

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON SCHOOL of MEDICINE

The Montlake Cut



A Newsletter from the Department of Neurological Surgery
January 2009, Volume I, Number 1



Have you ever wondered what became of that very junior resident the year you were Chief—the promising one you liked so much—who disappeared to a far corner of the world, and never wrote? What about the attending you admired (or the other one who gave you such a hard time)? Do you ever speculate about what they're up to now? Have you occasionally thought about how neurosurgery residents are trained these days, who they are and where they come from? You might want to know who the current faculty members are, and what research is going on in the department?

Our experience as residents and fellows is so long, intense and demanding that, of course, most of us still think of the UW Neurosurgery Department as ours. Some of you might be curious about where the department is headed now because it remains such a large part of what formed all of us. We're hoping to give you some answers to these questions, and to offer a forum for your own ideas and observations in this, our new quarterly newsletter.

We were recently notified that our training program has been granted continued accreditation through 2013, the maximum time allowed of 5 years.

You will be as delighted as we all are, no doubt, to learn that following a few challenging years your old department is back in the vanguard of education and innovation in international neurosurgery. We were recently revisited by the ACGME, and we're happy to say that, aside from a few minor suggestions from the reviewer, initial impressions found the residency program both strong and compliant. We were recently notified that our training program has been granted continued accreditation through 2013, the maximum time allowed of 5 years.

Workweek-hour limitations remain a major preoccupation for the staff and residents here as they are across the country. The regulations, their interpretations, and record keeping require not only transparency and vigilance, but the complete cooperation of everyone involved. Regardless of how we feel as individuals about this externally mandated alteration to our long-established culture (work until you're finished or have fallen over), the restrictions placed on house staff duty hours do now have the force of law and must be confronted straightforwardly. Residency Director Tony Avellino, Chair Rich Ellenbogen, as well as all the faculty and residents have come up with excellent responses to these demands.



John Loeser, MD George Ojemann, MD

In one innovative effort to diminish the residents' burden of caring for chronically ill patients whose primary problems are no longer neurosurgical (although perhaps neurological), a neurohospitalist service was established at Harborview this past summer. The service is being run by two senior neurosurgeons and mid-levels, and aims to not only reassign the less acutely ill patients to neurohospitalists, but to make senior attendings more available to patients and families, as well as for consultations. In our highly complex, busy and technically driven environment, the personal attention HMC patients need and their families deserve has sometimes taken a back seat. Although in play for only a few months, the program will no doubt evolve and grow over the coming years; we'll let you know what happens.

Your former teachers John Loeser and George Ojemann have both retired from active clinical practice, but continue their strong academic presence at UW; how could it be otherwise?

Over the past two years or so, several new faculty members have arrived in Seattle.

These younger men and women add new talents and perspectives, and join us from training programs and fellowships all over the country.

John maintains his frontal attack on "The Problem of Pain," to borrow a title from C.S. Lewis, and George is the Director of Research for the department (although his son Jeff, now also a faculty member, occasionally contradicts him at Grand Rounds).

Over the past two years or so, several new faculty members have arrived in Seattle. These younger men and women add new talents and perspectives, and join us from training programs and fellowships all over the country. Even though he grew up in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), founding Chairman Arthur Ward would be shocked at our recently-found diversity.



Virany Hillard, MD



Adam Hebb, MD

Sam Browd came from the University of Utah to Children's Hospital. He graduated with an M.D., Ph.D. from the University of Florida in 2000, and has the pediatric neurosurgeon's expected interests in CSF diversion. He also has investigated and written about functional MRI mapping in the treatment of epilepsy, the classification and surgical management of craniopagus twins, and the prophylaxis of DVT in neurosurgical populations. His other clinical interests include pediatric brain and cord tumors, as well as spina bifida. Sam completed his pediatric neurosurgical fellowship at the University of Washington.

Adam Hebb went to medical school in Nova Scotia at Dalhousie, thus along with Virany Hillard and Professor, Vice Chairman Laligam Sekhar, he brings along an interesting and expanding internationalism to our program. Adam trained in neurosurgery at the University of Minnesota where his research interests focused on Parkinsonism, DBS and tumors. He has organized and manages much of the formal didactic resident education.



Sam Browd, MD, PhD



Louis Kim, MD

Virany Hillard meandered to Seattle from New York Medical College via a spine fellowship at Utah. Before all that, she was a superstar undergraduate at Harvard. She's based at the University Hospital where she is focused on minimally invasive spine disease, with a particular interest on the cervical region. She has written about and has research interests in problems of spinal tumors and stabilization.

Following medical school at Columbia University, Louis Kim trained at The Barrow Institute. He moved to the UW after neurovascular and endovascular fellowships in Phoenix, and is now working with



John Howe, MD



Richard Rapport, MD

Dr. Sekhar on the expanded skull-base and vascular service at Harborview. Louis has done research in vascular neurosurgery as well as neurotrauma, and has published articles and textbook chapters concerning cavernous malformations, spinal AVM, and arachnoid cysts. A good plaid-shirt Northwesterner already, last summer he organized the first departmental "Hike to the Heavens" in the Olympic National Park. We hope there will be more.

At the other end of the age continuum, John Howe and Rick Rapport have returned to the University following long careers at Group Health to help establish the neurosurgical hospitalist service at Harborview, the first in the country so far as we know. John's interests (in addition to his sail boat) focus on ethics, a subject about which he is both widely read and has great practical and academic experience. Rick went into the non-fiction-writing business about fifteen years ago, and has now published more than thirty essays in various literary forms, as well as two books. He's writing a third.



