

Nikos Scarmeas

Nikos Scarmeas was born and raised in Athens, Greece. After obtaining an M.D. degree from the University of Athens, Scarmeas moved to the U.S. for neurology residency training and then a clinical fellowship in aging and dementia at Columbia University Medical Center. He also completed a Masters degree in biostatistics – epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. Since 2002, Scarmeas has held an assistant professor of neurology position at Columbia University Medical Center. He shares his time between clinical work and research.

His clinical work includes seeing patients with dementia and cognitive dysfunction. Scarmeas' research interests have so far included the following: investigating how factors that can affect cognitive reserve (i.e. higher IQ, education, more demanding occupational attainments or more engagement in cognitive-social-physical leisure activities) can help people cope better with the damage caused to their brains by Alzheimer's Disease and therefore improve both their Alzheimer's risk and rates of progression (such as cognitive and functional decline and institutionalization).

More recently, he has developed a special interest in the contribution of diet in AD risk, and is investigating the effect of composite dietary patterns (such as the Mediterranean Diet) in AD risk. His involvement in this topic was a natural next step of his interest in environmental factors (such as lifestyle) affecting risk for Alzheimer's Disease.