

## **NEUROSURGE**

### **MONTHLY UPDATES FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, DIVISION OF NEUROSURGERY**

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#### **FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE**

##### **COVID-19**

As we enter another month of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am encouraged by positive developments on the public health front in Toronto and Canada—and also by the tremendous resilience of every member of our city-wide Division. In spite of unprecedented disruptions to our manner of work and very way of life, Toronto Neurosurgery has not only remained strongly committed to clinical care but has also continued to lead in academic neurosurgery and research. As highlighted below, our Faculty and fellows have published timely COVID-related papers. Our Faculty continue to obtain major grant funding, and our residents continue to earn highly competitive and prestigious training awards. We will get through these challenging times together, and out of the necessities imposed by this situation, come up with new and better ideas that will have lasting impact on how we conduct our activities all the way from patient encounters to teaching and research. I thank each member of our Division for their ongoing sacrifices and commitment in these times, and wish each of you and your families continued health and well-being.

*- Andres Lozano, Dan Family Chairman of Neurosurgery, University of Toronto*

## COVID-related publications from UofT Neurosurgery

Dr. James Rutka (RS McLaughlin Professor and Chair, Department of Surgery, University of Toronto) co-authored a publication on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on neurosurgical practice. This paper is one of our PDF's of the Month.

Kondziolka D, Couldwell WT, Rutka JT. Introduction. On pandemics: the impact of COVID-19 on the practice of neurosurgery. *J Neurosurg.* 2020 Apr 10:1-2.



Dr. Mojgan Hodaie (left) and functional neurosurgery clinical fellows Christian Iorio-Morin (centre) and Can Sarica (right) at Toronto Western Hospital co-authored a publication on the risk of COVID-19 infection during neurosurgical procedures and mitigation measures. This piece is also one of our PDF's of the Month.

Iorio-Morin C, Hodaie M, Sarica C, Dea N, Westwick HJ, Christie SD, McDonald PJ, Labidi M, Farmer JP, Brisebois S, D'Aragon F, Carignan A, Fortin D. Letter: The Risk of COVID-19 Infection During Neurosurgical Procedures: A Review of Severe Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) Modes of Transmission and Proposed Neurosurgery-Specific Measures for Mitigation. *Neurosurgery.* 2020 Apr 26.



## **New Faculty Appointment, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre**



We are pleased to announce that Dr. Ashish Kumar has been appointed as an Assistant Professor and Surgeon-Teacher in the Division of Neurosurgery, University of Toronto and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Dr. Kumar completed neurosurgical residency at the Bombay Hospital Institute of Medical Sciences in Mumbai, India. He was then appointed as an Assistant Professor in Neurosurgery at the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Hyderabad. Dr. Kumar's field of expertise is in cerebrovascular and endovascular surgery, with open cerebrovascular training at Fujita Health University, Nagoya, Japan, and fellowships at University of Toronto in neurosurgery and endovascular Neurosurgery at Sunnybrook and St. Michael's Hospital respectively. He will develop a clinical practice centered in open and endovascular care of patients with cerebrovascular diseases. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Kumar back to Toronto as Faculty.

## **CIHR Fellowship and CNS/AANS Dempsey Award**



Christopher Pasarikovski (PGY4; PhD supervisor: Dr. Victor Yang) was awarded a highly competitive CIHR Fellowship valued at \$55,000 per year for two years. Chris also received the Robert J. Dempsey Cerebrovascular Research Award from the CNS/AANS. The Award is valued at \$15,000 for one year. Please join me in congratulating Chris on both of these achievements.

## **Academy/NREF Research Fellowship Grant**



Laureen Hachem (PGY3: Supervisor: Dr. Michael Fehlings, Co-supervisor: Dr. Charles Tator) was the recipient of the Academy of Neurological Surgeons/NREF 2020-21 Research Fellowship Grant valued at \$40,000 USD. The one year grant was given for her project entitled “Elucidating the mechanisms of glutamate-mediated activation of adult spinal cord neural stem/progenitor cells to reveal therapeutic targets for spinal cord injury.” Congratulations, Laureen.

### **3MT Competition Winner**



Christopher Ahuja (PGY4; supervisor: Dr. Michael Fehlings) was the Winner (second place) of the University of Toronto Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition. The Competition is a “friendly but intense contest where graduate students present the complexities of their research in an engaging and accessible way before a live audience in just three minutes. Well done, Chris.



### **Assistant Professorship, University of California, Davis**

Allan Martin (Clinical Spine Fellow, Toronto Western Hospital; Toronto Neurosurgery Class of 2019) has been appointed Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery at the University of California, Davis effective July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. His new position will focus on Complex Spinal Neurosurgery and Deformity. Please join me in congratulating Allan on his new role and wishing him and his family the very best in the next stage of his career.

