

He Wouldn't Take No

In 1982, internal-medicine resident Barry Marshall was frustrated that there was no cure for his patients with ulcers. Then, while studying a stomach biopsy, he saw organisms resembling *Campylobacter* bacteria, first identified by his hospital's pathologist, Dr. J. Robbin Warren.

Warren and Marshall studied 100 ulcer patients for a year, and found the bacteria in 87 percent of the cases. Leading specialists, however, insisted the bacteria developed after the specimens were removed. For decades, clinical researchers had concluded that ulcers were based on weak stomach linings. Marshall's bacterial theory was snubbed.

Warren and Marshall cultured the bacteria for observation and found that a combination of bismuth and antibiotics destroyed it. Again, their report was met with skepticism. Marshall reported study after study. Still, doctors refused to conduct clinical trials. Finally, trials began in 1986, four years after Marshall's initial findings. These studies confirmed both Marshall's bacterial theory and his treatment methods.

Because a young internist wouldn't accept no from the medical community, the vast majority of ulcers, and some stomach cancers, can now be treated successfully.

The lesson is obvious: Failure in people is caused more by lack of determination than by lack of talent.

--Beecher Hunter