Neurosurgery Faculty Well-Represented in Atlanta Top Doctors

Daniel Barrow  Nicholas Boulis  William Boydston  Jacques Dion

The Emory University Department of Neurosurgery continues to be the leader for neurological treatment and care throughout metro Atlanta. Atlanta Magazine’s “Top Doctors” issue for 2015 added to our department’s growing list of individual accomplishments by naming seven members of our faculty to the Neurosurgical and Neuroradiology sections.

Of the eleven neurosurgeons listed, Emory Neurosurgery accounted for six, including Daniel Barrow, MD, Nicholas Boulis, MD, William Boydston, MD, PhD, Jeffrey Olson, MD, Andrew Reisner, MD and Gerald Rodts, MD. Jacques Dion, MD, was one of three doctors in the Atlanta area listed as a top physician in neuroradiology. Overall, more than half of the physicians recognized in this year’s issue are Emory University School of Medicine faculty, Emory Healthcare doctors or Emory Healthcare Network doctors.

To compile the annual “Top Doctors” list, a survey and research process is used involving tens of thousands of top doctors across America and the medical leadership of leading hospitals. Atlanta’s top doctors are selected after peer nomination, extensive research, careful review and screening. Atlanta Magazine uses the research to provide detailed information about education, training and special expertise of Atlanta doctors.

Congratulations to our faculty on this much-deserved honor as they continue to be the leaders in their field.

Residency Program Ranked as One of Nation’s Finest

Choosing a residency program is one of the biggest decisions faced by new physicians when building their careers. In an effort to aid medical students in finding the proper training program, Residency Navigator released a transparent look into our country’s medical residency programs through various rankings. Emory’s Neurosurgery Residency Program was listed as one of the nation’s top programs based on the various rankings.

Emory has a national ranking of seventh in terms of overall reputation for neurosurgery residency programs, while ranking sixth in the country with a resident size of 21 trainees. Regional rankings have Emory listed as the top training program by reputation for neurosurgeons in the South, as well as the largest program in terms of enrolled residents.

Nelson M. Oyesiku, MD, PhD, FACS, Residency Program Director, sees the ranking as an influential tool residents can use when researching potential training programs.

“The Residency Navigator provides an insight into residency training programs,” Oyesiku said. “Emory’s ranking reflects our dedicated work to build future generations of neurosurgeons with a commitment to outstanding patient care and achieving excellent outcomes.”

Over 38,000 physicians contributed nominations, ratings and handwritten reviews. Residency Navigator combined feedback with objective data on residency programs across 22 specialties, as well as alumni outcomes analysis from curriculum vitae and career paths of the nation’s physicians.

Dr. Van Meir Receives Grant from St. Baldrick’s

Fundamental scientific research plays a vital role in translating scientific discovery into advanced treatments and clinical care for patients. Through a $100,000 grant from the St. Baldrick’s Foundation, Erwin Van Meir, PhD, and the Laboratory for Molecular Neuro-Oncology will work to find new approaches to treat childhood cancers.

This marks the second St. Baldrick’s grant Dr. Van Meir has received for his work on medulloblastoma (MB), which is the most common brain tumor found in children. Patients with MB have a high rate of relapse and poor prognosis due to a lack of effective therapeutic options, with new and efficacious antitumor agents urgently needed. Addressing this major challenge depends on a better understanding of the biological mechanisms of MB formation and their exploitation for therapeutic purposes. Dan Zhu, PhD, a Research Associate in the Laboratory for Molecular Neuro-Oncology, will lead the new research project.

Based out of Monrovia, Calif., the St. Baldrick’s Foundation is a volunteer-driven charity, committed to funding promising research such as the work being conducted in Dr. Van Meir’s lab to find cures for childhood cancers.
Ioachimescu Named Mentor of the Year

Adriana Ioachimescu, MD, PhD, FACE, takes great pride in helping train the next generation of endocrinologists. Through the Endocrinology Fellowship training program, Ioachimescu provides guidance and direction to those continuing their education at Emory. Her hands-on approach to helping develop future endocrinologists saw her voted the 2015 Mentor of the Year.