### **HONORS, GRANTS AND AWARDS**



Andres Lozano (and Robert Chen, Division of Neurology, UofT) received a one-year National Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Research Tools and Instrument Grant valued at \$150,000 for the work entitled “Non-invasive neuromodulation using low-intensity transcranial focused ultrasound in the human brain.”

Co-PI’s Gelareh Zadeh (Deputy Head, Division of Neurosurgery, University Health Network) and Farshad Nassiri (PGY4) received a grant from the NCI Cancer Moonshot Molecular Profiling to Predict Response to Treatment (MP2PRT) Program for their work to identify biomarkers of response to adjuvant radiotherapy in meningiomas.



## PUBLICATIONS

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## **IN THE MEDIA**



Michael Taylor's work on a new treatment approach for medulloblastoma and ependymoma in children was featured in a Baylor College of Medicine article. The piece can be accessed at: <https://www.bcm.edu/news/cancer-pediatric/treatment-recurrent-pediatric-brain-cancer>

## **PDFs OF THE MONTH**

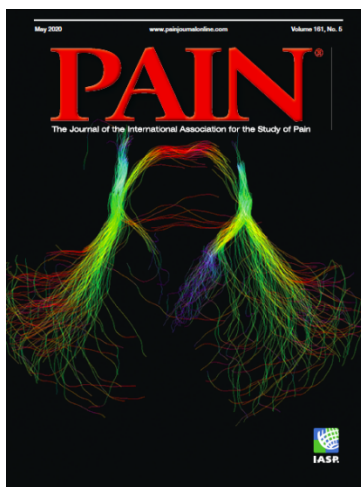
Davidson B, Suresh H, Goubran M, Rabin JS, Meng Y, Mithani K, Pople CB, Giacobbe P, Hamani C, Lipsman N. Predicting response to psychiatric surgery: a systematic review of neuroimaging findings. *J Psychiatry Neurosci.* 2020 Apr 15;45(3):190208.

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Infection During Neurosurgical Procedures: A Review of Severe Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) Modes of Transmission and Proposed Neurosurgery-Specific Measures for Mitigation. *Neurosurgery*. 2020 Apr 26.

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*\* This paper was selected for Pain's cover art for May 2020.*

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### May 2020

Society of Neurological Surgeons (SNS) 2020 Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. May 30-Jun 2, 2020. <https://www.societyns.org/2020-annual-meeting>

Update as of March 31, 2020: *“The SNS plans to proceed with the 2020 Annual Meeting as scheduled for May 30 - June 2. We are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation and want to assure all members, attendees, faculty and staff that your health and safety are of the utmost importance as we reassess meeting and course plans. We will continue to communicate updates to you as necessary.”*

### June 2020

CANCELLED: Canadian Neurological Sciences Federation (CNSF) 55th Annual Congress. Banff, Alberta. Jun 7-10, 2020. <http://congress.cnsfederation.org/>

## RESIDENTS' CORNER

### Brain School Schedule - [thebrainschool.net](http://thebrainschool.net)

MAY 2020

#### **Friday, May 1, 2020**

0900-1200

- 9-10 Abhaya Kulkarni: Myelomeningoceles
- 10-11 Abhaya Kulkarni: Hydrocephalus complications, incl. slit-ventricles
- 11-12 Christian Iorio-Morin: Overview of COVID-19 and its neurosurgical implications

#### **Friday, May 8, 2020**

Department of Surgery  
46th Annual Gallie Day

0800-1700

Virtual Zoom Webinar - *see attached program*

#### **Friday, May 15, 2020**

0900-1200

- 9-10 Kristen Davidge: Nerve transfers in children
- 10-11 Nebras Warsi: Encephaloceles / Arachnoid cysts
- 11-12 Abhaya Kulkarni: IVH of prematurity + ETV/CPC

#### **Friday, May 22, 2020**

0900-1200

TOPIC: Trauma/Spine

- 9-10 Reinhard Zeller: Spine deformities in children
- 10-11 Suzanne Laughlin: Pediatric Spine Trauma imaging
- 11-12 Lauren Hachem: Klippel Feil syndrome and disorders of segmentation

#### **Friday, May 29, 2020**

0900-1200

- 9-10 Lili-Naz Hazrati: Neuropathology of epilepsy in children

- 10-11 Ali Moghaddamjou: Trauma/Spine – CVJ abnormalities in children  
11-12 Michael Dewan: Global neurosurgery & global pediatric neurosurgery

**RESIDENCY PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Tuesday, May 19, 2020, 7-8 a.m., details TBA

**NEUROSURGERY CABINET MEETING**

Tuesday, May 26, 2020, 6:30 p.m., details TBA