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Western Neurosurgery Review

A newsletter for referring physicians

Summer 2004

Neurosurgery Referrals

We often hear the question: *When is it appropriate to refer a patient to a Neurosurgeon?* Many physicians question the choice between a referral to a Neurosurgeon or an Orthopedic Surgeon. This edition of Western Neurosurgery Review will answer that one lingering question. Let's start off by defining the role of a Neurosurgeon:

A neurosurgeon is a physician specially trained in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the spine, brain, nervous system and peripheral nerves. Neurosurgeons treat both adult and pediatric patients. They evaluate and operate on disorders of the brain and skull, blood vessels within this region, disorders of the pituitary gland, diseases of the spinal cord and vertebral column and disorders of the nerves exiting the brain and spine. Neurosurgeons also perform surgery on the carotid arteries in the neck and treat congenital and birth related problems of both the brain and spine.

When attempting to differentiate between a Neurosurgeon and an Orthopedic Surgeon, there is one question to ask: "Does this problem involve the Brain and/or Spinal Cord/Nerves?" If the answer is YES, then the dilemma is solved, send your patient to a **Neurosurgeon** who is trained and specializes in those fields.

Percutaneous Vertebroplasty and Kyphoplasty

Alleviating Pain Caused by Compression Fractures of the Spine

Michael E. Seiff, M.D.
Neurosurgeon



Osteoporosis is a disease that gradually weakens bones and causes them to become brittle. If not prevented or left untreated, osteoporosis can progress painlessly until a bone breaks. Along with hip and wrist fractures, osteoporosis can cause compression fractures in the spine, especially after a mild trauma such as falling off a chair.

Until recently, doctors were limited in how they could treat osteoporosis-related spine fractures. Bed rest, pain medications, bracing or complex spinal surgery were the only available options. Today, there are two promising therapeutic and preventive treatments for compression fractures; Percutaneous Vertebroplasty and Kyphoplasty.

What is the difference between Percutaneous Vertebroplasty and Kyphoplasty? **Vertebroplasty** came first. The procedure utilizes a special needle that is placed into the collapsed vertebra, allowing an injection of bone cement directly into the bone. The inside of the bone has little tiny spaces like a sponge. The cement fills the little spaces, strengthening the vertebra and preventing additional collapse. The cement stabilizes the bone fracture and stops the compression.

The **Kyphoplasty** procedure was really sort of a secondary development from Vertebroplasty. Doctors reasoned that if some of the height lost from the compression fracture could be restored, it may help people even more. The idea is to inflate a balloon to a very high pressure inside the bone to re-expand the compressed vertebra. When the balloon is removed, it leaves a larger space which is then filled with the cement. Both Kyphoplasty and Vertebroplasty stabilize the bone, but Kyphoplasty attempts to restore height, filling a larger space created by the balloon instead of the little spaces naturally present in the bone.

Percutaneous Vertebroplasty



The needle placement into the collapsed vertebral body.



The injection of the cement-like material into the collapsed vertebral body.

Kyphoplasty



A needle is being placed into the vertebra and then replaced with the balloon catheter. The balloon is positioned where, when inflated, it can affect the severe part of the fracture.



The balloon is then inflated to create a space for bone cement. The fracture is stabilized and the vertebra can be expanded to a more normal height.



The cavity is then filled with bone cement. The cement is injected under relatively low pressure. After this is successfully completed, the bone tamp is removed.

Studies have shown that 75% to 90% of patients will have complete or significant reduction of pain. The recovery time for either Kyphoplasty or Vertebroplasty is a couple of days. The patient is kept lying down for a couple of hours and some patients can even go home the same day but are advised to take it easy for a day or two.

Candidates for these procedures are individuals who have suffered recent compression fractures which are causing moderate to severe back pain.

Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery is pleased to announce that **Dr. James S. Forage** and **Dr. Stuart S. Kaplan** have joined Drs. Benjamin H. Venger, William D. Smith, John A. Anson, Derek A. Duke, Jason E. Garber and Michael E. Seiff in continuing our commitment to providing the highest level of patient care to Southern Nevada and our surrounding communities.



Dr. James S. Forage received two undergraduate degrees from the University of Arizona and graduated *Summa cum laude* with Honors. He went on to receive his doctorate of medicine from Washington University. During his residency training at UCLA Medical Center, Dr. Forage developed an extensive clinical understanding and surgical expertise in the treatment of degenerative and traumatic disorders of the cervical, thoracic, lumbar and sacral spine; as well as disorders and diseases of the brain and peripheral nervous system. Dr. Forage was also the Neurosurgical and Spine Fellow at Barrows Neurological Institute, an internationally renowned medical center. Dr. Forage's subspecialty interests include complex spinal surgery and instrumentation, skull base surgery, brain tumors, and general neurosurgery. He also has a special interest in the treatment of complex spinal problems using minimally invasive techniques which decrease patient pain and hospitalization time. Prior to joining our practice, Dr. Forage was the assistant professor of neurosurgery and spine surgery chief at Loma Linda University Medical Center.



