

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
MEDICAL SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

Erika D. Sears, M.D., M.S., assistant professor of surgery, Department of Surgery, Medical School, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of surgery with tenure, Department of Surgery, Medical School.

Academic Degrees:

M.S.	2011	University of Michigan
M.D.	2006	University of Michigan
B.S.	2002	Northwestern University

Professional Record:

2015-present Assistant Professor of Surgery, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Dr. Sears has been actively involved with the education and mentoring of undergraduates, medical students, residents, and fellows at both Michigan Medicine and the Ann Arbor Veterans Affairs Healthcare System. She teaches medical students, residents, and fellows in her day-to-day clinical practice where she leads didactic sessions, rounds, grand rounds, and conferences. The quality of her clinical teaching is apparent, as clinical residents and fellows consistently give her the highest ratings on evaluations. Dr. Sears mentors research residents and fellows along with her scholarly work, and serves on the Launch Committee of two National Clinician Scholars Program research fellows. Her mentees have demonstrated such accomplishments as presentations at national meetings, and manuscripts published in high impact peer reviewed journals. She is also passionate about providing career mentoring and coaching to mentees in pursuit of their unique passions, with a particular track record for mentoring women in surgery. Learners at all levels enjoy working with Dr. Sears and recognize her as an advocate and trusted ally. She was appointed as the associate program director of the Plastic Surgery Residency Program in 2020.

Research: Dr. Sears' research interests include improving the value and efficiency of surgical care, with a major emphasis on care processes during the pre-surgical period, diagnostic testing practices, and patient out-of-pocket expenses. Prior to joining the faculty, she obtained a Master's degree and advanced training in health services research through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Program. This training provided the strong foundation that she leveraged as a highly productive faculty member. Dr. Sears has published 58 peer reviewed manuscripts, 37 in rank, 17 as first or senior author, in top-tier journals such as the *Journal of Hand Surgery*, *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, *JAMA Surgery*, *JAMA Internal Medicine*, and *JAMA Network Open*. She has also written 15 book chapters related to the clinical practice of hand surgery. Dr. Sears has presented her scholarly work on numerous occasions internally, externally as a visiting lecturer at peer institutions, and at professional society meetings before a national audience. She has delivered 26 extramural presentations. She has also established a strong track record of obtaining federal and foundation-sponsored grant funding to support her research. Dr. Sears has received seven grants on which she was the principal investigator, including a Career Development Award funded by the Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Service, and four grants on which she

was a co-investigator, including two VA Merit Awards with collaborators at Stanford University and the Veterans Affairs in Palo Alto.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Sears ED, Swiatek PR, Hou H, Chung KC: Utilization of Preoperative Electrodiagnostic Studies for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: An Analysis of National Practice Patterns. *J Hand Surg Am* 41(6): 665-672, 2016.

Sears ED, Lu YT, Wood SM, Nasser JS, Hayward RA, Chung KC, Kerr EA: Diagnostic Testing Requested Before Surgical Evaluation for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. *J Hand Surg Am* 42(8): 623-629, 2017.

Sears ED, Meerwijk EL, Schmidt EM, Kerr EA, Chung KC, Kamal RN, Harris AHS: Variation in Nonsurgical Services for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Across a Large Integrated Health Care System. *J Hand Surg Am* 44(2): 85-92, 2019.

Sears ED, Lu YT, Swiatek PR, Chung TT, Kerr EA, Chung KC: Use of Preoperative Mammography During Evaluation for Nononcologic Breast Reduction Surgery. *JAMA Surg* 154(4): 356-358, 2019.

Billig JI, Lan W, Chung KC, Kuo C, Sears ED: The Increasing Financial Burden of Outpatient Elective Surgery for the Privately Insured. *Annals of Surgery*. (In Press)

Service: Dr. Sears serves in numerous capacities, both inside and outside our institution. She has been elected as a member of the Executive Committee on Clinical Affairs (ECCA) at Michigan Medicine. She also serves on several departmental committees, including the Faculty Recruitment Committee and the Junior Faculty Advisory Committee. Within the Plastic Surgery Section, she is a member of numerous committees, including the Program Evaluation Committee, Clinical Competency Committee, and as the associate program director of the Plastic Surgery Residency Program. Dr. Sears has been very active in the two professional societies central to her clinical expertise—the American Society for Surgery of the Hand (ASSH) and the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). She is an active member of numerous committees for these professional organizations, including the ASSH Clinical Research and Grantsmanship Committee, ASPS Clinical Research Subcommittee, and the ASPS Women Plastic Surgeons Steering Committee. She was selected to participate in the 2017 ASSH Young Leaders Program, where she, along with a small group of junior leaders, was tasked to develop a strategy for the Hand Society to evaluate and address member burnout. Out of this work, an ASSH Burnout Taskforce was developed, for which she is a member. Dr. Sears has served as a grant reviewer for the Plastic Surgery Foundation for the past two years and is also a regular peer reviewer for eight scientific peer reviewed journals, including *Journal of Hand Surgery*, *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, *Annals of Surgery*, *JAMA Surgery*, and *JAMA Network Open*.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: “She has an impressive curriculum vitae that checks all the necessary boxes. She has been involved in multiple large funded studies. She has produced a strong record of publications within the field of hand surgery. Her research efforts are impactful and are consistently published in the most influential journals...Compared to her peer group, I believe that her work puts her on an outstanding level.”

Reviewer B: “Dr. Sears has significant funding including Co-Investigator on multiple VA HSR&D awards. She is in the middle of a highly prestigious VA HSR&D career development award...I would

estimate that Dr. Sears' standing is at the highest 5th percentile in her peer group because she has achieved career development and national funding for her research.”

Reviewer C: “In my experience, Dr. Sears would be awarded promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure at my former institution, in [my current institution], and I believe at all similar institutions in the country. She has proven herself a strong addition to your institution, and it is my opinion that she is extremely deserving of the promotion.”

Reviewer D: “Dr. Sears has diverse teaching experiences both regionally and locally...she has presented her research at major national and international symposia...She has received over \$3.5 M in external funding...her biggest contributions to the field are seen over a series of publications...She first investigated the cost (both in dollars and time) of preoperative studies...she then investigated the variation in guidelines of nonsurgical services for patients...”

Reviewer E: “Dr. Sears' scholarly accomplishments far exceed those of surgeons, in quantity and importance...Dr. Sears is recognized as a rising star and future leader in surgical health services research.”

Reviewer F: “A review of her very impressive CV allows me to state unequivocally that her work and research are of extremely high quality with clinical impact...Dr. Sears demonstrates a clear commitment to service, both institutional and national. She is the associate director of the integrated plastic surgery residency and serves on a number of committees within and outside her department.”

Summary of Recommendations:

Dr. Sears is a dedicated clinician, an excellent teacher and a true scholar. Her research focuses on the value and efficiency of surgical care, with an emphasis on care processes during the pre-surgical period. She has made a big impact in this area. I am pleased to recommend Erika D. Sears, M.D., M.S. for promotion to associate professor of surgery, with tenure, Department of Surgery, Medical School.



Marschall S. Runge, M.D., Ph.D.
Executive Vice President of Medical Affairs
Dean, Medical School

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