

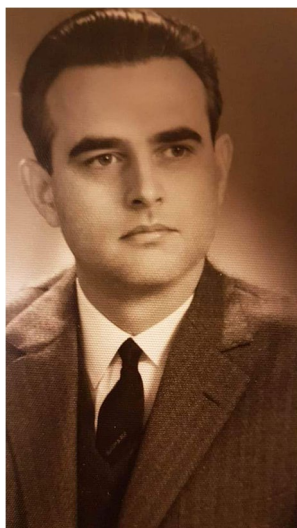


Obituary: Professor Menelaos Batrinos (1926–2022)

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Professor Menelaos Batrinos, renowned endocrinologist, pioneering pharmacologist, and Emeritus Professor at the Medical School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece (NKUA), passed away peacefully in November 2022.

He was born in Kastoria, a city in northern Greece in the region of Western Macedonia, that he loved very much. After completing his studies at the Varvakeio High School in Athens, he studied Medicine at the NKUA and, subsequently, specialized in Internal Medicine and Endocrinology. He undertook postgraduate studies at the University Clinic of the Broussais Hospital in Paris, where he gained extensive experience in Endocrinology studying and working under Professor de Gennes, one of the most famous endocrinologists at the time. During his studies in Paris, Batrinos had the opportunity to meet and collaborate with the most renowned endocrinologists in Europe.

On returning to Greece, he was appointed Director of the Hormone Laboratory of the Alexandra Hospital in Athens. In 1972, he started working at the Department of Pharmacology of the Medical School of Athens and, from 1982 until his retirement in 1994, was a full Professor of Pharmacology. In addition to teaching Pharmacology, Professor Batrinos also established the elective course “Introduction to Endocrinology.”

He was an exceptionally charismatic teacher, counselor, and mentor, full of empathy and understanding. He created a highly enjoyable and better learning environment captivating hundreds of students in the auditorium not only thanks to the manner in which he brilliantly imparted his knowledge but also due to his inherent kindness. His pedagogical skills motivated his students in developing both analytical and critical thinking and strongly encouraged them to pursue their passion for the field of medicine. Students attending the preclinical course of “Introduction to Endocrinology” were able to far better familiarize themselves with clinical cases being given the opportunity to attend the outpatient clinics of the Alexandra Hospital where Professor Batrinos primarily practiced reproductive endocrinology: as a leading authority on the subject, he sought to establish this field in Greece. In contrast to the prevailing spirit of his time, M. Batrinos was not only extremely amiable with the students but also provided them with opportunities to participate in publications and presentations at conferences.

In the Department of Pharmacology, with the help of his collaborator, the late Spyros Pitoulis, M. Batrinos set up an Endocrine Unit and a Laboratory for Hormonal Determinations, which became the reference center for many pioneering research activities of that time. The unit served as a nursery for generations of endocrinologists and a meeting place for discussions and exchange of ideas and opinions on endocrinology issues among well-known Greek endocrinologists of the time and younger fellows who were passionate about cutting edge issues in endocrinology.

Professor Batrinos was involved in many important activities and was an opinion leader in both education and

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endocrinology. He served on numerous professional society committees, government advisory panels, and medical consulting groups, including the Supreme Health Council of Greece (KESY) and the Greek Delegation to the Council of Europe's Higher Research Committee.

Among the most important accomplishments of Menelaos Batrinos was the establishment of the Hellenic Endocrinological Society (HSE) on 16 December 1964, together with seven other Greek endocrinologists. His name is closely connected with Endocrinology in Greece not only because he was a founding member of the HSE, but also due to his enormous contribution to the development and dissemination of Endocrinology in Greece. The latter was carried out in a number of ways: firstly, through the introduction and teaching of a course on Endocrinology (1972) at the Medical School of Athens, a development that allowed Endocrinology to gain prestige in the eyes of the medical students of the time and to be officially recognized as a separate specialty (following Cardiology) in Greece; secondly, through the publication of the 700-page textbook *Modern Endocrinology* which included a vast number of clinical cases of patients from his personal archive; and finally, through his research activity and the establishment of the Endocrine Unit and the Laboratory of Hormonal Determinations in the Department of Pharmacology at the Medical School of Athens.

Having retired from the NKUA, he continued to run his private practice until the age of 94, March 2020, daily climbing the stairs to his surgery on the 4th floor, while meanwhile maintaining undiminished interest in following developments in endocrinology and writing scientific articles. Additionally, he authored and published books unrelated to Medicine, including one titled *Mathe Modern Greek*, which provided a method for English speakers to learn the Greek language using English words with Greek roots (e.g., the word “*mathe*” found in the term “*mathematics*”).

His profound love of the Greek language, which he considered the source of Western civilization, was evident when

he made an address in English using words of Greek origin at an International Conference many years ago. Furthermore, his affection for his birthplace was demonstrated in two essays titled “*The Greek Language*” and “*The Race of the Greeks*,” which he donated to friends and to the Macedonian Museum of Kastoria. As an individual actively involved in political and social matters, he wrote numerous articles of social and political content that were published in “Letters from the Readers” in the daily newspaper *Kathimerini*.

From the age of 85 onwards, Menelaos Batrinos, surrounded as always by countless shelves of books, devoted himself fanatically to learning the Chinese language and tried to persuade his family (children and grandchildren) to learn it as well. Right into his mid and late 90s, Menelaos Batrinos continued to maintain a youthful spirit, retaining as ever a tremendous interest in science, politics, economics, and society. He preferred to discuss the future rather than the past and always offered valuable advice to his younger interlocutors. He never complained to family or friends about any ailments or infirmities he might have and remained lucid and entirely clear-headed until his last moments. Professor Batrinos was truly an outstanding example of a wise, stout-hearted, and compassionate man.

Professor M. Batrinos was a dedicated and excellent teacher, an innovative and productive researcher, and a competent and successful administrator. Through his teaching and his huge love of life and of learning, he left a profound imprint on all those who knew him, instilling in the younger generation a sense of commitment, dedication, and fervor in the pursuit of science and in the living of life itself.

Personally, I owe endless thanks to my teacher Menelaos Batrinos, an indisputably great person who will remain forever in our thoughts and our hearts as an inspiring beacon in our continuous endeavor to serve Endocrinology with unflinching enthusiasm and devotion.

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