Dr. Stuart S. Kaplan received his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College. He went on to receive his doctorate of medicine from Harvard Medical School. After his residency training at Washington University Medical Center, Dr. Kaplan completed a Pediatric Neurosurgical Fellowship at St. Louis Children's Hospital. Through his research in neuronal ischemia, Dr. Kaplan has been awarded several honors including the National Institutes of Health National Research Service Award and The Southern Neurosurgical Society Basic Science Resident Award. Dr. Kaplan's special interests are in general and functional neurosurgery with subspecialization in medically refractory epilepsy, spasticity and brachial plexus surgery. Dr. Kaplan has experience and interest in neuroscience research and will assist in developing pediatric neurosurgery's participation in the mission to create and use knowledge to improve the lives of children, as well as adult neurosurgery. Prior to joining our practice, Dr. Kaplan was the assistant professor of neurosurgery at the University of Cincinnati School of Medicine.

Dr. James S. Forage and Dr. Stuart S. Kaplan's phenomenal backgrounds make them two of the most intensely recruited neurosurgeons in the country. We are pleased that they have chosen to join the Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery.

What's New?

- WRCBSS is pleased to announce the addition of a Full Time Henderson Clinic located at **861 Coronado Center Drive, Suite 200**. To schedule an appointment, please call 702-896-0940.
- **New Online Referral Forms can expedite your referrals!** Go online to www.BrainAndSpineOnline.com, click on the Referral Form button, fill out the online form, then click the submit button. The information will be sent directly to our Referral Specialists to immediately start processing your referral.

[Visit our Website](#)

Please visit our newly updated website located at www.BrainAndSpineOnLine.com to learn more about our practice.

On our website, you will find information regarding our practice including office hours and locations, information on how to schedule an appointment, new patient paperwork, contact and insurance information, office policies, and much more.

In addition, learn more about our physicians and medical staff, about neurosurgery, as well as many of the more common symptoms and conditions that our physicians treat.

Keeping In Touch

At Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery we are constantly expanding to better serve the needs of our patients and referring physicians. While expansion allows us to see patients in a more timely manner and closer to their homes, we realize that keeping track of who and where we are can be a confusing proposition. For this reason, we have compiled the addresses of all our offices and reference the physicians(s) who hold(s) clinic in each and the frequency.

[Nevada Clinics](#)

Main Office

3061 S. Maryland Pkwy, #200

Phone: 702-737-1948

Toll Free: 800-334-0878

Fax: 702-737-7195

New Patients Referrals Fax: 702-735-1169

Henderson

861 Coronado Ctr Dr, #200

Phone: 702-896-0940

All Faxes: 702-896-6173

MountainView

Professional Med. Center

3150 N. Tenaya Way, #340

Spring Valley

5495 S. Rainbow Blvd, #101A

(Fall 2004)

Laughlin

UMC QuickCare

150 Bruce Woodbury Dr.

Mesquite

Mesq. Med. Associates

830 Hafen Lane

[Arizona Clinics](#)

Lake Havasu City

1810 Mesquite Ave, #B

Bullhead City

2000 HWY 95, #210

Kingman

Professional Medical Center

1739 Beverly Ave, #102 &
#106

[Utah Clinic](#)

St. George

Skyline Building

301 North 200 East, #2C

<u>Location</u>	<u>Physician(s)</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Main Office	Dr. Venger Dr. Smith Dr. Anson Dr. Duke Dr. Garber Dr. Seiff Dr. Kaplan	Mondays Thursdays Wednesdays Tuesdays Wednesdays Mondays Wednesdays
Henderson	Dr. Duke Dr. Forage	Wednesdays & Fridays Tuesdays & Thursdays
Mountain View	Dr. Anson Dr. Garber Dr. Kaplan	Tuesdays Fridays Mondays
Spring Valley (Fall 2004)	Dr. Smith Dr. Seiff Dr. Kaplan	Mondays Thursdays Fridays
Laughlin	Dr. Venger	Twice a month on Thursdays
Mesquite	Dr. Garber	Quarterly on Mondays
Lake Havasu	Dr. Anson	Twice a month on Tuesdays
Bullhead City	Dr. Venger	Twice a month on Thursdays
Kingman	Dr. Venger	Once a month on Thursday
St. George	Dr. Venger	Once a month on Wednesday

Meet Our Management Staff

In this edition of Meet Our Staff, we would like to introduce you to 4 pivotal members of the management staff at Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery.

Director of Marketing Operations

Miriam Michelberger, MBA, MM

Mrs. Michelberger was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois and moved to Las Vegas in 2000. She attended the University of Illinois at Chicago and received a Bachelors Degree in Psychology. She then went on to attend North Park University Graduate School of Management and received a Masters in Business Administration and a Masters in Management along with four certifications in Human Resources, Marketing of Services, Organizational Development and International Business. She has been with Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery for 4 years.

