

A Portrait Of The Surgeon Dr. L. Patricia Turner, M.D.

Written by Patricia Turnier
Sunday, 10 April 2011 22:31



Courtesy Patricia L. Turner, M.D.

Dr. Turner M.D is a general surgeon and assistant professor of surgery at the University of Maryland School of [Medicine](#) . She is an associate program director for the General Surgery Residency Program at the University of Maryland Medical Centre. She serves as chair of the Surgical Caucus of the American Medical Association (AMA) Young Physicians Section and is a member of the Editorial Board of Surgical News. Her academic interests include teaching and training paradigms for medical students and residents in open and

laparoscopic surgery.

Dr. Turner received her medical degree at Bowman Gray School of Medicine, Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and completed her surgical residency at Howard University Hospital. Throughout her residency, she was a senior staff fellow at the National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute, Laboratory of Kidney and Electrolyte Metabolism. Dr. Turner's fellowship training was in minimally invasive and laparoscopic surgery at Mount Sinai Medical Center & Weill-Cornell University School of Medicine in New York. Dr. Turner's clinical practice focuses on minimally invasive/laparoscopic, gastrointestinal and endocrine surgery. She has a diverse research background, including studying nitric oxide and the kidneys. In organized medicine, Dr. Turner has held the position of resident on the general surgery RRC and was the resident member on the AMA Council on Scientific Affairs. Given her considerable experience in her field, we asked Dr. Turner what was her best operation and why. "This is a tough question to answer. I guess, I would say that every operation has a different scenario which is exciting. It happens that I have to deal with trauma patients, life and death situations. I enjoy using new techniques (such as laparoscopy when we first tried it) which have not been employed before. I like that kind of challenge and opportunity. There are specific patients which resonate with you".

It is important to note that 76% of Baltimore's African-American males (among 16 to 24-year-old young adults) drop out before graduation, according to a 2001 study at John Hopkins University. Given that Dr. Turner works in the state of Maryland, we wanted to know what kind of advice she has for those young people who want to succeed in any field, including medicine, despite the hurdles. "Well, I think there is no reason that those individuals cannot pursue studies in medicine, law, engineering or anything else they wish to do. The statistics do not define the destiny of an individual. The numbers may seem discouraging but I think the best deterrent is to focus on academic excellence." In this respect, Dr. Turner thinks that excellence is the key to break the glass ceiling for minorities. "Superior grades are certainly the foundation for all of us", she expressed. "When you are among the best, there is always a place for you. Once the young people identify the area where they want to pursue their studies, they should find a mentor who succeeded in the field they chose. For medicine, with excellent grades and research experience or community service these factors will be great credentials to distinguish themselves. I can also add that one of the best ways to not be deterred by negative people that you can find in every level is to surround yourself with positive people who believe in you", she said.

During our interview, we asked Dr. Turner what is the best way (for students who want to pursue their studies in medicine) to seek the tutelage of prosectors or any other mentors in the medical field. She responded: "It depends on the level of the student. If you are in high school you can find a mentor who will give guidance on how to be admitted into college. There are

organizations that have established mentoring programs such as the American College of Surgeons. They take students from high schools and colleges to surgery meetings. The AMA have mentors who are guiding the future physicians with the necessary training. They also have a community service projects where they go to high schools or junior highs. I think many of the medical organizations intervene by providing mentorships”.

It is important to mention that the noteworthy *Black Enterprise* magazine (May 2008 issue) named Dr. Turner among the leading physicians in the U.S. The "America's Leading Doctors" list of this magazine includes 140 top-rated African-American physicians and surgeons throughout the U.S. who are advancing medical research. Physicians selected for the list are judged to be leaders in their respective fields, to be superior in service and reputation, and have been confirmed as being certified in accordance with the American Board of Medical Specialities. The 2008 list placed special emphasis on those who have been involved in medical breakthroughs across specialties. The list's editors consulted leading medical associations, health care organizations, the nation's top medical schools, and other top-ranked physicians to compile this year's publication. We asked Dr. Turner what the *Black Enterprise* magazine's recognition meant to her : « It is a great honour to be appreciated among my peers. It is an impetus to outdo myself even more. »

During our discussion, we wanted to know [what advice](#) Dr. Turner has for young people (regardless of their origins) who aspire to make their mark in the medical sphere and who wish to become a successful surgeon: “Surgery is one of the most competitive fields in medicine so, I reiterate that excellence is a must in medical school for everybody. It is also important to develop research expertise, experiences in volunteerism, community service and clinical practice. They have to excel in all those spheres. Strong letters of recommendation are imperative to be admitted into medical faculties. Regarding more specifically the surgery field, the physicians need to develop special technical skills. They need to establish an excellent rapport with the patients to provide excellent care. They have to be great communicators. To finish, they have to be life long learners to update themselves with all the novelties of their field”. In addition, Dr. Turner thinks that physicians can also distinguish themselves by pursuing an academic career while contributing to scientific literature. In this respect, she penned many scientific articles.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Turner is quite active in the American College of Surgeons, serving as a member of the Committee on Informatics, the Committee on Young Surgeons, the Committee on Patient Education, and the Task Force on Practice Based Learning and Improvement. It is also important to mention that Dr. Turner has been involved in other endeavours such as politics. She was an AMA member for 17 years, a member of the Young Physicians Section (YPS) for almost five years, and a governing council member for about two

