

# Professor Charles M. Balch: higher sophistication and accuracy of clean data are important for sophisticated clinical trials

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## Editor's Note

On the First China-America Submit Forum on Breast Cancer held in Guangzhou China in June 2016, we were honored to have an interview with Professor Charles M. Balch from MD Anderson Cancer Center in USA (Figure 1).

In the interview, Prof. Balch has shared one of the important progresses highlighted in ASCO meeting this year. *"The ASCO meeting once again continues advances the understanding of immunotherapy that really works, and that works across a large range of cancers. There are 247 abstracts of ASCO is related with immunotherapy. This is a really big field that is moving very fast."*

Moreover, Prof. Balch also encourages the Chinese Cancer Leaders and Surgical Oncology Leaders to be more and more involved in the clinical trials cooperated with international community, with emphasis on the importance of clean data.

*"It is going to be very important in having even higher sophistication and accuracy of clean data, and accounting for the variables in patients that we generally use in sophisticated clinical trials."* Prof. Balch said.

Hope this interview will provoke more thoughts among audiences, and bring inspiration to further researches.

## Expert's introduction

Prof. Balch leads a distinguished career as a surgical oncologist and authority in melanoma and breast cancer. He has authored over 630 publications on topics such as clinical investigations involving the natural history of melanoma, prognostic factors predicting clinical outcomes, standards of surgical treatment, and the conduct and methodology of clinical research and immunology. He is regarded as one of the leading melanoma experts in the world. He is the editor of *Cutaneous Melanoma*, regarded as the authoritative textbook on melanoma, now in its 5th edition. He is the founding Editor-in-Chief of the *Annals of Surgical Oncology* and is Chair of the Melanoma Staging



**Figure 1** Professor Charles M. Balch: higher sophistication and accuracy of clean data are important for sophisticated clinical trials (1).

Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/articles/1273>

Committee of the American Joint Committee on Cancer, which determines the staging criteria for melanomas worldwide. He has held major leadership roles in clinical research in three comprehensive cancer centers (UAB, MD Anderson, and City of Hope). He has been a PI or Co-PI of numerous clinical trials, including 10 phase III trials, most of which were NCI-funded National Phase III trials. He has organized or participated in randomized surgical trials that have defined the current standards of melanoma surgery (Figure 2).

## Interview questions

- (I) What are the highlights of ASCO meeting this year? What insights have you gained from these highlights?
- (II) What role do you think the Chinese clinical trials can play in the international arena of fighting against breast cancer?
- (III) What are the inner factors that give you such high enthusiasm in scientific writing and publications?
- (IV) In your career, what is the largest achievement that makes you most proud of yourself?



**Figure 2** After the interview, Prof. Balch was photographed with AME Science Editors Melanie He (left) and Helen Seliman (right) for memory.

## Acknowledgements

None.

## Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

## References

1. He CX. Professor Charles M. Balch: higher sophistication and accuracy of clean data are important for sophisticated clinical trials. *Asvide* 2016;3:498. Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/articles/1273>

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