President's Message

The Pregnant Neurosurgeon: Not an Oxymoron

Pregnancy and Neurosurgery

As Organized Neurosurgery embraces consideration of the issues surrounding the recruitment, advancement and retention of women neurosurgeons, the unavoidable and complex concept of the Pregnant Neurosurgeon emerges. While serving as the current President of Women in Neurosurgery, I concurrently serve the equally, if not more, challenging role of the Pregnant Neurosurgeon, pregnant with my fourth son. My pregnancies have occurred during all phases of a neurosurgical career - when I was a resident, fellow, on a pre-attending "career break," and, now, 10 years into life as a neurosurgery attending.

The literature on pregnant surgeons is sparse; there is essentially no literature on pregnant neurosurgeons. Neurosurgery, not entirely by choice, has adopted a "don't ask/don't tell" approach in the workplace, a strategy not always helpful to the Pregnant Neurosurgeon or to her colleagues. Women in neurosurgery often attempt to "blend" so as not to cause undue attention to their femaleness. During pregnancy, the female neurosurgeon becomes unavoidably visibly different from men. The most well-intentioned may find this physical reminder of gender difference difficult to reconcile. Pregnancy in Neurosurgery is a sensitive, perhaps even taboo, topic with far-reaching implications. However, as women become more prevalent in Neurosurgery, the topic of the Pregnant Neurosurgeon becomes unavoidable, and deserves reflection.

One can easily imagine the physical risks inherent to working as a Pregnant Neurosurgeon. For the Pregnant Neurosurgeon, there are issues generic to working in a medical environment, as well as challenges particular to neurosurgery. General concerns include contact with infectious materials, exposure to anaesthetic gases and physical dangers of heavy lifting during patient positioning. Ionizing radiation, a known cause of miscarriage and birth defects, may be encountered in neurosurgery, especially during fluoroscope-guided surgeries and neuroendovascular procedures. Some radiosurgery environments may expose the pregnant worker to unacceptable levels of radiation. The long duration of neurosurgical procedures may increase

risk of deep venous thrombi in the setting of pregnancy's hypercoaguable state and may produce dehydration, associated with preterm labor1. Interestingly, some pregnant neurosurgeons have reported triggering of emesis in the operating room by particular stimuli such as cautery smoke and the initial view through the surgical microscope when it is introduced into the operative field.

Perhaps less well understood than the physical hazards are the more complex other concerns surrounding Pregnancy and Neurosurgery.

Pregnancy as an Impediment to Recruitment in Neurosurgery

Maximizing recruitment of the best and brightest neurosurgeons of the future includes recognition of the deterrents to recruitment of qualified potential applicant groups. Neurosurgery is widely considered a specialty poorly compatible with having children. This perception inhibits application of female medical students for whom childbearing is important. Even the uncertainty of the compatibility between a neurosurgical career and family may serve as deterrent enough to discourage application.

The residency application and interview process bilaterally discourages discourse about plans for pregnancy during or after neurosurgical residency. Employment and hiring laws essentially prohibit open discussion of this important matter. The laws are intended to prevent gender discrimination in the recruitment and hiring process, but in some cases may actually encourage it. Residency programs are left uneasy about accepting female applicants due to the inherent "risk" of hiring a woman (i.e. she gets pregnant and drops out); the applicant is discouraged from addressing the issue, fearful of opening a Pandora's Box.

A quick look at the medical student "blogs" reveals some poignant concerns and highlights the impact that consideration of pregnancy in Neurosurgery has for young women considering a career in Neurosurgery. Here are some excerpts from the Student Doctor Forum2:

The two female medical students I know who are pursuing neurosurgery have both resigned themselves to not having children. I find this to be kind of depressing. Is it really impossible to balance both a career in



Susan C. Pannullo, MD **WINS President**

neurosurgery and a family? I value family and enjoyment of life as much as I do my career, and I cannot imagine discarding one for the other. I would love to hear some female neurosurgeons' perspectives. Any feedback with be greatly appreciated." (powermd, 05-28-2006, 06:00 AM)

