

Short bio

Jose Maria Polo was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina where he graduated from Buenos Aires University as a Biochemist. In 2002, Jose began his graduate studies at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York under the supervision of Dr. Ari Melnick where he worked on the transcriptional mechanism of the BCL6 repression complex in lymphomagenesis and B-cell maturation. In 2008, he obtained his PhD and moved to Boston to the laboratory of Dr. Konrad Hochedlinger at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute to work on reprogramming of adult cells into induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells. In particular, his work focused on the acquisition of immortality and the existence of epigenetic memory during reprogramming.

In June 2011, established his independent research group at Monash University, where he holds appointments to the departments of Anatomy and Developmental Biology and to the Australian Regenerative Medicine Institute. In 2012, Jose was awarded a NHMRC Career Development Fellowship, in 2014 a Silvia and Charles Viertel Senior Medical Research Fellowship and in 2018 an ARC Future Fellowship to continue his work in the molecular mechanism governing the reprogramming process and the epigenetic mechanism underpinning cell fate.

In October 2021, Jose was recruited to the University of Adelaide as the inaugural Director of the Adelaide Centre for Epigenetics (ACE) and Program leader of the recently established South Australian Immunogenomics Cancer Institute (SAiGENCI). In Adelaide he will continue his work in epigenetics and its application to reprogramming, early embryogenesis and cancer.

His work in epigenetics, reprogramming and cancer has been published in journals such as Nature, Cell, Nature Genetics, Cell Stem Cell and Nature Medicine among others as well as recognised with several awards including the Merit Award from the American Society of Haematology, the inaugural Metcalf Award, Victorian Young Tall Poppy Award, the Monash's Vice-Chancellor award. In 2016, he co-founded Mogrify Ltd to translate reprogramming technologies into therapies, receiving several accolades including the 2019 Scrip Innovation Award.