

## Dr. Philippe E. Spiess: right treatments offer patients best chance of cure

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### Expert's introduction

Dr. Philippe Spiess is a genitourinary oncologist at Moffitt Cancer Center and Professor of Urologic Oncology at the University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine. Prior to joining Moffitt, Dr. Spiess completed a three-year SUO-accredited urologic oncology fellowship at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. Dr. Spiess' research interests include novel therapies for advanced renal, bladder and penile cancer.

Dr. Spiess has published over 200 peer reviewed manuscripts and has edited 5 textbooks on urologic oncology. Dr. Spiess currently serves as the vice-chair of the NCCN panel on bladder and penile cancer and sits on several international editorial boards including Urologic Oncology: Seminars and Original Investigations, BMC Urology, British Journal of Medicine and Medical Research, and the International Brazilian Journal of Urology.

Dr. Spiess has delivered major lectures and seminars at national and international oncology meetings and has recently been appointed to serve on the American Urological Association Core Curriculum. He is a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in Canada and a member of the Société Internationale d'Urologie.

### Editor's note

The 2017 Annual Meeting of China Anti-Cancer Association-Genitourinary Cancer Committee & the 7th Shanghai Genitourinary Oncology International Symposium was held in Shanghai from 9–10 December 2017. The two-day symposium welcomed esteemed urology experts who gave thought-provoking and informative keynote speeches and lectures. It brought together a pool of renowned specialists from all around the world, allowing a space for the discussion and exchange of innovative ideas.

We were honored to invite and interview Dr. Philippe E. Spiess from Moffitt Cancer Center, Tampa FL, to share his views on recent developments in kidney cancer treatment,



Figure 1 Dr. Philippe E. Spiess and AME Editor Cora W. Xu.

minimally invasive surgeries for kidney cancer, various technologies, and his own story as a surgeon (Figure 1).

### Interview

**TAU:** *Your presentation informed the audience how to deal with the changes in minimally invasive surgeries for kidney cancer. What do you think is the largest update in these surgeries?*

**Dr. Spiess:** I think we've now developed some great technology, great tools, more specifically minimally invasive robotic surgery. I think now the challenge is to always make sure that we offer patients the appropriate surgical treatment option whether it be robotic, laparoscopic, or open to ensure the patients have the best outcome. I always tell my trainees that you should always do the right thing for the patient and give them the best chance for a cure. So, if that means doing robotic, open, or laparoscopic it's important that you adapt your technique to what is going to be the most beneficial option for your patient, and I think that it's important for young surgeons to be versatile and be able to use all these various technologies so they can adapt and progress and provide excellent patient care.

**TAU:** *You've reviewed recent development in kidney cancer treatment in one of your presentations, would you like to share your views on the future development of kidney cancer treatment?*

**Dr. Spiess:** Kidney cancer treatment has evolved significantly in the last few years which can be contributed to, we now realize that nephron-sparing surgery, partial nephrectomy is a viable option to offer to patients with larger and sometimes more challenging tumors to provide good outcomes. We now know the option will offer patients a better outcome in terms of kidney function, cardiac function and overall survival. So I think that has been a big advance in kidney cancer and management.

The other major area of progress in kidney cancer treatment has been the development of new medications to treat advanced kidney cancer. Many years ago, during my training, only three choices of medications were offered to patients with advanced kidney cancer. More recently physicians have access of ten to fifteen different types of medical therapies, targeted therapies, and immunotherapies. The issue now I think is identifying which patients are most likely going to respond to which forms of therapy. Genomics and the new ability for tumor profiling will help with the matching process. With this being said it is a very exciting time to be a doctor treating kidney cancer and I see additional major discoveries to come in the future years.

**TAU:** *From open surgery to minimally invasive surgery and robotic surgery, is it possible that the young generation of surgeons will become too dependent on surgical tools?*

**Dr. Spiess:** I think that it's important for a young surgeon to adapt and maintain their essential surgical skills. The advancement in surgical technology will make it easier for the surgeons to perform surgery but to rely solely on technology without mastering the essential skills and abilities will eliminate the surgeons ability to adapt. Surgery is not always straightforward; some cases can be more challenging than others so the more versatile flexible and technically able you are the better the outcome. I think it is important to be comfortable with technology but just as important to maintain a high quality of skill.

**TAU:** *What drives you to be a urologist?*

**Dr. Spiess:** I think I love to help people, it started from a young age, like many surgeons and doctors. Every day I love

to do surgery because I'm able to see that makes a difference in people's lives. I think that we are very privileged to do what we do as surgeons and doctors. I always tell young doctors the most enjoyable part of my entire day is when I do surgery. Teaching, education, research are wonderful but surgery is fun for me, and I think it's important that surgeons look at it in that way. I could be doing surgeries for 10 or 12 hours and not feel the hours pass by because it moves along very easily. It's a good sign I guess that it feels like that.

**TAU:** *What has given you the greatest sense of satisfaction in your career?*

**Dr. Spiess:** My greatest sense of satisfaction probably comes from my clinical care practice to see change and positively impact a patient's life with surgery is very rewarding. When the patients are able to live successful and a happy life; or we are able to cure their cancer I find that to be the most satisfying thing. In particular, when you're treating younger patients who have aggressive tumors and you're able to see them over the years cancer free to me that is truly the best part of my job.

**TAU:** *The new book Urinary Tumor System was launched at the meeting. As the editor of this book, would you like to briefly introduce this book to our audiences?*

**Dr. Spiess:** I was very privileged that Dr. Ye invited me to serve as an editor for this book with the AME group. It really is a wonderful book which gathers lot key thought leaders and international speakers; they have given a lot of important clinical information in the management of genital urinary cancers. I feel that it's really a great summary of the current state of the art level of knowledge we have in the management of urologic cancer. I think it's definitely a book that I feel proud and privileged that I served as an editor.

**TAU:** *Thank you.*

For more details, please check out the interview video below (*Figure 2*).

### Acknowledgements

On behalf of the editorial office of *Translational Andrology and Urology (TAU)*, we would like to extend our gratitude to Dr. Spiess for sharing his opinions with us.



**Figure 2** Interview with Dr. Philippe E. Spiess: right treatments offer patients best chance of cure (1).

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### Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

### References

1. Ma L, Liu AY, Xu CW, et al. Interview with Dr. Philippe E. Spiess: right treatments offer patients best chance of cure. *Asvide* 2018;5:121. Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/article/view/23349>

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