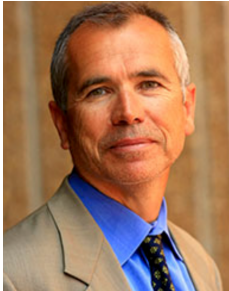




Colloquium in Neuro-Epidemiology

“Novel risk factors and interventions for Parkinson’s Disease and Multiple Sclerosis”



Prof. Alberto Ascherio, MD, PhD

Channing Division of Network Medicine, Department of Medicine, Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA

Location: Seminar Room, 1st Floor, Center for Brain Research, Spitalgasse 4. 1090 Vienna,

Time: Thursday, May 3, 2018, 16:30 pm, **Host:** Eva Schernhammer

Prof. Alberto Ascherio, MD, PhD

An Italian native, Alberto Ascherio trained in internal medicine in Italy (University of Milan), and from 1980 to 1988 he practiced medicine and public health in Latin America and Africa. He came to the United States in 1988 and obtained a doctoral degree in epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health in 1992 (PhD).

Dr. Ascherio's research is now primarily devoted to finding the causes of multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Since 1997 he has directed the investigation of neurodegenerative diseases in several large cohorts comprising over 400,000 men and women who have provided detailed information on their dietary habits and lifestyle in addition to blood or cheek cell samples for genetic and other laboratory analyses. Most recently, he has been directing large prospective sero-epidemiological studies based on the Department of Defense Serum Repository and the Finnish Maternal Cohort to identify prediagnostic markers of infection and nutritional status in relation to risk of multiple sclerosis.

Dr. Ascherio is an internationally recognized expert in the epidemiology of neurodegenerative diseases and the recipient of numerous grants from the National Institutes of Health and private foundations. Among the most significant research findings of his work are: 1) Multiple sclerosis – the identification of the Epstein-Barr virus as an etiological factor, and the prospective findings that high levels of vitamin D may reduce risk, whereas cigarette smoking may increase risk; 2) Parkinson's disease – increased risk associated with exposure to pesticides, possible protective effects of caffeine, physical activity, and high levels of urate; and 3) Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis – increased risk associated with military service and cigarette smoking, and possible protective effects of dietary antioxidants and n-3 fatty acids.

In his presentation, Dr. Ascherio will illustrate how epidemiological evidence has provided the rationale for an ongoing trial of urate elevation in Parkinson's disease, and for the use of vitamin D supplements in the prevention and treatment of MS.

Recent Publications:

Pre-diagnostic plasma urate and the risk of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. O'Reilly ÉJ, Bjernevik K, Schwarzschild MA, McCullough ML, Kolonel LN, Le Marchand L, Manson JE, Ascherio A. *Amyotroph Lateral Scler Frontotemporal Degener.* 2018 May;19(3-4):194-200.

25-Hydroxyvitamin D deficiency and risk of MS among women in the Finnish Maternity Cohort. Munger KL, Hongell K, Aivo J, Soilu-Hänninen M, Surcel HM, Ascherio A. *Neurology.* 2017 Oct 10;89(15):1578-1583.

Sodium intake and multiple sclerosis activity and progression in BENEFIT. Fitzgerald KC, Munger KL, Hartung HP, Freedman MS, Montalbán X, Edan G, Wicklein EM, Radue EW, Kappos L, Pohl C, Ascherio A; BENEFIT Study Group. *Ann Neurol.* 2017 Jul;82(1):20-29.

Neonatal vitamin D status and risk of multiple sclerosis: A population-based case-control study. Nielsen NM, Munger KL, Koch-Henriksen N, Hougaard DM, Magyari M, Jørgensen KT, Lundqvist M, Simonsen J, Jess T, Cohen A, Stenager E, Ascherio A. *Neurology.* 2017 Jan 3;88(1):44-51.