



Curriculum Vitae

Marighoula Varla-Leftherioti

Marighoula (Youla) Varla-Leftherioti is a Medical Doctor specialized in Medical Biopathology and possesses a Doctorat/PhD from the Medical School of the “National and Kapodistrian” University of Athens, Greece. Since 1979, she is involved in Immunology. The professional experience in the Immunology departments of big hospitals in Athens area (Laboratory of Immunology of the Transplant Center-2nd Dpt. of Surgery, “Tzanion” Hospital of Piraeus, Immunological Laboratory, “Evangelismos” Hospital of Athens, Immunology Dpt.-National Tissue Typing Center, General Hospital of Athens, Hellenic Transplant Service), as well as the training she had in UK (U.K. TRANSPLANT SERVICE, Bristol, UK Laboratory Immunology Immunology Dpt., Royal Post-graduate Medical School, Hammersmith Hospital, London, U.K. Immunology Dpt., St Mary’s Hospital, London, UK) and France (Laboratoire d’ Immunologie et Histocompatibilite et France Greffe de Moelle, Hospital Saint Louis, Paris), made her familiar with all lines of Immunology.

Since 1985, she is Head of the Immunobiology Dpt., of the General District-Maternity Hospital of Athens “Helena Venizelou”. Her main interests are Reproductive Immunology, Histocompatibility, Transplantation Immunology, and Unrelated Donor Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation.

She is the first to introduce Reproductive Immunology to the Hellenic medical community by starting immunological investigation of women with RSA, supporting Gynaecologists to start immunizations and publishing a relevant monograph (Lymphocyte Immunization in Recurrent Spontaneous Abortions, 1992). At her current position as Director of the Immunobiology Department of “Helena Venizelou” Maternity Hospital, she has developed the department to be unique in Greece for the investigation of couples with immune-mediated fertility problems. She has organized and runs an out-patient RSA clinic where >2.000 couples have been followed. She is actively involved in clinical studies and research projects on original ideas, mainly those with clinical interest and possible application in the clinical setting. Her research interest focuses on the study of NK cells in pregnancy failure (Paparistidis et al, 2008, Pantazi et al, 2010), while supporting rather passive than active immunization, she has studied and presented data on the effect of intravenous immunoglobulin G infusions (IVIG) on the immune response of aborting women (Th2 shift) (Graphou et al, 2004). With her team, she was the first to investigate the role of the NK cell receptors’ repertoire in couples with RSA (Varla-Leftherioti et al, 2003), to suggest lack of the appropriate KIR inhibitory receptors in aborting women (Varla-Leftherioti et al, 2005) and to present the role of a KIR/HLA-C allorecognition system in pregnancy (Varla-Leftherioti, 2003). She was the leader of the Reproductive Immunology component at 3 International Histocompatibility Workshops where they showed that increased HLA-sharing between partners is not associated with sub-fertility and gave new data for specific combinations of maternal inhibitory KIRs and fetal HLA-C molecules that may provide reduced NK cell inhibition at the feto-maternal interface and predispose to implantation failure and/or fetal loss (Varla-Leftherioti et al, 2007, Varla-Leftherioti et al, 2010). The European Reproductive Immunologists have invited her to join them as partner to the “EMBIC-EMRYO IMPLANTATION CONTROL” For Network of Excellence programme (2002-2006). During the last years she has started studies on Pre-Implantation Factor - PIF (initial results of an association of PIF levels in culture media embryo supernatants with the outcome of embryo implantation and pregnancy outcome).

The International Coordination Committee for Immunology of Reproduction has awarded her (2009) with the “Kiril Bratanov” medal for her contribution to the development of the Committee and to the advancement of Reproductive Immunology.

Apart from her scientific work, she is an active member of scientific societies (three times President of the Hellenic Society of Immunology) and various scientific and administrative committees, and Greek representative to European and International Associations/Programmes.

She has organized two congresses of the European Society for Immunology in Greece (2003, 2009) and has served as member of ESRI Board (Treasurer -2003, General Secretary -2007, President Elect - 2010, President – 2013).