



Neurosciences Update

First Quarter, 2009

A Note from the Chief Medical Officer, Neurosciences Program



Dear Colleagues,

It is a new year, and with that, the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Neurosciences program is enacting new strategies to meet our annual goals. As a part of these annual goals, the Children's Neuro Spine Care for Kids program will be experiencing some positive growth and new opportunities during the coming year, and we will be pursuing some exciting advances in clinical research.

The Children's Neuro Spine Care for Kids program, under the direction of David Wrubel, M.D., Medical Director, has launched a comprehensive outreach initiative. Both Dr. Wrubel and Barun Brahma, M.D., Pediatric Neurosurgeon, will be giving several neuro spine disorders-related lectures across metro Atlanta in the coming months. Mark your calendars for two upcoming presentations about Chiari malformations from Dr. Wrubel 7:30 a.m., Tuesday, April 21, at the Children's at Scottish Rite Patient Care Conference and 7:30 a.m., Wednesday, April 29, at the Children's at Egleston Grand Rounds.

Additionally, Dr. Brahma is collaborating with the Georgia Institute of Technology to develop a clinical research initiative that utilizes innovative new technology to more accurately delineate brain tumors from normal, healthy brain tissue. Using a nanoscale magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) contrast agent, the peripheral vasculature of brain tumors is highlighted, adding remarkable clarity to the image. This ultimately leads to more precision in the operating room, decreasing the risk of damage to healthy tissue.

We appreciate your comments and welcome your suggestions for future issues. Contact Jill Morrissey, Neurosciences Service Line Director, at jill.morrissey@choa.org or 1001 Johnson Ferry Road, Atlanta, GA 30342-1605 with any questions or suggestions.

Thank you for your support and ongoing interest in the Children's Neurosciences program. We are looking forward to another exciting year in 2009.

Sincerely,

Roger J. Hudgins, M.D.
Pediatric Neurosurgeon
Chief Medical Officer, Children's Neurosciences program

Caring For the Child with Cerebral Palsy

Barbara Weissman, M.D.
Associate Professor of Pediatric Neurology
Emory University School of Medicine



Early diagnosis and intervention are associated with improved long-term outcomes for children with cerebral palsy. At Children's and Emory-Children's Center, children diagnosed with cerebral palsy--and their families--have access to a multidisciplinary approach, referrals and treatments to assist with early diagnosis and therapy.

For the high-risk group of low birth weight infants, the need for these resources begins during an infant's recovery in the Children's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Patients and families receive comprehensive recommendations to maximize the child's ability to function with patient-specific treatment plans. These treatment plans start with therapy recommendations, including physical, occupational or speech therapy.

Other resources include constraint therapy, hippotherapy, aquatic therapy, conductive education therapy, suit therapy and assistive technology evaluations. The child often is referred for appropriate seating and mobility equipment. Patients also are evaluated for medical therapies and other tone-control therapies, including botulinum toxin injections.

Neurological evaluations include assessments for intrathecal baclofen pumps, selective dorsal rhizotomies and deep-brain stimulators. Neurologists work with neurosurgeons to perform these procedures to properly delineate areas of interest. Children are referred to orthopaedic surgery to release tight muscles. Other referrals consider the child's comprehensive health needs, including gastroenterology, which maximizes the child's health and well-being.

When evaluating a child, the school support programs, educational environment and developmental needs are considered at all times. Neuropsychological evaluations provide further recommendations to maximize each child's learning potential.

As more children with cerebral palsy are living longer, the transition to adulthood is an important focus. There are additional challenges related to transitioning to adult healthcare, insurance and education systems. Children's and Emory-Children's Center offer a pathway of care to keep children with special needs healthy and their families supported.

Accomplishments

- Pediatric Neurologist Nicolas Krawiecki, M.D., recently earned the 2009 Heroes in Healthcare Ethics Award from the Health Care Ethics Consortium of Georgia. Since 2004, this award recognizes individuals who foster a culture of ethics within their healthcare organizations and communities. As the chair of the Children's Bioethics Consultation Committee, Dr. Krawiecki showed his devotion to the delivery of ethical clinical care and the facilitation, identification and resolution of ethical dilemmas.
- The newly developed clinical pathway for severe traumatic brain injury--led by Andrew Reisner, M.D., Pediatric Neurosurgeon--reached several new milestones, including the completion of Epic orders for both Children's at Egleston and Children's at Scottish Rite; finalizing guidelines for preadmission management; and increasing the age limit for acceptance to age 18. The neurosurgery team also is providing ongoing training to trauma nurse specialists, who are a tremendous

resource in treating patients with severe traumatic brain injury.

- On Sunday, April 19, 2009, the Brain Tumor Foundation for Children Inc., will host the annual Flight of the Butterflies fundraiser event, held at the Atlanta History Center from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. This year, Claire Mazewski, Pediatric Neuro-oncologist and Co-director, Neuro-oncology program, Aflac Cancer Center and Blood Disorders Service of Children's, will be presented with the annual Brain Tumor Foundation for Children Visionary Award. Visit www.braintumorkids.org or call 404-252-4107 to purchase tickets to the event.
- Kathleen O'Toole, Ph.D., Senior Neuropsychologist, is spearheading a new collaborative research project with the University of Georgia Psychology department to examine the efficacy of cognitive remediation therapy with, and without, parent collaboration.
- Pediatric neuropsychologists, David Marcus, Ph.D., Kristine Whigham, Psy.D., and Dr. O'Toole, participated in a poster presentation in February 2009 titled *Investigating the Neuropsychological Outcomes of Pediatric Mitochondrial Disorders Within a Neurodevelopmental Framework* at the annual meeting of the International Neuropsychological Society in Atlanta.

News and Notes

- **Miracles in the Operating Room**
WAGA-TV (FOX) followed Dr. Brahma during a busy day in the operating room, as he performed surgery on a child with a neurological spinal disorder. [View](#) the story here--scroll to the bottom of the page to view part two, which features Dr. Brahma.
- **Neurosciences Web Portal**
A new Neurosciences Web Portal also was launched, allowing all neurosciences clinicians to share important clinical information, even when off-site. Visit www.choa.org/neuro_resources or contact Mandy Rosenberg, Portal Administrator, at 404-785-5648 or e-mail mandy.rosenberg@choa.org to make updates or changes.
- **Neuro Update Clinical Newsletter and CME Module**
Visit www.choa.org/neuroupdate to use the online Neuro Update continuing medical education (CME) module. Physicians are encouraged to read each issue and take the online questionnaire to earn CME credit.

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