

Richard G. Fessler, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor

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Dr. Richard G. Fessler serves as Professor of Neurosurgery at the Rush University Medical Center. Prior to assuming this position he was Professor and Vice Chair of Neurosurgery at the Feinberg School of Medicine of Northwestern University, and the John Harper Seeley Professor and Chief of Neurosurgery at the University of Chicago Hospitals and Clinics. He previously founded and directed the Institute for Spine Care at the Chicago Institute of Neurosurgery and Neuroresearch (CINN) after serving as Director of Clinical Services and Education at the University of Florida Brain Institute. Additionally, at the University of Florida, he held the Dunspaugh-Dalton Chair of Brain and Spinal Surgery and served as Professor in the Department of Neurological Surgery.

Dr. Fessler completed his Medical Doctorate with honors, and Surgical and Neurosurgical residencies at the University of Chicago. In addition to surgical training, Dr. Fessler completed a Doctorate of Philosophy in Pharmacology and Physiology, and a Masters of Science in Psychology. His undergraduate degree was from Lawrence University, Appleton, WI, also in Psychology, where he also earned a certificate of education. Continuing education after earning doctoral degrees, Dr. Fessler held research Fellowships at the University of Chicago Medical Center in Neurological Surgery and Psychiatry. The Chicago Surgical Society honored Dr. Fessler with the Excellence in Surgical Research award.

Dr. Fessler is internationally known for his contributions to endoscopic and microendoscopic surgical developments. He has been instrumental in developing many of the current minimally invasive surgical techniques, including “minimally invasive decompression of lumbar stenosis”, “minimally invasive microendoscopic posterior cervical discectomy”, “minimally invasive decompression of cervical stenosis”, “unilateral transforaminal lumbar interbody fusion”, “minimally invasive correction of adult spinal deformity”, and has contributed to the development of many more. The Kambin Foundation awarded Dr. Fessler their annual research award for his research in the field of minimal invasive spinal surgery. He was also asked to deliver the inaugural “Rhoton lecture” of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons on these revolutionary surgical techniques.

Dr. Fessler is also well known for his pioneering research into human embryonic spinal cord transplantation for the treatment of spinal cord injury. He was co-principal investigator on the first human transplant study to evaluate the safety and efficacy of human embryonic spinal cord transplantation for the treatment of syringomyelia, and is the only physician in the United States to have performed these procedures. More recently, Dr. Fessler was the principle investigator of the Geron and Asterias sponsored studies evaluating the safety of transplantation of the stem cell GRNOPC-1/ASTOPC-1 into humans suffering acute spinal cord injury.

Routinely listed in “Best Doctors of America”, Dr. Fessler is also listed in the Consumer Research Council of America “Guide to America’s Top Surgeons”, and “Who’s Who” and has been listed among the top 100 scientists of the United States and top 1000 intellectuals of 2014. Dr. Fessler is a member of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons, American

Association of Neurological Surgeons, Neurosurgical Society of America, Joint Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves, American College of Surgeons, Society of Neurological Surgeons, the Society of Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery, the International Society of Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery, and La Sociedad Interamericana de Cirugia Espinal Minimamente Invasiva. He has held leadership positions for several of these professional organizations, and has been a course director or faculty member for several hundred courses sponsored by these groups. For the Federal Government, Dr. Fessler has served on Advisory Committees for the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services and the National Head Injury Foundation, and was chairman of the Congressman Bob Dold's health care policy committee and was a member of Senator Mark Kirk's health care policy committee. Previously, Dr. Fessler served on several advisory councils for the state of Florida.

A prolific author, Dr. Fessler has written 27 books and contributed over 200 book chapters to medical texts. He has published over 200 articles in peer-reviewed journals and presented hundreds of papers at peer-reviewed symposia nationally and internationally. Dr. Fessler lends his expertise to multiple Editorial Boards, including Neurosurgery, Journal of Spinal Disorders, Spine Surgery, and Neuro-Orthopaedics, and he is an editorial reviewer for several other professional journals. He is frequently invited for speaking engagements and visiting professorships worldwide.

In addition to all of the above accomplishments, Dr. Fessler served as a Medical Specialist and Flight Surgeon for NASA/Space Shuttle.