

Maria Delivoria-Papadopoulos, PSOM

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Maria Delivoria-Papadopoulos

Maria Delivoria-Papadopoulos, emeritus professor of pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, director of newborn services at HUP for 21 years, and a pioneer in neonatal and pediatric medicine, died September 11 from endometrial cancer. She was 89.

Dr. Delivoria-Papadopoulos is known for making significant and lasting contributions to the health of the world's children. Her work included studying the mechanisms of brain damage in infants and finding therapeutic interventions for extremely ill premature infants.

She is perhaps best known for performing the world's first successful ventilation treatment for premature infants in North America. She received continuous funding from the National Institutes of Health for decades for her research.

Dr. Delivoria-Papadopoulos was born in Athens, Greece, and graduated from Athens University's School of Medicine in 1957 and afterward came to the United States for a post-doctorate degree in physiology at the University of Pennsylvania. She joined the faculty at Penn in 1967 as an instructor in pediatrics. She became an assistant professor in physiology and pediatrics a few years later, moving up to associate professor and then, in 1976, full professor of pediatrics, physiology, and OB/Gyn. She also served as the director of Newborn Services and the Intensive Care Nursery at HUP (*Almanac* March 4, 1986 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v32pdf/n25/030486.pdf>)) from 1974 to 1996. She served as associate dean for International Medical Programs, and she was also an associate physician at CHOP. She retired in 1996 and earned emeritus status.

That same year, Dr. Delivoria-Papadopoulos was appointed chief of the division of neonatal-perinatal medicine and medical director of the NICU at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. Dr. Delivoria-Papadopoulos was also a professor of pediatrics and physiology at Drexel University College of Medicine.

Dr. Delivoria-Papadopoulos received numerous awards throughout her career and after her retirement, including the American Academy of Pediatrics Lifetime Achievement Award, induction into the Neonatology Hall of Fame as a Legend in Neonatology (*Almanac* April 10, 2007 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/volumes/v53/n29/hot.html>)), and the Virginia Apgar Award in Perinatal Pediatrics from the American Academy of Pediatrics. Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine's Children's Center NICN established the Maria Delivoria-Papadopoulos Prize for Research in Neonatal Neuroscience (*Almanac* November 26, 2013 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/volumes/v60/n15/hot.html>)). She received Penn's prestigious Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching (*Almanac* May 29, 1973 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v19pdf/n36/052973.pdf>)) and the Leonard Berwick Memorial Teaching Award from Penn's Perelman School of Medicine (*Almanac* April 20, 1993 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v39pdf/n30/042093.pdf>)). She also received The President's Achievement Award from the Society for Gynecologic Investigation and the Mentor of the Year Award from the Eastern Society for Pediatric Research. She was honored with the Ralph Brenner Endowed Chair in Pediatrics at St. Christopher's Hospital and received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Castle Connolly Medical Foundation. Her work was published in top-tier journals including *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *Science*, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, and *The Journal of Clinical Investigation*.

John Zupancic, an associate professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and associate chief of neonatology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, wrote that Dr. Delivoria-Papadopoulos was "an extraordinary woman whose pioneering contributions, including the demonstration of the feasibility of neonatal mechanical ventilation, changed the lives of countless newborns."

Dr. Delivoria is survived by her sons, James Patterson and Chris Patterson; and grandson, Christos Patterson.