Director of Finance

Troyas Wade

Ms. Wade was born in Barstow, California and has been a Las Vegas resident for 31 years. She has 20 years experience in billing and has been with Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery for 11 years.

Director of Support

Trina Norton

Mrs. Norton was born and raised in Las Vegas. She is currently taking classes at the Community College of Southern Nevada and upon completion, will then enroll in the Nursing Program. She has been with Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery for 12 years.

Director of Clinic Operations

Gina Detwiler

Mrs. Detwiler was born and raised in Las Vegas. She moved to California and was an office manager for an Orthopedic practice and it wasn't long before she returned to her home base in Las Vegas. She has been with Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery for 13 years.

Meet our Physician Assistants

Joseph A. DeLappi, PA-C

Mr. DeLappi was born and raised in Scranton, Pennsylvania. He received a B.S. in Biology from the University of Scranton and then went on to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Physician Assistant Studies from Pennsylvania College of Technology. Mr. DeLappi has been with Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery for 2 years.

Michael B. Houtz, PA-C

Mr. Houtz was born and raised in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He graduated with a B.S.B.A. from the University of Missouri-Columbia and went on to receive his MBA in Finance from DePaul University. During the years that followed his acquisition of his MBA, Mr. Houtz attended Midwestern University and received a Bachelor of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies. Mr. Houtz has been with Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery for 2 years.

Douglas T. Young, PA-C, Ph.D.

Mr. Young was born in North Kingston, Rhode Island and raised in Houston, Texas. He graduated with an Associate of Arts Degree from San Jacinto College and then received his B.S. from the University of Houston. He then went on to receive two degrees from the Western University of Health Sciences, his Physician Assistant and Master of Science Degree. From there he went on to receive his Doctor of Philosophy from Kennedy-Western University. Mr. Young is also an instructor of Human Pathophysiology at the Community College of Southern Nevada. Currently Mr. Young is a Doctoral student at Nova South Eastern University. Upon graduation he will receive his second Doctorate of Education Degree in Managerial Leadership. Mr. Young has been with Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery for 1 year.

Hunter F. Homes, PA-C

Mr. Homes was born and raised in White Plains, New York. He graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in Health Sciences and then went on to receive his Bachelor of Science Degree in Physician Assistant Studies. Mr. Homes has been with Western Regional Center for Brain and Spine Surgery for 1 year.

Questions & Answers

These questions were gathered from referring physicians, their office staffs and our patients.

1. Do you accept pediatric patients as part of your practice?

Yes. In fact our practice performs the majority of pediatric neurosurgery in southern Nevada and surrounding communities. Dr. Stuart Kaplan joined our group in 2004 and performed a Pediatric Fellowship at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

2. Do you perform spine surgery as well as intracranial procedures?

Yes, we have one of the busiest and diverse spine practices in southern Nevada. Our physicians not only evaluate acute and degenerative spine conditions, but also perform complex spinal reconstructive procedures in both adults and pediatric patients. Our practice directs the neuro/spine injury program at the only Level 1 Trauma Center in southern Nevada. We also routinely treat tumor and vascular disease within the spinal cord itself.

3. At which of the Las Vegas hospitals are your physicians on staff?

All of our physicians have privileges at Sunrise, UMC, Desert Springs, Valley, MountainView, Summerlin, Spring Valley, Southern Hills, St. Rose DeLima and Siena Hospitals.

4. At which hospitals will your physicians perform surgery?

Our physicians perform surgery at Sunrise, UMC, Desert Springs, Valley, MountainView and St. Rose Siena.

5. Are any of the physicians on hospital medical staffs outside of Las Vegas?

We are also part of the medical staff of Western Arizona Regional Medical Center (Bullhead City, AZ), Kingman Regional Medical Center (Kingman, AZ), Havasu Regional Medical Center (Lake Havasu City, AZ) and Dixie Regional Medical Center (St. George, UT).

Dr. Venger has privileges at Western Arizona Regional Medical Center, Kingman Regional Medical Center, Havasu Regional Medical Center and Dixie Regional Medical Center. Dr. Anson has privileges at Havasu Regional Medical Center in Lake Havasu City, AZ.

6. Prior to scheduling an appointment, does one of the physicians need to review any records or radiology reports?

The more information our physicians have to review prior to evaluating a patient, the more efficiently we can determine what is necessary to arrive at a correct diagnosis. Generally, we ask that records be sent, if possible, to help facilitate this.

7. Do patients need to bring their actual films with them to their scheduled appointment?

Yes. Before reaching a decision to recommend surgery, we need to personally review all pertinent radiology studies. For this reason, if patients arrive without their actual films, their appointments may need to be rescheduled.

8. Do you accept worker's compensation?

Yes. We accept many out-of-state plans including those in Arizona, Utah and California.