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years. We asked her if she has any political plans for the future. She expressed during our interview: "At this point of my life, I do not have necessarily political aspirations. However, I always keep my options open. I was fortunate enough in the past to work as a parliamentarian. I was a Speaker of the American Medical Association, Young Physicians Section. There are opportunities with the AMA to be a speaker for the entire House of Delegates of the AMA".

At the end of the interview, we asked Dr. Turner what advice can she give to female professionals who have to manage their careers and their personal lives. "It is important to ally yourself with people who will be supportive: a partner, your family, your friends and so on. A strong support system is imperative. You have to be very efficient with your time, especially females who have responsibilities at home and at work. They have to be able to wear different hats successfully."

To sum up, Dr. Turner is the medical director of the Surgical Acute Care Unit at the University of Maryland of Maryland Medical Center among other roles. The physician contributes in the medical field in a significant manner. Based on her body of experience, we are anticipating her next contribution in the scientific field. [It is important to note that since the first publication of this article, Dr. Turner was involved in the November 2010 issue of *Ebony* Magazine for the article "Black America 2010: The State we're in" with prominent people such as Hill Harper, J.D., Dr. Bill Cosby PhD, etc.]

Interview conducted by Patricia Turnier, Editress-In-Chief of Mega Diversities the 27th of April 2010.

Academic and Professional achievements:

Education:

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- MD, Bowman Gray School of Medicine of Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, 1996
- BA, Biology, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 1992

Post graduate training:

- Clinical Fellow, Minimally Invasive & Laparoscopic Surgery
Mount Sinai Medical Center & Weill-Cornell University School of Medicine, New York, NY,
2003-2004
- Categorical Intern and Resident in Surgery, Howard University Hospital
Washington, DC, 1996-1998, 2000-2003
- Senior Staff Fellow, National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute,
Laboratory of
Kidney and Electrolyte Metabolism, Bethesda, Maryland, 1998-2000
- DSI Advanced Laparoscopic Resident Courses, Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Cincinnati, OH,
December 2001 & June 2012

Medical Licenses:

DC 1997
MD 1998
NY 2003

Board Certification:

American Board of Surgery 2005

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Special Interests:

- Minimally Invasive Surgery
- Laparoscopic Surgery
- Gastrointestinal Surgery
- Endocrine Surgery
- General Surgery

Endorsements:

- American College of Surgeons
- MedChi, Maryland State Medical Society

Work Experience:

AUGUST 2004 TO PRESENT

Attending Surgeon & Assistant Professor of Surgery
Program Director, General Surgery Residency Program
University of Maryland Medical Center

JUNE 2003-JUNE 2004

Clinical Instructor, Department of Surgery
Surgery Attending & Minimal Invasive Surgery Fellow
Mount Sinai Medical Center & Weill-Cornell School of Medicine

JULY 1996 - JUNE 1998 & JULY 2000 – JUNE 2003

Surgery resident (Chief Resident 2002-2003)
Howard University Hospital

JULY 1998 – JUNE 2000

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Senior staff fellow, National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute
Laboratory of Kidney & Electrolyte Metabolism, National Institute of Health

JUNE 1993 – JUNE 1996

Graduate research assistant

Department of Neurobiology & Anatomy, Bowman Gray School of Medicine

Honours and Awards:

1993 Bowman Gray School of Medicine Student Research Day Competition Award
1994 Student National Medical Association Research Forum Award
1994 Lange Medical Publication Award
1994 Bristol-Myers Squibb/National Medical Fellowships Fellow in Academic Medicine
1995 Slack Award for Medical Journalism
1996 American Medical Association/Glaxo Welcome Leadership Achievement Award
1996 Richard L. Burt Research Achievement Award
1998 National Institutes of Health/National Medical Association Travel Award
1999 Pfizer Resident Travel Award; American College of Surgeons
2000 American Physiological Society Travel Fellowship Award
2000 American Federation for Medical Research Trainee Travel Award
2000 American Federation for Medical Research Henry Christian Award
2000 Drew-Walker Surgical Residents' Research Forum, 1 prize for basic science
2000 Aventis Pharma Hypertension Research Clinical Fellowship Award, American Heart Association
2001 National Institutes of Health Fellows Award for Research Excellence
2002 Chairman's Award, Howard University Hospital Department of Surgery
2002 Howard University Hospital Medical Staff Resident Leadership Award
2003 Association of Women Surgeons Outstanding Woman Resident Award
2005 Henry C. Welcome Fellowship Grant
2008 Claude H. Organ, MD, FACS Travelling Fellowship Award

