

Theodore Puck, genome pioneer, dies at 89

November 11 2005

Theodore Puck, the Denver scientist who was a pioneer in studying the human genome and founded the Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, has died at age 89.

Puck, who did groundbreaking work on somatic cells and who was in forefront of research on Alzheimer's disease and Down syndrome, had been doing research on a new paper as recently as last week. He died Sunday in Denver from complication following a broken hip, reported the Rocky Mountain News.

Puck developed a nutrient and incubator that enabled human cells to grow in great numbers and with great precision in a petri dish that made practical to research the human genome.

In addition, Puck calibrated the correct number of human chromosomes to 46, when it was believed to be 48 and determined the dosage needed to kill cancer cells but keep the person alive.

Puck, born in 1916 in Chicago, earned his bachelor and doctorate degrees in physical chemistry at the University of Chicago in 1937 and 1940. He was widely published and won numerous awards for his research.

Puck is survived by his wife, Mary; three daughters and seven grandchildren.

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