Jan Ramirez, PhD

A more scientifically glamorous addition to the department arrived in the form of Jan-Marino Ramirez, along with many of his laboratory collaborators. Professor Ramirez was recruited from the Chair in Organismal Biology and Anatomy in the Pritzker School of Medicine at the University of Chicago. He will now chair the new Neuroscience Institute at Seattle Children's. His laboratory "focuses on the question how the brain controls rhythmic activity. This issue is of great basic scientific and clinical interest, because many mammalian neuronal networks generate such activity, including networks within the neocortex, basal ganglia, thalamus, locus coeruleus, the hypothalamus, ventral tegmentum area, hippocampus, amygdala, brainstem and spinal cord." Dr. Ramirez and his group are a world-class supplement to long-established research groups at UW interested in epilepsy.

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Overall, the revenues associated with grants to our department nearly tripled, increasing from \$5,523,468 in 1998 to \$14,558,290 in 2008. Among these were twelve R01 grants from NIH.

While residents are no longer assigned to the VA, that hospital remains involved in the system under the guidance of Michel Kliot. And the residents continue to have the grand opportunity of a year at Atkinson Morley's Hospital, University of London, which they love.

For those of you not directly involved in training programs, residencies have sure changed over the past dozen years! As technical innovations have appeared at a now disorienting rate, trainees are consumed by data management, new instrumentation and equipment, better surgical strategies, the dizzying alphabet of short-hand and abbreviations, added to the already generous body of neurosurgical lore, nomenclature, classification and established technique. The enormous body of genetic information, DNA testing, and new relationships between variously long-described syndromes add another layer. But, they are up to it. The twenty men and women residents, plus the seven Fellows, come to Seattle from all over the country and the world. Often they arrive with both M.D. and Ph.D. degrees these days, and they are engaged not only with the discipline of neurosurgery and the patients, but they are much more attentive to each other in a positive way perhaps missing in the past. And, we guarantee, they do not work longer than the workweek limits allow.

Neurosurgery Residents:

Chong C. Lee, MD, PhD
PhD 2000, University of Chicago
MD 2001, University of Chicago

Patrik Gabikian, MD
MD 2002, Johns Hopkins

Timothy H. Lucas II, MD
MD 2001, University of Florida

M. Nathan Nair, MD
MD, MPH 2002, Columbia University

Abhineet Minku Chowdhary, MD
MD 2003, Ohio State College of Medicine

Mikhail Gelfenbeyn, MD
MD 1978, Moscow Medical
Stomatological Institute

Leila Khorasani, MD
MD 2003, University of Chicago-Pritzker

Juanita Celix, MD
MD 2004, U. Penn

Mahesh Karandikar, MD, PhD
MD, PhD 2004, UT Southwestern

Andrew Ko, MD
MD 2005, U of Illinois at Chicago

Jeffrey Mai, MD, PhD
MD, PhD 2004, U Pittsburgh School
of Medicine

Eric Peterson, MD
MS, 2001, Georgetown
MD, 2004, U of Michigan

Rohan Ramakrishna, MD
MD 2006, U. Penn

Tong Yang, MD, PhD
PhD 1996, Brandeis University
MD 2006, Yale

Jason J. Chang, MD
MD 2007, U. Kentucky

Michael R. Levitt, MD
MD 2007, Loyola University

Joshua W. Osbun, MD
MD 2007, UT Southwestern

Michelle M. Cecchini, MD
MD 2008, Rush Medical Center

David K. Su, MD
MD 2008, UT Southwestern

Yaw Sarpong, MD
MD 2008, Vanderbilt

Neurosurgical Faculty:

Anthony M. Avellino, MD, MBA, FACS

Samuel R. Browd, MD, PhD

Randall M. Chesnut, MD

Richard G. Ellenbogen, MD, FACS

Robert Goodkin, MD

Adam O. Hebb, MD

Virany H. Hillard, MD

John Howe, MD

Louis Kim, MD

Michel Klot, MD

John D. Loeser, MD

George A. Ojemann, MD

Jeffrey Ojemann, MD

Richard Rapport, MD

Robert C. Rostomily, MD

Laligam N. Sekhar, MD

Daniel L. Silbergeld, MD

Trent L. Tredway, MD

Marcelo D. Vilela, MD

Research Faculty:

Michael S. Bobola, PhD

Raimondo D'Ambrosio, PhD

Felix Darvas, PhD

Robert Hevner, MD, PhD

Phillip Horner, PhD

Yoshito Kinoshito, PhD

Richard S. Morrison, PhD

Pierre Mourad, PhD

Sean P. Murphy, PhD

Al Ngai, PhD

Jan M. Ramirez, PhD

John R. Silber, PhD

Nancy Temkin, PhD

The *Montlake Cut* will come to you quarterly as a pdf attachment. You can find current department information on-line at: <http://depts.washington.edu/neurosurg/>

We'd love to hear from all of you as well, about where you are in your career, what are your interests outside of medicine, what's going on with your family, what have been your own triumphs and ordeals. And, if you have those specific questions about whatever happened to old what's-his-name, we'll try to find that out too.

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If you have received this by surface mail, please send me an e-mail address if you have one, as we propose to do this entirely electronically in the future.

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Thanks,
Rick

*Montlake Cut Photo by Jim Pridgeon,
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