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His main research interest is the study of muscle dysfunction in elderly and the potential benefits of exercise training. He has published more than 230 scientific manuscripts including 16 edited books and is Editor-in-Chief of The American Journal of PM&R. He is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine (USA), President-elect of ISPRM, and an elected fellow of the American Academy of PM&R and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Dr. Frontera has presented invited lectures in 53 countries and is Past-President of the International Federation of Sports Medicine (FIMS).

He has received the AAP's Distinguished Academician and Outstanding Service Awards, the Best Scientific Research Paper (3 times) presented by the American Academy of PM&R, the Harvard Foundation Award for his contributions to PM&R, the Sydney Licht Lecture Award of the ISPRM, and the Excellence in Rehabilitation of Aging Persons Award of the Gerontological Society of America. He was the first recipient of Kessler's Foundation's Joel DeLisa, MD Award for Excellence in PM&R. He is an honorary member of national societies in Chile, Dominican Republic, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Portugal, and Spain.