

15 spine surgeons to know

By: **Sophie Eydis** 20 hours ago

Spine surgery is evolving rapidly through advances in minimally invasive techniques, motion-preserving procedures, robotic technology and complex spinal reconstruction. Across the country, spine surgeons are leading those advances by improving patient outcomes, advancing clinical research and training the next generation of spine specialists.

The following 15 spine surgeons are helping shape the future of spine care through their clinical expertise, scientific contributions and leadership in the field.

Editor's note: This is not a comprehensive or ranked list. Becker's does not endorse any individual featured. To nominate a physician for a future list, please contact Sophie Eydis at seydis@beckershealthcare.com.

1. **Stéphane Owusu-Sarpong, MD. Hospital for Special Surgery (New York City):** Dr. Owusu-Sarpong is an orthopedic spine surgeon at Hospital for Special Surgery specializing in minimally invasive and robotic-assisted spine surgery, complex spinal deformity correction and motion-preserving techniques. He treats pediatric and adult patients with scoliosis, kyphosis, degenerative spine disease and traumatic spinal conditions.

A nationally recognized spine researcher, Dr. Owusu-Sarpong has authored more than 70 peer-reviewed publications and focuses on patient-reported outcomes, adult spinal deformity and motion preservation. He is an active member of the North American Spine Society, AO Spine North America and the International Society for the Advancement of Spine Surgery.

2. **Julio Jauregui, MD. University of Maryland Medical Center (Baltimore):** Dr. Jauregui is a pediatric and adult orthopedic spine surgeon at the University of Maryland Medical Center and the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center. He specializes in complex spinal deformity, revision spine surgery, spinal trauma and primary and metastatic spine tumors, with expertise in treating scoliosis, kyphosis and other major spinal deformities.

Dr. Jauregui has authored more than 160 peer-reviewed publications and 16 book chapters. His research focuses on adult and pediatric scoliosis and spinal trauma, and he is an active member of the Scoliosis Research Society, AO Spine and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

3. **Daniel Riew, MD. NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine (New York City):** Dr. Riew is an internationally recognized orthopedic spine surgeon whose practice is devoted exclusively to cervical spine disorders. He specializes in minimally invasive cervical spine surgery, complex revision procedures and cervical deformity correction, and is widely regarded as one of the world's foremost experts in cervical spine care.

A global leader in spine surgery, Dr. Riew is a past president of the Cervical Spine Research Society and former chair of the AO Spine International Board. He has authored more than 300 peer-reviewed publications and 75 book chapters, delivered more than 120 named lectures in 22 countries and trained spine surgeons from around the world, helping shape modern cervical spine surgery.

4. **Alisa Alayan, MD. LA Bone and Joint Institute (Los Angeles):** Dr. Alayan is an orthopedic spine surgeon specializing in minimally invasive spine surgery and the treatment of degenerative spine conditions, spinal disorders and complex spinal pathology. After completing her orthopedic surgery residency at Los Angeles-based Cedars-Sinai, she pursued two spine fellowships, including advanced training in minimally invasive spine surgery.

An active contributor to spine research, Dr. Alayan has published peer-reviewed studies and presented her work at national and international meetings. She is a member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the North American Spine Society and serves on the medical staff of the Cedars-Sinai Spine Center of Excellence.

5. **Laviel Fernandez, MD. OrthoAtlanta:** Dr. Fernandez is an orthopedic spine surgeon specializing in spinal deformity, degenerative spine disease, spine trauma, spine tumors and adult and pediatric scoliosis. He has advanced expertise in minimally invasive spine surgery and motion-preserving techniques, offering a full spectrum of cervical and lumbar reconstructive procedures.

A rising leader in spine surgery, his clinical interests focus on spinal reconstruction, minimally invasive surgical innovation and improving outcomes for patients with complex spinal disorders.

6. **Justin Miller, MD. Indiana Spine Group (Carmel, Ind.):** Dr. Miller is an orthopedic spine surgeon specializing in degenerative spine disease, spinal deformity, spinal trauma, revision spine surgery and pediatric and adult scoliosis. He also has expertise in minimally invasive spine surgery and advanced spinal navigation techniques for complex spinal disorders.

A leader in clinical spine research, Dr. Miller serves as a co-investigator on multiple studies examining degenerative disc disease, lumbar stenosis, infection prevention and osteoporosis. His work focuses on advancing evidence-based treatments that improve outcomes for patients with complex spine conditions.

7. **P. Ronjon Paul, MD. Endeavor Health (Evanston, Ill.):** Dr. Paul is a nationally recognized orthopedic spine surgeon specializing in minimally invasive cervical and lumbar spine surgery, complex spinal reconstruction and motion-preserving techniques. He is known for emphasizing evidence-based, nonoperative care whenever appropriate while delivering advanced surgical solutions for patients with complex spine disorders.

A leader in spine innovation, Dr. Paul has built a reputation for combining minimally invasive techniques with a patient-centered approach to improve recovery and long-term outcomes. Through his affiliation with Endeavor Health Orthopaedic & Spine Institute, he is expanding access to advanced spine care across the Chicago region while maintaining a focus on personalized treatment.

