Professor Maya S. Ignatova (1929–2019)

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Maya S. Ignatova: Born December 13, 1929; Died August 18, 2019

Professor Maya Ignatova, who has died aged 89, was a pioneer and a giant in the field of pediatric nephrology. She was one of founders of the European Society for Pediatric Nephrology (ESPN) in 1967 and the International Pediatric Nephrology Association (IPNA) in 1972. Maya Ignatova dedicated her life to searching innovative approaches in diagnostics and treatment of kidney diseases in children. She established the first regional referral unit for children with kidney diseases in Russia at the Research Institute of Clinical Pediatrics in Moscow in 1970. Maya Ignatova also founded the Russian Association of Pediatric Nephrology in 1996.

Born in Rostov-on-Don, Russia, in 1929 in the family of a physician Dr. Sergey Ignatov, she was educated at Lviv

Medical School and underwent residency and postgraduate studies at the Central Institute for Advanced Medical Studies in Moscow from 1953 to 1959, where she successfully defended her thesis for the medical degree. Since 1961, Maya Ignatova worked at the Department of Pediatrics of the Central Institute for Advanced Medical Studies under the supervision of Acad. G.N. Speransky, first as an assistant, and subsequently, as an assistant professor. In 1968, she successfully defended her Ph.D. thesis “Pathogenetic approach to treatment of glomerulonephritis in children.” Her research promoted the use of kidney biopsy in Russia, including immunohistochemistry and electron microscopy, and led to a better understanding of the underlying pathology in children with kidney diseases.

Since 1970, Maya Ignatova worked at the Research Institute of Pediatrics in Moscow. She was an excellent clinician who always carried children’s best interests at her heart. Together with Professor Yu. E. Veltishchev, Maya Ignatova conducted the first study of congenital and hereditary kidney diseases in children with publication of the first textbook “Congenital and hereditary kidney diseases in children” (1978).

Curiosity, open-mind, and the ability to listen to alternative points of view were outstanding features of Maya Ignatova. She had an amazing ability to identify promising areas of research leading to the introduction of new therapeutic methods in pediatric nephrology in Russia, including the use of immunosuppressive drugs in patients with glomerulonephritis.

Professor Maya Ignatova devoted all her time and energy to promote Pediatric Nephrology in Russia and to establish a link between Russian and international colleagues. She nurtured generations of pediatric nephrologists in Russia and published over 15 books and 600 scientific papers. Like other physicians and scientists in the Soviet Union, for many years she was only allowed to publish in Russian journals, which limited international recognition of her research.

Maya Ignatova was a Council Member and the Honorary member of the ESPN and the IPNA. In 2015, she was awarded

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by the International Society of Nephrology with the Pioneer Award for her outstanding input in Nephrology. Maya recorded a video recollecting the early years of the ESPN which formed part of the Oral History of Pediatric Nephrology video which is now available on the ESPN website (<https://www.espn-online.org>).

Nephrology was by no means her only interest in life. Maya Ignatova loved literature, art, and music; she traveled a lot, taking thousands of photographs. She married her husband Yaroslav and they had two children and two grandchildren.

Our deepest condolences have been sent to her family, colleagues, and friends. She leaves a remarkable legacy for all of us.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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