

Dimitra Skondra, MD, PhD, FASRS

An internationally renowned vitreoretinal surgeon and physician scientist. She is also a Professor of Ophthalmology & Visual Science and the Director of J. Terry Ernest Ocular Imaging Center at the University of Chicago. She is also the founder and leader of UChicago Retinal Microbiome and UChicago Retina Big Data Team.

She completed her ophthalmology residency at Weill Cornell Medical College/New York Presbyterian Hospital and her PhD/postdoctoral fellowship and vitreoretinal surgery fellowship at the Harvard Medical School, Mass Eye and Ear Infirmary.

As an expert in vitreoretinal diseases, Dr. Skondra provides comprehensive care for diabetic eye disease, age-related macular degeneration (AMD), macular hole, epiretinal membrane, retinal vein occlusions, retinal detachment, eye trauma, proliferative vitreoretinopathy and intraocular infections. With her advanced training, she has expertise in complex diabetic tractional and recurrent rhegmatogenous retinal detachments.

In addition to her commitment to her clinical practice, she is an internationally renowned researcher who is actively investigating new treatments and techniques designed to improve care for her patients. Along with a team of dedicated scientists, she is focused on connecting the role of diet and gut microbiome in retinal disorders, especially with AMD and ROP, to identify new therapies for these complicated eye diseases.

As an international leader and pioneer in retinal research using specialized gnotobiotic animal models, Dr. Skondra is developing a leading-edge, multidisciplinary and multi-omics approach to define the gut-retina axis interactions. Using Big-Data and computational bioinformatics, her team is also studying how repurposing existing medications for AMD and other retinal and ocular disorders can be a viable treatment option. Her research has shown that metformin, a common anti-diabetic medication, is protective for AMD and could represent a new therapeutic strategy for AMD.

At present, she is an elected member of the prestigious Macula Society, Retina Society and Club Jules Gonin that includes select leaders from the international retinal field. She has received numerous honors and awards including the Macula Society Research Award, Thome AMD Foundation Award, ARVO Early Career Clinician Scientist, Retina Society Margherio Award, Club Jules Gonin Retina Research Foundation travel award, twice received the ISPB AMD award, a three-time awardee of the UChicago Innovation award. She has given multiple invited lectures nationally and internationally for her research. She is an invited founding member of the International Ocular Circulation Society and the Microbiome Medicine Program, on editorial board of IOVS and Nature's Scientific Reports. Furthermore, she has served as the co-chair for the retinal section of ARVO Program Committee and as a member of the Retina Society's Socioeconomic Committee.