

John E. Wennberg, M.D., M.P.H.

John E. Wennberg, M.D., M.P.H., is the Director of the Center for the Evaluative Clinical Sciences at the Dartmouth Medical School. He has been a Professor in the Department of Community and Family Medicine since 1980 and in the Department of Medicine since 1989, and currently holds the Peggy Y. Thomson Chair for the Evaluative Clinical Sciences.

Dr. Wennberg is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Science and the Johns Hopkins University Society of Scholars. He has received several awards, including the Association for Health Services Research's Distinguished Investigator Award, the Baxter Foundation's Health Services Research Prize and the Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Foundation Award in Clinical Medicine.

He is a graduate of Stanford University and the McGill Medical School. His post-graduate training was in internal medicine and nephrology at Johns Hopkins, but he became interested in the application of epidemiological principles to the health care system while pursuing his Master's degree in Public Health at Johns Hopkins.

With colleague Alan Gittelsohn, he developed a strategy for studying the population-based rates of health resource allocation and utilization (small area analysis), which revealed large variations in the rates among local and regional health care markets, much of which appeared to relate to the distribution of supply of resources and to differences in local medical opinion. Together with colleagues in Maine and Boston, Dr. Wennberg undertook a series of studies designed to reduce scientific uncertainty, primarily in the area of prostate disease (where surgical procedures had been shown to vary by a factor of three or more among neighboring regions). Efforts to clarify the outcomes and the theoretical basis for undertaking prostate surgery led, in turn, to clarification of the importance of patient preference in the rational choice of treatment and to experiments to involve the patient as an active participant in the choice of treatment. Recent research includes a focus on the question of how many physicians are needed.

Wennberg and colleague Al Mulley are co-founders of the Foundation for Informed Medical Decision Making in Hanover, N. H. The Foundation is a non-profit corporation providing objective scientific information to patients about their treatment choices using interactive media.

Dr. Wennberg is the principal investigator and series editor of The Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care, which examines the patterns of medical resource intensity and utilization in the United States. The Atlas project has also reported on patterns of end-of-life care, inequities in the Medicare reimbursement system and the underuse of preventive care.

Elliott S. Fisher, M.D., M.P.H.

Elliott S. Fisher is Professor of Medicine and Community and Family Medicine, and Director, Health Policy Research at the Center for the Evaluative Clinical Sciences, Dartmouth Medical School in Hanover, N.H. He is also a Senior Associate of the VA Outcomes Group at the VA Medical Center in White River Junction, Vermont.

He is a general internist whose research focuses on exploring both the causes and the implications for health and health policy of regional variations in Medicare spending and practice. He has broad expertise in the use of Medicare databases and survey research methods for health system evaluation.

Some of his more recent publications include "Variations in the Longitudinal Efficiency of Academic Medical Centers," Health Affairs, web exclusives, Oct 7, 2004; and "The implications of regional variations in Medicare spending," Parts 1 and 2; Annals of Internal Medicine 2003;134(4) 273-87; 288-98.