

MEET THE *Team*

We understand that no surgery is simple. That is why patients need surgeons who are pediatric-trained and experienced in treating a wide range of conditions. Our team of pediatric general surgeons includes:

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SURGERY *Update*

A newsletter from Children's
Physician Group-Pediatric Surgery

SPRING 2017

SURGERY *Update*

A newsletter from Children's
Physician Group-Pediatric Surgery

Surgery Update is a newsletter from Children's Physician Group-Pediatric Surgery intended to keep you informed regarding the latest in pediatric general surgery.

In this issue

- Clinical research in neonatal surgery
- Program news and announcements

Call **404-785-6895** (Scottish Rite) or **404-785-8787** (Egleston) to make a referral or to discuss potential surgical treatments for your patients.

Visit choa.org/cpsurgery for more information.

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Clinical research in neonatal surgery

Amina Bhatia, MD

An update on current studies at Children’s

Neonatal surgery is constructed on a solid foundation of clinical and basic science research directed toward the development of evidence-based practices and better treatment for neonatal surgical conditions. At Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, pediatric surgeons have teamed up with neonatologists and other medical specialists to discover and develop treatment strategies for surgical diseases. Pediatric surgeons at Children’s are involved in multiple neonatal surgical projects, which include multicenter randomized trials, translational studies, national databases and multicenter retrospective studies. In this article, we highlight some of the surgical neonatal research at Children’s.

Necrotizing Enterocolitis Surgical Trial (NEST)

The Necrotizing Enterocolitis Surgical Trial (NEST) is a Neonatal Research Network study comparing the effectiveness of two surgical procedures, laparotomy and drainage, both commonly used to treat necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) and isolated intestinal perforations (IP) in extremely low birth weight infants (less than 1,000 grams). The study is a randomized controlled trial to compare the effectiveness of laparotomy versus drainage for treating NEC or IP in extremely low birth weight infants. The primary outcome to be measured is impairment-free survival at 18 to 22 months old. In addition to collecting detailed information on the randomized infants, the study group is collecting information on more than 300 nonrandomized infants with NEC or IP who were enrolled in a preference cohort.

After six years of enrollment, NEST reached its goal of 310 randomized patients in March 2017. Children’s contributed 23 randomized subjects and was the fourth-largest contributor to the study. Follow-up should be completed in 18 to 24 months, so anticipate some results in 2019.

Multicenter database participation

- **The Children’s Hospital Neonatal Consortium (CHNC)** began in 2006 as a tool to help elevate neonatal surgical care in tertiary neonatal intensive care units. In 2008, CHNC partnered with Children’s Hospital Association (CHA) to create a comprehensive data set, the Children’s Hospitals Neonatal Database (CHND), in which more than 20 tertiary NICUs participate. This extensive database provides a platform for quality improvement and benchmarking. Pediatric surgeons at Children’s have worked with the CHNC to help develop data sets and study surgical diseases, such as gastroschisis, esophageal atresia and necrotizing enterocolitis. An example of this work by Children’s pediatric surgeons includes the 2014 publication “The association of type of surgical closure on length of stay among infants with gastroschisis born after 34 weeks gestation.”

- **Hirschsprung Disease Research Collaborative (HDRC)** is a research collaboration based out of Johns Hopkins University involving geneticists, pediatric surgeons, pediatricians and gastroenterologists interested in genetic analysis of Hirschsprung disease. The HDRC is attempting to correlate specific genetic mutations with evolution of the disease, outcomes and complications after the surgical management of the disease. The goals of this research are to improve genetic counseling and possibly individualize surgical treatment for Hirschsprung disease. A participant since 2013, Children’s has contributed data and genetic samples on 25 patients with Hirschsprung disease and their families.

- **The Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia (CDH)** study group is an international database out of the University of Texas. With more than 9,000 patients in the system, this data allows individual centers to compare themselves with others and demonstrate changes over time with both management and outcomes.

Translational neonatal surgical studies

- **Impact of breast milk on surgical outcomes:** Pediatric surgeons and neonatologists at Children’s are prospectively studying outcomes with donor breast milk. This is funded by a local donor.

