

Director: Zoher Ghogawala, MD

Special Thanks to Jean and David Wallace for their generous \$250,000 donation in support of the Cervical Spondylotic Myelopathy Study.

Updated Patient Enrollment For Clinical Trials:

SLIP Study: 97

Carotid Study: 48

Cervical Spondylotic Myelopathy Study: 50

Duragen Study: 14

Thank you to the Johnson Foundation for its generous donation given in honor of Dr. Jean-Valery Coumans, MD one of our collaborators at the Massachusetts General Hospital.

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Yale Spine Institute

Dr. Khalid Abbed leads a spine initiative at Yale known as The Yale Spine Institute (YSI). The YSI was developed to provide personalized and comprehensive care to patients suffering from all spinal disorders through the use of state of the art diagnostic imaging, non-operative treatment modalities, and innovative surgical techniques.

The YSI and the Wallace Trials Center are now closely collaborating in several ways. First, all clinical research protocols available at Greenwich Hospital are now also available at Yale. In addition, one important Yale-based trial focusing

upon minimally invasive surgery led by Dr. Abbed will be available in Greenwich as well. Second, research meetings to discuss the findings from all clinical trials are discussed in joint meetings of the WTC and the YSI. This fosters greater critique of the projects. Third, Yale neurosurgery residents have begun to get involved in the research efforts at both sites. Lastly, one of our clinical trials coordinators, Lauren Stabile, now works at both the YSI and the WTC to help provide communication between the two sites.

We believe ultimately

TLIF Study Wins AANS Award

The AANS/CNS Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves recently presented Dr. Abbed with the Clinical Trials Fellowship Award. This award provides junior faculty with \$50,000 to be used in the development of multi-center clinical studies greatly needed in neurosurgery and spine surgery in particular. This award will be instrumental in funding

the TLIF study. Congratulations Dr. Abbed!

Dr. Abbed has recently received Greenwich Hospital IRB approval to open a new clinical trial comparing the newer minimally invasive technique of transforaminal lumbar interbody fusion (TLIF) with the older more



Dr. Khalid Abbed

that cooperation between university and community hospital research efforts will result in meaningful research that is more likely to be useful to doctors and patients throughout the United States. One of the traditional challenges of all university-based clinical research is the difficulty in applying the results to community settings. The YSI-WTC connection and other similar research models may help solve this problem in the future.

traditional "open" approach in patients with low-grade lumbar degenerative spondylolisthesis. This condition is a type of spinal stenosis which frequently requires spine surgery for decompression and fusion. The study will be non-randomized and the goal is to accrue 104 patients between three sites

Welcome, Interns!

We are very fortunate to welcome back two of our previous summer interns and one new intern this year.

Eitan Burstein will be attending medical school at SUNY Brooklyn in the fall and has been helping us work on an NIH grant for Cervical Spondylotic Myelopathy as well as helping to organize and analyze data for the Carotid Study.

Alex Mojcher has returned from the University of Massachusetts, where he recently completed his sophomore year. He will be helping us film and edit a number of surgical videos to be used for various presentations as well as patient education.

Rachel Potter has just finished her junior year at Colgate University and is excited to begin work on her summer project. She will be looking at the five assessment tools used to measure Quality of Life in the CSM Study and will compare the outcomes of the ventral and dorsal surgery groups.



From left to right: Eitan Burstein, Rachel Potter, and Alex Mojcher.

NIH RO1 Grant Submission

In June, Dr. Ghogawala, serving as the principle investigator, submitted an RO1 grant application to the National Institutes of Health. The grant entitled “Cervical Spondylotic Myelopathy” has recently been accepted for review by NIAMS (National Institute of Arthritis and Musculo- skeletal and Skin Diseases). If awarded, the grant will help fund a multi-center randomized clinical trial looking at “front” vs. “back” spine surgery outcomes for patients with Cervical Spondylotic Myelopathy (arthritis of the cervical spine).

WTC Publication

Dr. Ghogawala recently co-authored an article entitled “*Clinical Equipoise and the Surgical Randomized Controlled Trial*” in the June 2008 issue of *Neurosurgery’s Science Times*. It speaks of the need for well-designed, randomized surgical clinical trials within the neurosurgical community. Determining clinical equipoise, a term which means “genuine uncertainty within the medical community”, is an important element in an effective randomized trial.

WTC Presentation: Washington D.C. (NQF)

Dr. Ghogawala was nominated by the Spine Section to represent organized neurosurgery (AANS-CNS) to participate as a spine surgery consultant to the National Quality Forum in

June 2008. This group is a governmental advisory board that makes healthcare recommendations to make medicine in the US efficient, consistent and cost effective.

WTC Presentation: Chicago

Dr. Ghogawala delivered an oral presentation entitled "*Ventral Surgery versus Dorsal Decompression with Fusion for Cervical Spondylotic Myelopathy: A Cost Analysis*" at the American Association of Neurological Surgeons Meeting, held

in Chicago, in April 2008. This talk was based on preliminary data from hospital charges associated with patients who had "front" vs. "back" surgery for Cervical Spondylotic Myelopathy.

WTC Publication:

Dr. Ghogawala, Dr. Westerveld, and Dr. Amin-Hanjani have published a paper entitled, "*Cognitive Outcomes after Carotid Revascularization: The Role of Cerebral Emboli and Hypoperfusion.*" It was published in the February issue of the peer-reviewed journal

Neurosurgery. The paper looks at how understanding key mechanisms resulting in cognitive impairment during carotid revascularization procedures might limit injury for patients undergoing these procedures.

WTC Presentation: Cape Cod

Dr. Khalid Abbed recently gave a presentation to the New England Neurosurgical Society in Cape Cod, Massachusetts in June 2008. His talk was entitled, "*Dorsal vs. Ventral Re-operation Rates Following Cervical*

Spine Surgery for Degenerative Spine Disease." His talk was the result of the analysis of Washington state's inpatient database which provides administrative data on thousands of patients that had spine surgery from 1998-2002.

WTC Poster Presentations: New Orleans and Chicago

Dr. Ghogawala's abstract entitled, "*Extracranial Carotid Plaque Length and Parent Vessel Diameter Significantly*

Affects Baseline Ipsilateral Intracranial Blood Flow" was presented in New Orleans, in February 2008, at the International

Stroke Conference as well as the American Association of Neurological Surgeons meeting in Chicago, in April

2008. The information presented was based on preliminary data from the Carotid Study.

Charitable Donations

Our success here at the Wallace Trials Center is made possible only through the generous donations of individuals as well as private foundations. Please consider making a **fully tax-deductible** donation to:

Wallace Trials Center
Or
Greenwich Lumbar Stenosis SLIP Study Fund

Send donations to:

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The Wallace Trials Center Newsletter is published twice a year. Look for the next update in Spring 2009.



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www.greenwich-neurosurgery.com/research.shtml