



Fergus J. Couch, Ph.D.

Professor of Laboratory Medicine/Pathology



Fergus J. Couch, Ph.D., is chair of the Division of Experimental Pathology and a professor of laboratory medicine and pathology at Mayo Clinic in Rochester. He has joint appointments in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and the Department of Health Sciences Research. In 2014 he was named the Mayo Clinic Investigator of the Year, and in 2015 he was named the Zbigniew and Anna M. Scheller Professor of Medical Research in Honor of Dr. Thomas J. McDonald in recognition of his achievements in research.

Dr. Couch obtained his Bachelor of Science degree and Ph.D. in biochemistry at University College Cork in Ireland. He completed a fellowship in cancer genetics at the University of Michigan, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and furthered his training as a postdoctoral fellow and senior research investigator at the University of Pennsylvania. He began his career at Mayo Clinic in 1997.

Dr. Couch studies breast and pancreatic cancer, with a particular interest in understanding how these cancers are inherited within families. He was involved in the discovery of the *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genes that cause breast, ovarian, and pancreatic cancer and continues to investigate the genetic causes of these diseases. In ongoing work, he is developing methods that predict individual risk of developing breast cancer and improve selection of treatment for individuals with breast and pancreatic cancer.

Dr. Couch is regarded as a world leader in this area of research. He founded and serves as a principal investigator of five large international research groups (TNBCC, CIMBA, ENIGMA, SIMPLEXO, and PROMPT) that are combining efforts and resources to better understand *BRCA1* and *BRCA2*-associated breast cancer, inherited breast and pancreatic cancer, and triple negative breast cancer, a particularly aggressive form of this disease. He is also a long-term contributor to the specialized programs of research excellence (SPOREs) in breast and pancreatic cancer at Mayo Clinic.

His research is supported by the Breast Cancer Research Foundation and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). He has editorial responsibilities for several prominent peer-reviewed journals, and his research findings have been published in many of the top scientific journals including *Nature*; *Science*, *Nature Genetics*; *New England Journal of Medicine*; *Molecular Cell*; *Journal of Clinical Oncology*; and *Cancer Research*, among others.