

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

DODGE-KHATAMI JOINS UMMC'S CHILDREN'S HEART CENTER

Media contact: Jen Hospodor at (601) 984-1105 or jhospodor@umc.edu.

JACKSON, Miss. – Dr. Ali Dodge-Khatami has joined the University of Mississippi Medical Center as professor of surgery in the division of pediatric and congenital heart surgery.

Dodge-Khatami previously was professor of cardiovascular surgery, chief of Pediatric Cardiac Surgery and head of the Congenital Heart Program at the University of Hamburg School of Medicine in Hamburg, Germany.

His experience and expertise will help expand both the clinical and research aspects of UMMC's Children's Heart Center, which has experienced tremendous growth in the last three years.

"We are thrilled to recruit a senior world class pediatric and congenital heart surgeon to Mississippi," said Dr. Jorge Salazar, chief of congenital heart surgery and co-director of the Children's Heart Center. "His presence will greatly strengthen our program and ensure its long term success."

Dodge-Khatami said he chose to join the Medical Center ultimately because he liked the people he would be working with at the Children's Heart Center.

"I'm at a point in my career where I want to do a job that I love in a place with people who have that same passion and have the same vision," Dodge-Khatami said. "I had that feeling with Dr. Salazar and how he's set up his program here and the great job he's done."

Dodge-Khatami completed premedical studies in the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Neuchatel in Neuchatel, Switzerland, in 1986. He earned a Swiss Federal Diploma of Medicine at the University of Geneva Medical School in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1991 and completed a residency in general surgery at Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève in Geneva from 1991-93. From 1993-96, he did a cardiovascular surgery residency at the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois in Lausanne, Switzerland. He completed a cardiovascular-thoracic surgery fellowship at RUSH-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago, Ill., from 1996-98 and a pediatric cardiovascular-thoracic fellowship at Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, Ill., from 1998-99.

He served as senior registrar at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children, London, U.K. from 1999-2000 before becoming a staff surgeon at the Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam, Netherlands from 2000-03. During that time, he was also a cardiothoracic surgeon committed to congenital cardiac surgery at Wilhelmina Children's Hospital in Utrecht, Netherlands. In 2003, Dodge-Khatami earned a doctorate from the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, based on his research on tracheal reconstruction and healing. He then became a staff pediatric cardiovascular surgeon at University Children's Hospital in Zurich, Switzerland from 2003-08.

The highlight of his career thus far, he says, has been traveling all over the world on humanitarian missions with the International Children's Heart Foundation to build congenital heart surgery programs in developing countries. ICHF sends a team of physicians and nurses several times over the course of

four to five years to train and work alongside a local health-care team to complete heart surgeries and manage postoperative care. He cites it as a humbling experience.

“In the long run, besides saving hundreds, thousands of kids with heart disease, we save even more by teaching colleagues how to continue doing it themselves,” Dodge-Khatami said. “This is the most rewarding, and has made me friends and colleagues for life in corners of the world I wouldn't have otherwise thought of ever visiting.”

He is a member of several professional organizations, including the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, the European Association of Cardio-Thoracic Surgery, the Association of European Paediatric Cardiologists, the World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery and the American Society of Echocardiography.

Dodge-Khatami has served as principal investigator of numerous studies. He is the co-author of more than 100 abstracts and research articles and more than 10 reviews in peer-reviewed publications. He has also co-authored six book chapters.

His plans for research with the Children’s Heart Center include applying results to develop a new operation for babies born with only one ventricle.

“You never stop learning in this job,” he said. “There’s always room for improving and kind of molding things together so that it’s even better.”

He and his wife, Jannika, reside in Jackson.

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About The University of Mississippi Medical Center

The University of Mississippi Medical Center, located in Jackson, is the state’s only academic medical center. UMMC encompasses five health science schools, including medicine, nursing, health-related professions, dentistry and graduate studies, as well as the site where University of Mississippi pharmacy students do their clinical training. The Medical Center’s health-care enterprise includes five hospitals in the University Hospitals and Health System, and University Physicians, the faculty group practice. The Medical Center’s threefold mission is to educate tomorrow’s health-care professionals, conduct innovative research to improve human health, and to provide the highest quality care available to the state’s population. A major goal of the Medical Center is the improvement of the health of Mississippians and the elimination of health disparities. For more information, contact the Division of Public Affairs at 601-984-1100 or visit us on the Web at umc.edu/publicaffairs