

Professor Joshua Sonett: to make lung donors more available in the US

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Editor's note

On the “4th International Uniportal VATS Course-Live Surgery and Wetlab” held in Berlin from March 2 to March 4, 2017, we had honor to interview Professor Joshua Sonett from NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center (*Figure 1*).

In the interview, Professor Sonett majorly shared his views on lung transplantation. When asked his goal in medical field, Professor Sonett said, “In the lung transplantation field, my goal would be to make the donors more available in the US, so we no longer have 20–30% of the recipients died and wasted. This can be a matter of public policy and a matter of medical progress.” Professor Sonett also shared his outlook to the future which he believed would progress with *ex vivo* and stem cells to yield a better treatment for lung cancer patients.

More details, please enjoy the interview video (*Figure 2*).

Interview questions

- (I) As this course's theme is about uniportal VATS. In your daily practice, would you prefer to perform multi-portal VATS or uniportal VATS?
- (II) You have done some researches in lung transplantation. Is there any difference in survival between the extended lung recipients and regular lung recipients? Are there any data or researches support it?
- (III) Do you have any good techniques for the lung donor assessment?
- (IV) No matter lung transplantation or ECMO, they are very difficult techniques. Why do you like challenging such difficulties in the medical field?
- (V) What's your goal in the medical field?

Expert introduction

Joshua R. Sonett, MD, FACS, is the Edward C. and Anne



Figure 1 The photo of Prof. Sonett and Science Editor Melanie at the base of Wetlab during the 4th International Uniportal VATS Course in Berlin.



Figure 2 Professor Joshua Sonett: to make lung donors more available in the US (1).

Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/articles/1742>

K. Weiskopf Professor of Surgical Oncology (in Surgery) at CUMC, Chief of General Thoracic Surgery and Director, The Price Family Center for Comprehensive Chest Care, Lung and Esophageal Center. He is instrumental in making the Thoracic Surgery section at Columbia University Medical Center one of the best in the U.S. and he is one of the youngest professors of surgery at a major academic institution in the United States. Dr. Sonett is best known

for his work on the multidisciplinary treatment of lung and esophageal malignancies. Leading work in minimally invasive treatment of lung and esophageal cancer, Dr. Sonett and his team at Columbia are innovators in the development and teaching techniques of Video Assisted Thoracic Surgery (VATS) and Minimally Invasive Esophageal (MIE) surgery, allowing surgeons to incorporate these techniques into their daily practices. Dr. Sonett and his team make up one of the few programs in the country to employ a combination of maximal chemo and radiation and surgical therapies in the treatment of locally advanced lung malignancies. He is also a leader in multi-modality therapies for lung and esophageal cancers, and a pioneer in endo-bronchial palliation of benign and malignant airway stenosis. In the clinical area of lung transplantation, Dr. Sonett is best known for developing an extended-donor lung transplant criteria protocol. Extended donor criteria (EDC) applies to the use of organs that don't meet the usual criteria for transplantation due to various health problems, but are still healthy enough for a successful transplant (Liver MD 2006). Dr. Sonett and his team have been aggressively trying to alleviate the donor shortage by evaluating lungs that may be rejected from other centers (CS News 2005). Between 2001 and 2003, 53 percent of the lungs transplanted at NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia were extended donor criteria lungs, with no difference in survival between EDC lung recipients and regular lung recipients. The Columbia programs has a 95% survival rate after one year and 83% after three years, which far surpasses the national average of 79% and 62% respectively (CS Lung News 2006). Dr. Sonett has been an invited speaker and principal and co-investigator of numerous clinical trials, author of numerous publications in renown journals such as the *Journal of The American College*

of Cardiology, Annals of Thoracic Surgery, and the Journal of Heart and Lung Transplant, among many others. Dr. Sonett received his MD from Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University Medical School, and completed his surgical residency at the University of Massachusetts, and Thoracic Fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Professional Memberships include the New York Thoracic Society, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons, Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and member of the American Association for Thoracic Surgeons. Dr. Sonett has received numerous award and honors including annual awards to America's Top Doctors, Castle Connolly America's Top Doctors for Cancer, New York Magazine's Best Doctors, the Barbara Neibauer Celebration of Life Award, Foundation for Thymic Cancer and the Humanitarian Award, Chesed of New Square.

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Footnote

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

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