

Pioneering IVF doctor dies in Australia

September 27 2011

A pioneering Australian doctor known for his groundbreaking work on the world's first pregnancy through in vitro fertilisation (IVF) has died after a long illness.

Carl Wood, who had battled Alzheimer's disease since 2004, passed away in a Melbourne nursing home last Friday.

Working with Melbourne's Monash University, he was a leader in the 1970s in the developing field of IVF pregnancy, heading the team that produced Australia's first test-tube baby in 1980 -- among the first in the world.

He and fellow Monash researcher Alan Trounson had earlier helped establish IVF as a method for the treatment of human infertility with the world's first clinical IVF pregnancy in 1973. However, this [pregnancy](#) did not progress.

"He was at the forefront of the development of IVF technology and he led the team responsible for Australia's first IVF baby," the university said in a statement Tuesday.

"Professor Wood, with Monash University colleagues, would go on to deliver the world's first babies from [frozen embryos](#) and donor eggs."

The world's first baby conceived outside the human body, Louise Brown, was born in Britain in 1978 as a result of the work of IVF pioneers Patrick Steptoe and Bob Edwards.

Edwards, who was in 2010 awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine, and Steptoe, who died in 1988, developed IVF technology in which [egg cells](#) are fertilised outside the body and implanted in the womb.

Wood's investigations into the use of artificial hormones to control the ovulation cycle of women on IVF treatment is credited with raising success rates and helping thousands of [infertile couples](#) to become parents.

Former colleague Gab Kovacs said Wood's work spilled over into other areas.

"Carl pioneered the monitoring of babies during labour, which saved many, many lives," Kovacs told The Australian newspaper.

"He was also one of the first to suggest there was more to women than just their organs and pushed for the introduction of sexual counselling and abortion reform."

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Citation: Pioneering IVF doctor dies in Australia (2011, September 27) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-09-ivf-doctor-dies-australia.html>

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