



Lorenz Studer, MD

LORENZ P. STUDER, MD, is the founding Director of the Center for Stem Cell Biology and a Member of the Developmental Biology Program at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. As a native of Switzerland, he received his medical and doctorate degree from the University of Bern, where he codeveloped a primary cell-based therapy for Parkinson's disease. He subsequently trained as postdoctoral fellow at the National Institutes of Health, pioneering the therapeutic application of neural stem cell– derived neurons in models of neurodegeneration. In 2000, he moved to New York City, where he started his laboratory at the Sloan Kettering Institute at MSK. His team has led the development of technologies that can turn human pluripotent stem cells — on demand — into more than 40 different nerve cells of the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerves, and gut. Using such technologies, he developed several novel applications in regenerative medicine including a potential treatment for Hirschsprung's disease. He has also been among the first to realize the potential of patient-specific stem cells in modeling human disease and in drug discovery, resulting in promising therapeutic targets for neurodevelopmental and neurodegenerative diseases. For the study of neurodegeneration in a dish, he developed methods to artificially “age” pluripotent-derived cells in modeling late-onset neurodegenerative disorders. Finally, he has led a multidisciplinary consortium to pursue a first-in-human clinical trial of human stem cell– derived dopamine neurons for the treatment of Parkinson's disease. Based on the translational potential of such regenerative therapies, he co-founded BlueRock Therapeutics, a major biotech startup focused on bringing innovative cell-based therapies to the clinic. Dr. Studer's work has been recognized by numerous awards, including a MacArthur Fellowship, the Ogawa-Yamanaka Prize, and, most recently, the Jacob Heskell Gabbay Award in Biotechnology and Medicine.