

In Memoriam
Professor Demetrios Koutras (1930-2011)



Professor Demetrios Koutras passed away on 4th May, 2011. He was born in Athens, Greece, where he studied medicine, after which he received training as a British Council Fellow at the Western Infirmary Glasgow under Sir Edward Wayne and Dr Donald Alexander. This was followed by a year at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, U.S.A., and subsequently his return to Greece.

Internationally renowned for his in-depth studies on iodine metabolism and deficiency, he was one of the founders of the European Thyroid Association, which he served with enthusiasm and dedication, from 1967 to 1970 on the Executive Committee and from 1970 to 1973 as Vice-President, while being an ever present participant of the annual meetings of the Association. In 2004 Dr. Koutras received the Lissitzky Career Award presented by the ETA for his outstanding contribution to thyroid research and clinical practice. Furthermore, he expertly organized two particularly productive annual meetings of the ETA in Athens in 1969 and in 1998.

In Greece, he distinguished himself via his pioneering, countrywide research into endemic goiter and by promoting salt iodization to counteract the once widespread prevalence in Greece of endemic goiter. He authored or co-authored more than 200 peer-reviewed articles and numerous book chapters and edited a major textbook of Endocrinology in Greek.

Professor Koutras was endowed with exceptional discernment, an attribute that was especially observable in his article reviews and his comments on meetings and scientific discussions. He was a benevolent and caring person, socially very agreeable and an excellent conversationalist who shone, inter alia, by his exceptional sense of humor. He is survived by his wife, Maria.

The thyroid community is saddened by its loss of this greatly accomplished gentlemen-scientist who was devoted lifelong to thyroid research and practice and who has left a brilliant imprint on the field of thyroid research through his work and his learning. We will sorely miss both his deep humanity and his exceptional knowledge, as well as his unforgettable anecdotes at the end of each meeting.

Leonidas Duntas

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