

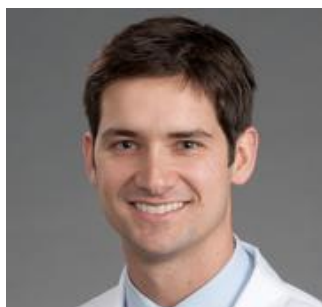


INTRODUCING

Introducing JSD's new associate editor

Dr. Felipe Bochnia Cerci: Soaring to greater heights in dermatology

By: R.N. Sugitha Nadarajah



Dr. Cerci

Dr. Felipe Bochnia Cerci, the new associate editor for *Journal of Surgical Dermatology* (JSD), is on a mission to promote dermatologic surgery by helping authors publish articles of the highest quality: "One of my aims is to stimulate the development of surgical dermatology in countries where dermatology is seen only as a clinical specialty," says the dermatologist, who is also a member of numerous prestigious medical associations, namely the International Transplant Skin Cancer Collaborative, Brazilian Society of Dermatology, American Academy of Dermatology, among others.



Dr. Cerci participating as a speaker of the XXVII Brazilian Congress of Dermatologic Surgery, 2016 (photo credit: PUCPR via Dr. Felipe Cerci)

In an exclusive interview with JSD media team, Dr. Cerci shares about his journey in the realm of medical research. "I did my training at Hospital Santa Casa de Curitiba, which is affiliated with the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUCPR)," he says. PUCPR is recognized as one of the best institutions of higher education in Brazil, due to the excellence of its programs, with the title 'Pontifical' being a mark of its commitment to produce graduates of the highest quality, according to the university.

After successfully completing his medical degree at PUCPR, Dr. Cerci went on to do a one-year internship followed by three years of additional residency training at the same hospital. "As a resident I was one of the three winners of the 'Residents Project', promoted by the Brazilian Society of Dermatology," says Dr. Cerci.

The award for his study on the 'Evaluation of sun-screen use in vitiligo patients' was a two-month scholarship to the University of Texas/MD Anderson Cancer Center. It was during his scholarship in Texas that Dr. Cerci had the opportunity of meeting Dr. Tri Nguyen, a nationally recognized dermatologist for his excellence in surgical dermatology and expertise in skin cancer, Mohs surgery and reconstructive surgery. Dr. Nguyen is one of the editors of the book 'Flaps and Grafts in Dermatologic Surgery', considered one of the main references in this field.

"My career in Mohs surgery was mainly influenced by Dr. Tri Nguyen. Before I met him, I was already a big fan of his book and articles. Reading his book and watching his reconstructions definitely influenced me to pursue a career in Mohs surgery," explains Dr. Cerci. He further adds, "Spending several months with him and other great Mohs surgeons in the US made me want to keep learning and improving surgical techniques so I could better take care of patients and teach residents and fellows in Brazil."

In 2011, Dr. Cerci returned to Hospital Santa Casa de Curitiba, where he pursued his procedural dermatology fellowship. On this same year, he did a one-month rotation at the Skin and Cancer Foundation in Melbourne, focusing in Mohs surgery and skin cancer in solid organ recipients. A year later, Dr. Cerci moved to the United States for two years to do additional training. He completed a one-year International Fellowship Program at Wake Forest School of Medicine Department of Dermatology, one of the most academically active programs and one of the 20 best dermatology programs in the United States, where he got to work with renowned dermatologists including Dr. Gil Yosipovitch and Dr. Joseph Jorizzo.

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“As a resident, I used to study and read Dr. Joseph Jorizzo’s articles and books. During my time at Wake Forest, I was honored to work with him and learn from his years of expertise in medical dermatology,” Dr. Cerci adds. After Wake Forest University, the JSD associate



Dr. Cerci was awarded for the presentation of his lecture ‘Importance of evaluating and preparing a surgical defect prior to reconstruction’ in session Dermatology 2.0 during the Brazilian Congress of Dermatologic Surgery, 2016 (photo credit: PUCPR via Dr. Felipe Cerci)

editor also obtained training at various prominent institutions such as Harvard University/Massachusetts General Hospital, Mayo Clinic, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, and Mount Sinai Medical Center.