Research Grants:

National Medical Fellowships

Effect of b-amyloid protein on neuronal cell survival during development and following injury

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National Institutes of Health

The regulation of neuronal survival and differentiation, (supp. to RO1 grant; LJ Houenou, PI)

National Institutes of Health

Effects of protease nexin-1 and neurotrophins on neuronal cell survival during development and

American Heart Association

Long-term effect of nitric oxide inhibition on Na transporter abundance in kidney: a targeted proteomics approach

Joan F. Giambalvo Memorial Scholarship Grant (American Medical Association)

The impact of attitudes regarding bearing and rearing children on female general surgery residents

Professional Societies:

American Medical Association

Past Chair, Young Physicians Section Surgical Caucus

Governing Council, Young Physicians Section (YPS)

Alternate Delegate to AMA House of Delegates from YPS

American College of Surgeons, Fellow

American Society of General Surgeons

Association for Academic Surgery

Association for Surgical Education

Association of Women Surgeons

MedChi, Maryland Medical Society

National Association of Medical Communicators

National Medical Association

Chair, Resident Physician Section 1999-2001

Long-Term Planning Committee (HOD) 2000-2003

Executive Committee, Surgical Section

Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons

Society of Black Academic Surgeons

Southeastern Surgical Congress

SOME APPOINTMENTS & CONSULTATIONS:

2000-2003 American Medical Association Council on Scientific Affairs
2001 Association of Program Directors in Surgery Task Force on Short and Long Term Issues
2002-2004 Residency Review Committee for Surgery
2002-2004 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education Resident Council
2002 Participant, American Board of Surgery Retreat on Graduate Surgical Education
2002 Howard University Hospital Department of Surgery Research Committee
2005-2007 Association for Academic Surgery Institutional Representative
2006-Present American Medical Association Young Physician Section Alternate Delegate to HOD
2008-Present Program Director, University of Maryland General Surgery Residency
2007-2010 American Board of Surgery Examination Consultant to Qualifying Examination Committee

Editorial Boards:

Surgery News 2004-2009
Journal of Medical Sciences Research 2007-Present

Ad Hoc Editorial Reviewer:

Archives of Surgery
Journal of the American College of Surgeons
Surgical Endoscopy
Surgical Innovation
American Surgeon

SOME PUBLICATIONS, ABSTRACTS & PRESENTATIONS

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Askonas, LJ, Turner, PL, Penning, TM. Synthesis and evaluation of affinity labeling analogs based on nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. FASEB 4: A1123, April 1990.

Bush, PJ, Obeidallah, DO, Turner, PL. The pharmacist's changing role in drug prescription techniques for pediatric otitis media. NCPIE, 1991.

Obeidallah, DA, Turner, PL, Iannotti, RJ, O'Brien, RW, Haynie, DL, and Galper, DI. Investigations of children's knowledge and understanding of AIDS. JOSH, March 1993.

Turner, PL, Li, L, Houenou, LJ. The serine protease inhibitor, Protease Nexin I, rescues spinal motoneurons from programmed and axotomy induced cell death. N. Stud. Res. Forum, 35:149, 1994

Turner, PL, Li, L, Proctor, VL, Burek, MJ, Festoff, BW, Houenou, LJ. Serine Protease Inhibitors, PN-I and PN-II prevent motoneuron cell death. Soc. Neurosci. Africa, Capetown, South Africa, April 1997.

Invited Lecture: Turner, PL, Knepper, MA. The kidney's role in hypertension. African-American Youth Initiative, NIH, June 1999.

Invited Lecture: Turner, PL, Knepper, MA. The kidney's role in hypertension. Biomedical Research Training Program for Underrepresented Minorities, NIH, February 2000.

S Masilamani, PL Turner, I Reyes, GF DiBona, MA Knepper. Dysregulation of Na transporters in a rat model of congestive heart failure. FASEB 14:4, A372, March 2000.

L. Milone, P. Turner, M. Gagner. Laparoscopic surgery for pancreatic tumors, an update. Minerva Chir. April 2004, 59(2): 165-73.

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Turner, PL, George, IM, Mastrangelo, MJ, Kavic, S, Park, AE. 3-Dimensional (3-D) modeling of CT scan data for preoperative planning in laparoscopic adrenalectomy, SAGES 2006.

Franco E, Park H, Kavic SM, Turner P, Greenwald B, Park AE, Roth JS. Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy: A safe technique in patients receiving corticosteroids. SAGES 2007.