8. **Ehsan Saadat, MD. Cedars-Sinai (Los Angeles):** Dr. Saadat is an orthopedic spine surgeon and assistant professor of orthopedic surgery at Cedars-Sinai. He specializes in cervical and lumbar disc replacement, motion-preserving spine surgery, minimally invasive decompression and fusion procedures, and complex revision spine surgery. He also serves as co-director of spine surgery at the Precision Ambulatory Surgery Center in Beverly Hills, Calif.

A nationally recognized spine researcher, Dr. Saadat leads multiple clinical studies at Cedars-Sinai and has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications, book chapters and contributions to leading spine surgery textbooks. He regularly presents his research at national and international conferences while advancing innovations in outpatient spine surgery.

9. **Nima Salari, MD. Desert Institute for Spine Care (Phoenix):** Dr. Salari is an orthopedic spine surgeon specializing in ultra-minimally invasive endoscopic spine surgery, cervical artificial disc replacement and motion-preserving techniques. He is known for emphasizing conservative treatment and less invasive surgical options before considering spinal fusion.

A leader in minimally invasive spine innovation, Dr. Salari has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications and book chapters, helped develop spine surgical instruments and implants, and teaches national and international courses on laser-assisted endoscopic and image-guided spine surgery. He is a member of the North American Spine Society and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

10. **Grace Xiong, MD. Stanford (Calif.) University School of Medicine:** Dr. Xiong is an assistant professor of orthopedic surgery and patient safety director for the department of orthopedic surgery at Stanford Health Care. A spine surgeon, she specializes in minimally invasive, motion-preserving and complex reconstructive spine surgery, treating degenerative cervical and lumbar conditions, spinal deformities and revision cases.

Dr. Xiong serves as associate editor of *Spine* and *Spine Open* and chairs the Resident and Fellow Education Committee for the North American Spine Society. She has authored more than 50 peer-reviewed publications, with research focused on spinal cord injury, surgical outcomes and improving access to high-quality spine care.

11. **Alekos Theologis, MD. UCSF Health (San Francisco):** Dr. Theologis is an orthopedic spine surgeon specializing in adult and pediatric spinal disorders, including spinal deformity, cervical myelopathy, spinal tumors, lumbar stenosis, spondylolisthesis and complex revision spine surgery. He is recognized for treating complex spinal conditions with advanced reconstructive techniques.

A nationally recognized spine researcher, Dr. Theologis focuses on surgical risk assessment, revision spine surgery, postoperative complications and health policy. He has received multiple national research awards and remains active in global spine care and surgical education, including training spine surgeons in Ghana.

12. **Jihoon Choi, MD. Baylor Scott & White Health (Dallas):** Dr. Choi is an orthopedic spine surgeon specializing in minimally invasive and endoscopic spine surgery, motion-preserving procedures and advanced technologies including computer-assisted navigation, augmented reality and robotic-assisted spine surgery. He provides comprehensive spine care for adolescent and adult patients, emphasizing conservative treatment before surgery whenever possible.

A leader in advanced spine techniques, Dr. Choi is committed to expanding the use of technology to improve surgical precision and patient outcomes. He is an active member of the North American Spine Society and the Korean American Spine Society.

13. **Jessica Aidlen, MD. Newton-Wellesley Hospital (Newton, Mass.):** Dr. Aidlen is chief of the spine surgery division and medical director of the spine center at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. An orthopedic spine surgeon, she specializes in minimally invasive spine surgery and adult reconstructive spine procedures, with a focus on improving recovery and restoring function through personalized, multidisciplinary care.

A respected leader in spine surgery, Dr. Aidlen has led multiple initiatives to improve access to spine care and has authored several peer-reviewed publications. She is also a dedicated educator and mentor, serving as a strong advocate for developing the next generation of spine surgeons, particularly women in orthopedics.

14. **Mark Mikhael, MD. Illinois Bone & Joint Institute (Des Plaines, Ill.):** Dr. Mikhael is an orthopedic spine surgeon specializing in complex cervical spine surgery, minimally invasive spine procedures, nerve decompression and spinal reconstruction. He treats a broad range of spinal disorders, including disc herniations, spinal stenosis, fractures, instability and degenerative spine disease, while emphasizing conservative care whenever appropriate.

A leader in spine innovation, Dr. Mikhael serves on the radiology and evidence-based guidelines committees of the North American Spine Society and is an active researcher focused on advancing spine care. He has authored multiple scientific publications and contributed to the development of new spine technologies, including cervical fixation and bone growth stimulation devices.

15. **Christopher Sliva, MD. OrthoIllinois (Rockford):** Dr. Sliva is an orthopedic spine surgeon with more than 20 years of experience specializing in minimally invasive cervical and lumbar spine surgery. His practice focuses on advanced navigation-guided procedures, cervical disc replacement, spinal deformity, revision spine surgery and outpatient spine care using the latest imaging and implant technologies.

A leader in minimally invasive spine surgery, Dr. Sliva has performed thousands of cervical and lumbar procedures and has helped expand the use of ambulatory spine surgery in northern Illinois. He is recognized for integrating advanced navigation systems and muscle-sparing techniques to improve surgical precision, accelerate recovery and enhance patient outcomes.