

cost, high-care areas tend to fare worse than those where more conservative care is the norm.

Another focus for Wennberg has been involving patients in treatment decisions. In 1989, with Dr. Albert Mulley, a Harvard faculty member and a DC '70, he created the Foundation for Informed Medical Decision Making. (For more on patient decision-making, see page 38.)

Dictum: Wennberg's dictum that "more care is not always better care" is one that Weinstein, the new director, clearly embraces. Weinstein left an endowed professorship at the University of Iowa to come join Wennberg's team in 1996. Since then, Weinstein has founded the DHMC Spine Center, as well as the first-in-the-nation Center for Shared Decision Making, both national models for informed patient choice. He is the principal investigator for the \$21-million Spine Patient Outcomes Research Trial—the first large, randomized trial of the efficacy of various back surgeries—and he is also editor-in-chief of the journal *Spine*.

Reform: "More than anyone, he understands how our research can be applied in the real world to improve patient care, reform our health-care system, and produce a new kind of health-care leader," Wennberg said of Weinstein in an announcement of the changes. And Weinstein observed that "we all stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, and I am proud and honored to stand on the shoulders of Jack Wennberg."

JENNIFER DURGIN

CLINICAL OBSERVATION

In this section, we highlight the human side of clinical academic medicine, putting a few questions to a physician at DMS-DHMC.

Armin Helisch, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Medicine (Cardiology)

Helisch cares for patients with cardiac problems and performs echocardiography. He also does research in angiogenesis, the development of new blood vessels; his hypothesis is that collateral arteries develop from existing vessels so small they're nearly invisible.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Bonn, Germany, and went to medical school at Rheinische-Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität in Bonn.

What made you decide to become a physician?

It sounds cheesy, but I wanted to help people.

How did you end up in the United States?

I came to the U.S. in 1988 as a medical student to do some rotations at Harvard hospitals. I loved teaching rounds. In Germany, most teaching happens in lecture halls. In 1992—after a two-year residency in Germany and a year as a physician on a German Navy vessel—I returned to the U.S. for a residency at the Harvard-affiliated Deaconess Hospital and a cardiology fellowship at Albert Einstein in New York. I then went back to Germany and was a research associate at the Max Planck Institute in Bad Nauheim, and I came to Dartmouth in 2003.



How did you end up at Dartmouth?

In 1994, I interviewed with Dr. Michael Simons, now chief of cardiology at DHMC, for a fellowship at Harvard's Beth Israel Hospital. I didn't get it but later visited his lab for training in *in vivo* angiogenesis models. We discovered we were both tango lovers, so after that we'd talk about tango when

we saw each other at meetings. He later offered me a position at Dartmouth because of our shared research interests.



How did you get interested in research?

The angel of research kissed me one day during my residency. Suddenly I wanted to understand what was happening at the cellular level in vessels affected by coronary artery disease.

How did you get interested in tango?

I was walking through Central Park in New York one day and heard beautiful, melancholic, passionate music. I came upon a man playing a bandoneón, which looks like a little accordion, and couples dancing Argentine tango. I realized that tango was very close to my soul and organized classes at Albert Einstein. Now I'm a faculty advisor of the Dartmouth Argentine Tango Society, which I helped some students found in 2005. It offers free classes and is open to anyone.

What are your favorite nonwork activities besides tango?

I enjoy photography; opera; hanging out with friends; eating good food and drinking good wines; cooking; listening to music—classical, world, and jazz; watching movies that I find truly artistic, like *Pan's Labyrinth*; bicycling to work; seeing the fog rise over Lake Mascoma; and hearing the frogs outside my bedroom window.

What do family and friends give you a hard time about?

My still being single (but some of them seem envious), my tendency to procrastinate with regard to less pleasant things (such as taxes and grants), and my German accent.

What bores you?

Talking about baseball or American football.

What do you admire most in other people?

When intelligence, ability, or professionalism is combined with a passion for what one does in life (work or nonwork), as well as with empathy, gentleness, patience, and some humility. I don't think there ever is any justification for arrogance, however accomplished one may be.