

Focus on Faculty #13

Sarkis Meterissian



[Dr. Sarkis Meterissian](#) is a tenured professor in the Department of Oncology as well as in the Department of Surgery. Dr. Meterissian graduated from McGill Medical School in 1985 and then went on to a residency in General Surgery which he completed in 1990, obtaining a MSc in Experimental Surgery along the way. He then went on to 2 Fellowships. He first completed a 2-year Research Fellowship in Surgical Oncology at the Deaconess Hospital in Boston under the supervision of Dr. Glenn Steele. His research centered on the pathogenesis of colorectal liver metastases specifically looking at the role of Kupffer cells and cytokines in the hepatic microenvironment. He then completed a 2-year Clinical Fellowship under the direction of Dr. Charles Balch at the prestigious MD Anderson Cancer Center from 1992 to 1994. During this Fellowship he completed 6 months of research looking at the role of the FAS ligand and circulating soluble FAS. He then returned to McGill University and the Royal Victoria Hospital in 1994. His career can best be described according to the three pillars of academia: administration, research and teaching.

In administration Dr. Meterissian has fulfilled many roles. He directed the surgical pre-clerkship rotation, known at that time as ICM-Introduction to Clinical Medicine, from 1998-2000. During this time he was also the second Program Director of our brand new Surgical Oncology Residency succeeding its founder, Dr. Henry Shibata. Dr. Meterissian successfully navigated the program through its first Royal College accreditation in 2000 gaining Full Approval. Then from 2001 to 2007 he was Program Director of General Surgery introducing many innovations, most notably the Academic Half-day in 2001 and games as teaching tools. He guided the program to a Full Approval in 2006 and, nationally, was named to the Royal College Accreditation Committee that same year. Then in 2007 he assumed the role that we all remember him in, Associate Dean of Postgraduate Medical Education. He remained the Associate Dean until 2014, guiding our programs through another arduous accreditation process in 2013. Dr. Meterissian was honored by his peers by being named the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) Chair of the Standing Committee of Postgrad Deans from 2012-2014. During this time he negotiated the new contract between Canadian Universities and Middle Eastern countries which remains in effect till 2020.

On the International side Dr. Meterissian was President of Breast Surgery International from 2013 to 2015. Nationally he was President of the Canadian Society of Surgical Oncology from 2007 to 2009. He is presently the Co-President of the Medical Advisory Board of the Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation. He has completed a decade in his role as Director of the Breast Center of the MUHC and currently the Breast Cancer program at the MUHC.

On the teaching side Dr. Meterissian has won a total of 4 teaching awards. He was named the most outstanding teacher in the Department of Surgery in 1996 and then in the Division of General Surgery in 2000, 2002 and 2003. He was named to the Faculty Honor List for Teaching Excellence in 2005 and was awarded the Outstanding Teacher Award in 2007 by the Association for Surgical Education in the US. He was also instrumental in the pivotal project entitled the Future of Medical Education – Postgrad (FMEC). He led McGill's participation on the research side along with the University of Toronto and UBC in a joint grant. He also played an important role in the Implementation Phase. Dr. Meterissian also was the lead for an important project provincially aiming to help foreign medical graduates integrate into our residency programs. This IMG integration project was established at St. Mary's Hospital and was a pivotal part of the MSSS' plan for helping IMGs.

On the research side Dr. Meterissian's career has evolved from having his own basic science research laboratory and working with Dr. Pnina Brodt on colorectal liver metastases from 1994 to 2001 to his present day translational research collaborations. In 1999 he and Dr. Morag Park of the Goodman Cancer Centre (at that time of the Ludwig Molecular Oncology Labs) were awarded a sizable grant from the Montreal Breast Cancer Foundation to establish Quebec's first breast tumour tissue bank. Since then, this group, called the McGill Functional Genomics Group, has accumulated nearly 1000 tissues and published landmark articles in the area of molecular profiling. Presently Dr. Meterissian has active collaborations with Dr. Luke McCaffrey of the Goodman Cancer Centre looking at the pathogenesis of DCIS, Dr. David Juncker of the Genome Centre looking at blood-borne markers of early breast cancer and Dr. Ian Watson of the Goodman Cancer Centre looking at molecular profiling of melanoma particularly as a predictor of response to immunotherapy. He has also received external funding for medical education research from the Association for Surgical Education (ASE) looking at a novel tool, the script-concordance test, as a measure of intra-operative clinical reasoning. He has published on games and their role as teaching tools and simulated models of accreditation.

We asked Dr. Meterissian to list a few of his articles whose work he is particularly proud of or enjoyed the most. This is what he provided:

Finak G., Bertos N., Pepin F., Sadekova S., Souleimanova M., Zhao H., Chen H., Omeroglu G., **Meterissian S.**, Omeroglu A., Hallett M. and Park M. 2008 Stromal gene expression predicts clinical outcome in breast cancer. *Nature Medicine* 2008 14:518-27

Jamal M.H., Rousseau M.C., Hanna W., Doi S.A., **Meterissian S.** and Snell L. 2011 Effect of the ACGME duty hours restrictions on surgical residents and faculty: a systematic review *Academic Medicine* 86: 34-42

Nouh T., Boutros M., Gagnon R., Reid S., Leslie K., Pace D., Pitt D., Walker R., Schiller D., MacLean A., Hameed M., Fata P., Charlin B. and **Meterissian S.H.** 2012 The script concordance test as a measure of clinical reasoning: a national validation study *Am. J. Surg.* 203:530-534