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Sir John Charnley, 70; Orthopedic Innovator

Sir John Charnley, an orthopedic surgeon who developed a procedure that revolutionized hip replacement surgery, died on Aug. 12 in Knutsford, England, it was disclosed yesterday. He was 70 years old.

The operation, known as the Charnley procedure, involves the replacement of the hip socket and top of the thigh bone with artificial material. It has enabled thousands of painfully handicapped people to walk again.

Before the procedure was introduced, artificial thigh bones were used but success was limited because the metal often pressed painfully on nerves in the natural hip sockets and the joint was inadequately lubricated by body fluids.

The development brought Dr. Charnley many honors. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1977 and was one of the recipients of the 1974 Albert Lasker Medical Research Awards. He lectured in Manhattan that same year as part of the Hospital for Joint Diseases' Robert Jones Lectures, named in honor of the Army's director general for orthopedics in World War I. Dr. Jones was considered to be the father of modern orthopedic surgery.

Dr. Charnley, who lived in Knutsford, was professor emeritus of orthopedic surgery at Manchester University.

He is survived by his wife, Lady Jill, and by a son and a daughter.