

## Prof. John Elefteriades: being alert to everything a patient teaches you

Submitted Jul 01, 2017. Accepted for publication Jul 27, 2017.

doi: 10.21037/jtd.2017.08.30

View this article at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/jtd.2017.08.30>

The 97<sup>th</sup> American Association for Thoracic Surgery (AATS) (AATS Centennial) was successfully held in Hynes Convention Center, Boston, USA from April 29<sup>th</sup> to May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Celebrating the first 100 year of AATS, the AATS this year covered many hot and new themes on cardiac and thoracic fields as well as gathering numerous experts from all around the world to make high-quality and impressive sharing and discussion, the combination of which presented a grand feast to every participant.

During the conference, Prof. John Elefteriades, a well-known expert on thoracic aortic disease from Yale University School of Medicine, also enjoyed a lot from the AATS presentations. Seizing this opportunity, the Editorial Office of *Journal of Thoracic Disease (JTD)* has the great honor to invite Prof. Elefteriades to have an interview with us, sharing with us his update of the latest progress of research, precious opinion and tips about the thoracic aortic aneurysms treatment as well as his advice based on the past experience (*Figure 1*).

In the interview, Prof. Elefteriades firstly updated us two of the important investigations of his work with Celera Diagnostics to identify the genetic mutations: one is RNA signature and the other is the whole exosome sequencing, both of which aiming at identifying the affected individuals before aortic disruption and finding ways to cure patients.

When talking about the current management strategies for thoracic aortic aneurysms, Prof. Elefteriades told that the biggest area that needs better care is to identify the silent aneurysms in general public while another area also needs tremendous progress lies on the medication.

Later in the interview, combining points from his previous published paper, “*A Heart Surgeon’s Top Tips for aortic aneurysm*”, Prof. Elefteriades emphasized the importance of aorta examination for members of a family with sudden death or with a family history of aneurysm disease and for those who engaged in heavy strength training or heavy sport, like American football. Prof. Elefteriades hoped the public to understand that we don’t have any evidence indicating medication is effective and thus early examination is necessary.



**Figure 1** Photo with Prof. Elefteriades.

Being a frequently requested international lecturer, visiting professor and guest surgeon, Prof. Elefteriades also told us that he benefits a lot from these global lectures since it’s important to see how things are done in other countries.

At the end of the interview, when talking about the past and future, Prof. Elefteriades shared with us a story among the three generations when they first discovered the aortic aneurysm in this family 19 years ago. From this story and discovery, Prof. Elefteriades would like to deliver an important message for all surgeons—being alert to everything patients will teach you is very important!

For more details, please click on the following video (*Figure 2*).

### Interview questions

- (I) We know that you’re working with Celera Diagnostics to identify the genetic mutations responsible for thoracic aortic aneurysms. Here would you like to share with us some of your research progress that would be beneficial for the patient treatment?
- (II) What do you think about the current management strategies for thoracic aortic aneurysms in US? What aspect you think should be improved in the future?
- (III) We know that you previously published a paper, “*A Heart Surgeon’s Top Tips for aortic aneurysm*”. Here would you like to tell us what will be the most



**Figure 2** Interview with Prof. John Elefteriades (1).  
Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/articles/1741>

important tips you'll give our patients with aortic aneurysm?

- (IV) As a cardiac surgeon with rich experience for aortic aneurysm, what'll be your suggestion for our young surgeons in this field?
- (V) We know that you're a frequently requested international lecturer, visiting professor and guest surgeon. When looking back to your touring experience around the world, what impress you most? Except sharing your knowledge with others, what do you learn from others when visiting?
- (VI) This year is the 100<sup>th</sup> year of AATS and it encourages surgeons to reflect the past, establish the future and always learning. Then when facing the past, what would you like to say to yourself? And also, what would you say to the future?

### Expert introduction

Prof. John Elefteriades is the William W. L. Glenn Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery and Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Yale University and Yale New-Haven Hospital. He is among the most clinically active academic surgeons in the country.

Prof. Elefteriades graduated magna cum laude with a triple major in Physics, French and Psychology from Yale University. He received his MD degree from the Yale University School of Medicine. He trained at Yale in both general surgery and cardiothoracic surgery. After completing his training, he joined the faculty at the Yale University School of Medicine.

He performs all aspects of adult cardiac and thoracic

surgery. He is a recognized authority in interventions for the failing left ventricle, including coronary artery bypass grafting, left ventricular aneurysmectomy, and artificial heart implantation. Prof. Elefteriades directs the Center of Thoracic Aortic Disease at Yale, one of the nation's largest facilities for treatment of the dilated thoracic aorta. He conducts laboratory research in new techniques of heart transplantation. Among his research projects, he is working with Celera diagnostics to identify the genetic mutations responsible for thoracic aortic aneurysms.

Prof. Elefteriades serves on multiple scientific advisory and editorial boards. He is a past President of the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Cardiology and member of the national Board of Governors of the College. Prof. Elefteriades is also past President of the International College of Angiology. He serves on the editorial board of the *American Journal of Cardiology*, the *Journal of Cardiac Surgery*, *Cardiology*, and the *Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery*. He is a member of the Thoracic Surgery Director's Association and has been named consistently in The Best Doctors in America. He is a frequently requested international lecturer, visiting professor and guest surgeon. He is the author of over 200 scientific publications on a wide range of cardiac and thoracic topics. He was selected as one of the ten best doctors in America by *Men's Health* magazine. He has been featured in many dozens of print, radio, and television presentations. He has been awarded the Walter Bleifeld Memorial Award for Distinguished Contribution in Clinical Research in Cardiology and the John B. Chang Research Achievement Award. In 2005, he was selected to lecture at the Leadership in Biomedicine Series at the Yale University School of Medicine. In 2006, he received the Socrates Award from the Thoracic Residents Association, Thoracic Surgery Directors' Association, and the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, recognizing exceptional achievement in teaching and mentorship of residents.

Prof. Elefteriades was named the William W. L. Glenn Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery in 2006. This endowed chair honors the memory of Prof. Elefteriades' mentor, Prof. Glenn. Prof. Elefteriades is the author of the books *House Officer Guide to ICU Care* (1st and 2nd Editions), *Advanced Treatment Options for the Failing Left Ventricle*, *Diseases of the Aorta*, *Your Heart: The Owner's Guide*, and *Acute Aortic Disease*.

### Acknowledgements

None.

### Footnote

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

### References

1. Gao S. Interview with Prof. John Elefteriades. *Asvide* 2017;4:427. Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/articles/1741>

(Science Editor: Skylar Gao, JTD, [jtd@amepc.org](mailto:jtd@amepc.org))

**Cite this article as:** Gao S. Prof. John Elefteriades: being alert to everything a patient teaches you. *J Thorac Dis* 2017;9(9):E850-E852. doi: 10.21037/jtd.2017.08.30