Speaking of the challenges he faces in this field, Dr. Cerci says, “A personal and professional challenge is to help increase the awareness of Mohs surgery in Brazil. Unlike the US and other countries such as Canada and Australia, Mohs is still not well-known in Brazil.” He furthers, “A significant effort will be needed by the Mohs surgeons to educate dermatologists and other medical specialties about the importance and benefits of Mohs surgery for specific cases of non-melanoma skin cancers, mainly on the face.”

According to the dermatologist, another common challenge he encounters is when he strives to give every patient the best possible result after removing a skin cancer. “Deformities caused by surgeries on the face may have a significant impact on the quality of life of these patients. Therefore, doing the best we can for every case is a constant challenge,” he explains.



In 2016, during the Brazilian Congress of Dermatologic Surgery, Dr. Cerci was also awarded first place in the category “Original study” (photo credit: PUCPR via Dr. Felipe Cerci)

Currently, Dr. Cerci works at two private practices and is doing his academic work at University Hospital of Hospital Santa Casa de Curitiba, while also collaborating with other dermatologists on several research projects. “I have been working with some colleagues to evaluate the proportion of solid organ transplant patients that use sunscreen and practice other sun protective measures in Brazil. As we know, they have a high risk of developing non-melanoma skin cancers, mainly squamous cell carcinoma,” says Dr. Cerci.

He adds, “After finishing it, we plan to work with other Brazilian colleagues to educate these high-risk patients and other medical specialties about the importance of protecting themselves from the sun. As the number of transplant patients increases and life expectancy increases, the number of skin cancers will increase along with it. Other projects ongoing are related to Mohs surgery and reconstruction.”

Throughout his career, Dr. Cerci received numerous awards for his contribution in the field of dermatology. One of his proud achievements includes winning three awards in three different categories at the XXVII Brazilian Congress of Dermatologic Surgery in 2015. In this event, which brought together distinguished dermatolo-

gists from the whole country, Dr. Cerci was awarded first place in Case Report session, second place in Young Dermatologic Surgeon and first place for New Surgical Talents Session.

“All his winning works were focused on the area of Mohs micrographic surgery, which is the dermatologist’s specialty, having been dedicated to it for two years in the United States,” reported PUCPR website. The following year, during the XXVIII Brazilian Congress of Dermatologic Surgery 2016, Dr. Cerci was awarded for the presentation of the lecture ‘Importance of evaluating and preparing a surgical defect prior to reconstruction’ in session Dermatology 2.0 and also received a prize for the first place on the category “Original study”.

The dermatologist, whose interests lie mainly in the areas of skin cancer and Mohs surgery, had performed or participated in more than 1,500 cases throughout his career, and has won numerous scholarships to many conferences such as the World Congress of Dermatology (Seoul, 2011), International Summer Academy of Practical Dermatology (Munich, 2015), European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology Spring Symposium (Athens, 2016) and also the Brazilian Congress of Dermatologic Surgery (Rio de Janeiro, 2016).



**Dr. Cerci at the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology Spring Symposium, Athens
(photo credit: PUCPR via Dr. Felipe Cerci)**

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Regarding current trends and the future of dermatology research, Dr. Cerci opines, “A better understanding of pathophysiology of many diseases is needed, so better specific treatments may be developed.” He asserts, “As in some other areas of medicine, I believe targeted therapies will help us deal with many hard-to-treat conditions. Therapies will be individually tailored to each patient.”

For future dermatologists, Dr. Cerci has this advice:

“Surgical dermatology is a field in constant development in many countries and it needs young dermatologists to dedicate themselves and contribute scientifically to its further development.”

He adds, in conclusion, “I believe that doing an additional training abroad (either clinical or research focused) in a specific area of surgical dermatology may contribute significantly to professional development.” ■