Ioachimescu takes great pride in receiving the mentor award as helping train these students is an important part of her duties within the School of Medicine.

“I am grateful to have received the research Mentor of the Year award from Emory endocrinology fellows,” Ioachimescu said. “The three fellows mentored at the Emory Pituitary Center won three awards at national and international meetings. Training and inspiring the future generation of endocrinologists to get involved in research has always been important to me.”

Ioachimescu was also recently elected to The Pituitary Society’s Board of Directors to help oversee functions of the society. The Pituitary Society is dedicated to furthering the understanding of diseases related to the pituitary gland, with a membership comprised of researchers and clinicians from all over the world.

Along with Dr. Nelson Oyesiku, Ioachimescu serves as the Co-Director of the Emory Pituitary Center. She also holds appointments as Associate Professor in the Departments of Neurosurgery and Medicine, as well as attending endocrinologist at Emory University Hospital.

Research and Clinical Trial Opportunities Available

Pituitary Disorders
- A Phase III, multi-center, double-blind, randomized withdrawal study of LCI699 following a 24 week, single-arm, open-label dose titration and treatment period to evaluate the safety and efficacy of LCI699 for the treatment of patients with Cushing’s disease, currently enrolling.
- Somatuline Depot (Lanreotide) Injection for Acromegaly: a Post-marketing Observational Study (SODA), multicentric prospective observational study, currently enrolling.
- Molecular Biology of Pituitary Tumors, currently enrolling.

Brain Tumors
- A Phase II randomized trial comparing the efficacy of heat shock protein-peptide complex-96 (HSPPC-96) (NSC #725085, ALLIANCE IND # 15380) vaccine given with Bevacizumab versus Bevacizumab alone in the treatment of surgically resectable recurrent Glioblastoma Multiforme (GBM).

Traumatic Brain Injury
- Surgical critical care initiative (SC2i-sTBI). Surgical decisions and biomarkers in severe traumatic brain injury.

Softball Team Takes Second at Annual Tournament

Emory Neurosurgery tied its highest finish at the 12th annual Neurosurgery Charity Softball Tournament over the summer. Emory claimed a hard-fought second place finish, coming up just short against the Barrow Neurological Institute by a final score of 8-6. The annual tournament brings together teams of neurosurgery departments to compete in New York City’s Central Park.

Emory opened the tournament in round robin play, going 2-1 with wins over New York University and Johns Hopkins University and a loss to Duke University. The knockout stages saw the team’s bats get hot, taking out the University of Miami 12-1, Columbia University 18-3 in the quarterfinals and avenging the earlier loss to Duke in the semifinals with an 18-6 win.

This year’s team was comprised of faculty members Cory Adamson, Faiz Ahmad, Daniel Barrow, Robert Gross, Kenneth Hill and Gerald Rodts, as well as residents Griffin Baum, Andrew Boucher, Jason Chu, Brian Howard, Jay McCracken, Michael Moore and Joe Quillin.

The tournament, which is a partnership between the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and Columbia University Pediatric Brain Tumor Research Fund with sponsorship from the New York Yankees, helps bring awareness to brain tumor research. The tournament has become a tradition within the neurosurgical community and represents the amiable competition, social camaraderie and charitable nature within neurosurgery.

Neurosurgery and Emory University Hospital Recognized

The 2015-16 Best Hospitals Guide from U.S. News & World Report saw Emory Neurosurgery’s national ranking jump three spots from 15 to 12 in hospital adult specialty areas. For the fourth year in a row, Emory University Hospital was also ranked the number one hospital in both Georgia and metro Atlanta.

The hospital rankings identify the best medical centers for the most difficult patients, those whose illnesses pose unusual challenges because of underlying conditions, procedure difficulty or other medical issues that add risk.