- **Prospective analysis of neonatal gut tissue:** Funded by the Children’s Friends research grant, pediatric surgeons and neonatologists are examining cytokine patterns in neonatal intestine after resection for NEC. Preliminary results have shown that both IL-22 and RegIIIγ mRNA expression is reduced in resected NEC tissue when compared to controls. Thus, human NEC tissue exhibits evidence of reduced neutrophil activity compared to control tissue.

- **Definitive peritoneal drainage in the extremely low birth weight infant with IP; a prospective pilot study of the predictive value of abdominal ultrasound:** In collaboration with radiology, pediatric surgeons are looking for ultrasound findings that may correlate with outcomes in neonates undergoing peritoneal drainage for IP.

With access to two busy tertiary neonatal units, pediatric surgeons at Children’s have seized the opportunity to contribute to better evidence-based practices in neonatal surgical care. By using what we discover through clinical trials and studies, we help provide quality care to newborns and ensure the most up-to-date information and treatments are made available to patients and their families.

News and announcements

Raval and McCarthy receive grant

Mehul V. Raval, MD, MS, FAAP, Assistant Professor of Surgery at Emory University School of Medicine, and co-investigator Ian McCarthy, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Emory University Department of Economics, were awarded a nationally competitive \$1.1 million grant from the Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

Their goal is to study the value of children’s surgical care using payment data at children’s hospitals as compared to non-children’s hospitals for commonly performed surgical procedures. This study will test for any quality or price differentials among children’s hospitals and non-children’s hospitals, then examine the sources of any such differentials with particular interest in the role of hospital market structure and competition as potential drivers of high-cost care.

Results of this study will inform patients, physicians, hospitals and payers by encouraging pricing transparency and cultivating a high-quality, value-centric healthcare system for children in the United States.

Children’s pediatric surgery team volunteers in Peru

A team from Children’s completed its second mission to Yantalo, Peru, in February. Led by Amina Bhatia, MD, the 11-person team spent a week performing surgery in the high jungle of Peru. A CPR course led by Egleston hospital nurse Mary Ann Cornwall was a huge success and drew nearly 50 medical professionals and community members. A global health survey conducted during the weeklong trip has been accepted as a poster presentation at an international meeting.

Contact **Amina Bhatia** at amina.bhatia@choa.org if you would like to learn more about the trip.

Shorter wait times

We are experiencing wait times that are shorter than normal for general surgery cases and have availability for next-day appointments in some instances. Please call **404-785-DOCS (3627)** to refer a patient.

Contact us

Children’s Physician Group—Pediatric Surgery provides comprehensive general and thoracic pediatric surgical care for children and adolescents throughout Georgia and the Southeast. Our offices are located at:

Main offices

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1975 Century Blvd., Suite 6
Atlanta, GA 30345
p: 404-785-8787, f: 404-785-8788
Drs. Bhatia, Clifton, Durham, Heiss, Meisel, Parker, Raval, Santore and Wulkan

Children’s Medical Office Building
5461 Meridian Mark Road, Suite 570
Atlanta, GA 30342
p: 404-785-6895, f: 404-785-6896
Drs. Bansal, Bleacher, Bussey, Glasson, Norelius and Raschbaum

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Children’s at Cobb (Marietta)
p: 404-785-8787, f: 404-785-8788
Dr. Meisel

Children’s at East Cobb (Marietta)
p: 404-785-6895, f: 404-785-6896
Dr. Bleacher

Children’s at Fayette (Fayetteville)
p: 404-785-8787, f: 404-785-8788
Dr. Bhatia

Children’s at Forsyth (Cumming)
p: 404-785-6895, f: 404-785-6896
Drs. Bleacher, Norelius and Raschbaum

Children’s at Old Milton (Alpharetta)
p: 404-785-6895, f: 404-785-6896
Drs. Bansal and Bussey

Children’s at Satellite Boulevard (Duluth)
p: 404-785-8787, f: 404-785-8788
Drs. Bhatia, Heiss, Meisel and Santore
p: 404-785-6895, f: 404-785-6896
Dr. Glasson

Athens Clinic (Athens)
p: 404-785-8787, f: 404-785-8788
Dr. Clifton

Columbus Clinic (Columbus)
p: 404-785-8787, f: 404-785-8788
Drs. Heiss and Wulkan

Surgical locations

We perform surgeries at Egleston hospital, Scottish Rite hospital, Children’s at Meridian Mark Outpatient Surgery Center and Children’s at Satellite Boulevard Outpatient Surgery Center.