



## Summary :

An internationally acclaimed doctor, Michail Isigonis was the first eye specialist in Smyrna and director of the ophthalmology clinic of the Greek Hospital of Smyrna. He was particularly active in combating epidemics in Smyrna and treating Asia Minor refugees of World War I in Chios.

## Date and Place of Birth

1854, Smyrna

## Date and Place of Death

1931, Athens

## Main Role

Doctor (eye specialist)

## 1. Background

Michail Isigonis was born in [Smyrna](#) in 1854. He was the third son of [Antonios Isigonis](#), a teacher of the Greek language from Marpissa of [Paros](#), and Anastasia Mavrommati from [Naxos](#).

## 2. Education

Michail Isigonis was educated at the '[Ellinikon Paidagogeion](#)' of Smyrna, the private school founded and directed by his father. The latter sent him later to Germany, where he finished high school. He then studied medicine at the University of Basel, Switzerland, and specialised in ophthalmology. He became a registrar at the ophthalmology clinic of the university under Professor H. Schiess. As soon as he obtained his doctorate, in 1880, he returned to Smyrna, where he practised ophthalmology.

## 3. Professional activity

Thanks to his various publications, as well as his research and participation in international conferences, where he met and collaborated with the greatest doctors of Europe, Isigonis became a distinguished doctor both in Smyrna and abroad.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, he played a very important role in Smyrna, where he was not restricted to the Greek Orthodox community. He founded and then directed the ophthalmology clinic of the [Greek Hospital](#) 'St. Charalambos'. In 1881, he participated in the international scientific mission (consisting of Greeks and Europeans of Smyrna) that helped the victims of the earthquake of [Chios](#). Besides, towards the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, he participated, along with other doctors of Smyrna, both Europeans and Ottomans, in various committees that dealt with epidemics.

His activity as a doctor was not restricted to Smyrna. When World War I broke out, Michail Isigonis was in Chios on vacation with his family. As he could not return to Smyrna, he remained on the island throughout the war. He established a medical society there, as well as a municipal committee assigned with the duty of fighting the epidemic of trachoma,<sup>2</sup> which at the time was spread in Chios. He became an appointed prefectural doctor and founded in Chios an ophthalmology clinic, which treated [the refugees from Asia Minor](#) who arrived on the island during World War I.

Most of his publications are on medical and medical-philosophical matters.<sup>3</sup> In 1888, he published a study on both the development of short-sightedness in the schools of Smyrna and its prevention.<sup>4</sup>

## 4. Family



In 1896, Michail Isigonis got married to Eleni Ioannou-Krousoulenti, a member of a distinguished family of merchants from Chios. He had four children by this marriage, three boys and a girl. Unluckily, his wife died soon, in 1904. He got married again, in 1906, to Phroso Antovik from Chios. He had one girl by his second marriage.<sup>5</sup>

## 5. Social activity

Mainly in Smyrna, but also in Chios, Michail Isigonis was considered one of the most notable citizens and played an important role in the everyday life of the Greek-Orthodox community. Towards the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, he became the president of the board of the [‘Evangeliki Scholi’](#), the Girl's School [‘Agia Foteini’](#) and the Greek Hospital ‘St. Charalambos’.<sup>6</sup> His social role allowed him to establish relations with the most eminent figures of Smyrna and particularly the Europeans. He also collaborated with the English and the German hospital of the city. In addition, he was the official doctor of the Catholic bishopric of Smyrna and the English railway companies. These relations proved particularly useful when the Greco-Ottoman war of 1897 broke out. The Catholic archbishop urged him to become a protégé of the the French consulate in order to avoid any unpleasant consequences. In 1919, when the Greek army landed on Smyrna, Michail Isigonis and his family returned from Chios. After the [events of September 1922](#), they left Smyrna and settled in Athens. Michail Isigonis died in Athens in 1931.

1. Παϊδούσης, Μ., ‘Ιατροί της Ανατολής: Μιχαήλ Αντωνίου Ισηγόνης (1854-1931)’, *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* ΙΕ’ (1972) p. 172.
2. It is a chronic bacillary infection of the conjunctiva of the eyes and may result in blindness. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the disease of the trachoma was particularly spread.
3. His first two articles were published before he obtained his doctorate.
4. The information of the section comes from: Παϊδούσης, Μ., ‘Ιατροί της Ανατολής: Μιχαήλ Αντωνίου Ισηγόνης (1854-1931)’, *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* ΙΕ’ (1972) pp. 180-190.
5. The information of the section comes from: Ισηγόνη, Ε. – Ισηγόνη, Μ., *Η οικογένεια Μιχαλάκη Ισηγόνη της Σμύρνης, Σμύρνη, Αθήνα, Αίγυπτος, Ινδίες, Λονδίνο, Αθήνα, 1831-1995* (Athens 1995).
6. Καραράς, Ν., ‘Μιχαήλ Αντωνίου Ισηγόνης και ανέκδοτα προς αυτόν γράμματα’, *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* ΙΕ’ (1972) p. 163; Λιθοξόου-Σαλάτα, Ζ., *Η Ευαγγελική Σχολή Σμύρνης, 1733-1933* (Athens 1959).

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	<b>Ισηγόνη Μ., Ισηγόνη Ε.,</b> <i>Η οικογένεια Μιχαλάκη Ισηγόνη της Σμύρνης. Σμύρνη, Αθήνα, Αίγυπτος, Ινδίες, Λονδίνο, Αθήνα, 1831-1995</i> , Αθήνα 1995
	<b>Σολομωνίδης Χ.,</b> <i>Η ιατρική στη Σμύρνη. Ασκληπιεία, σχολές, το γραικικό νοσοκομείο, επιδημίες, γητείες, γιατροσόφια, γιατροί, φαρμακεία</i> , Αθήνα 1955
	<b>Καραράς Ν.,</b> "Μιχαήλ Αντωνίου Ισηγόνης και ανέκδοτα προς αυτόν γράμματα", <i>Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά</i> , ΙΕ', 1972, 160-180
	<b>Βέρας Σ.,</b> "Οι Έλληνες γιατροί της Σμύρνης.", <i>Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά</i> , 12, 1939, 319-356



**Παιδούσης Μ.**, "Ιατροί της Ανατολής: Μιχαήλ Αντωνίου Ισηγόνης (1854-1931)", *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά*, ΙΕ', 1972, 180-190

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