...the 1 woman neurosurgeon I know is single, no kids.... Good luck pursuing NS. I think you have to turn in your ovaries though." (Fomites, 05-24-2006, 02:54 AM)

"OK, well all these posts are depressing.... You have to be dedicated to your career, no doubt. And it doesn't help that the residency lasts during the child-bearing years of your life." (betz, 05-24-2006, 06:02 PM)

Pregnancy During Neurosurgical Residency and Fellowship

Unique characteristics of Neurosurgery Residency, as opposed to most other surgical training programs, include small program size, length of training and the rigorousness of the training experience. The reality of Neurosurgery residency programs is that these programs are small relative to other training programs, often hiring only 1-2 residents per year. Neurosurgical residency programs are not staffed to support the prolonged absence that may accompany a pregnancy. Reduction in work hours allowed and strict enforcement of work hour limitations have produced increasing inflexibility regarding resident leave. In addition, a program, as above, may be hesitant to "waste" a coveted spot on a female resident, who biologically (for now at least) is more likely than a male counterpart to become pregnant during her career.

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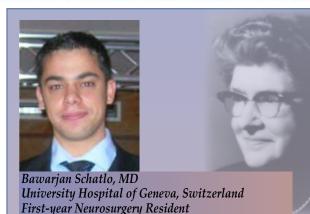
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WINS MISSION

To educate, inspire, and encourage women to realize their professional and personal goals, and to serve neurosurgery in addressing the issues inherent to training and maintaining a diverse and balanced workforce.



The 2008 Louise Eisenhardt Resident Travel Scholarship

Cortical Infarct in a Primate Model of Subarachnoid Hemorrhage (SAH): Is it an Animal Model of Delayed Ischemic Deficits?

This paper and award will be presented at the AANS Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, AANS/CNS Cerebrovascular Section, Tuesday, April 29, 2008 3:01-3:08 p.m.

The Louise Eisenhardt Resident Travel Scholarship is granted yearly to an outstanding resident abstract accepted at the American Association of Neurological Surgeons Annual Meeting. Up to \$2000 stipend is given to cover travel expenses.

For both Sherry Apple and Louise Eisenhardt Resident Travel Scholarships, all interested residents may submit their abstracts through the CNS and AANS Abstract Center and indicate WINS award consideration in the provided menu.



The 2007 Sherry Apple Resident Travel Scholarship

Atypical Non-Benign Clinical Course for Spontaneous Angiogramnegative Subarachnoid Hemorrhage: A Single Center Experience with 95 Patients.

This award was presented at the WINS reception during the CNS Annual Meeting, Tuesday, September 18, 2007, San Diego, California.

The paper was presented during the Select Abstract Session, Monday, September 17, 2007, 4:00-5:30 PM.

The Sherry Apple Resident Scholarship was named in honor of our colleague and WINS President who died in 2001. The Sherry Apple Resident Travel Scholarship is granted yearly to an outstanding resident abstract accepted at the Congress of Neurological Surgeons Annual Meeting. Up to \$2000 stipend is given to cover travel expenses.

Contributed by Jamie Ullman, MD

The Pregnant Neurosurgeon...

Continued from page 1

Neurosurgery residency is generally at least 7-8 years, a long period relative to the short time considered optimal for attempting pregnancy. Advanced maternal age alone, due to postponing of pregnancy, is a well recognized factor associated with numerous obstetrical complications¹.

Finally, the rigors of neurosurgical training may produce risks for the pregnant neurosurgical resident and her unborn child. Rotating shift work, especially involving night shift hours, has been associated with increased incidence of spontaneous abortion, preterm birth and intrauterine growth retardation³. In the UK, workers by law are not obligated to work at nights during pregnancy, the postpartum period and while breastfeeding. In many European countries, night work was banned for pregnant woman; this mandate was later softened to a guideline to prevent discrimination against female workers4.

Fellowship training may be a kinder, gentler time for pregnancy, depending

upon the type of fellowship and schedule involved.

Some fellowship programs are less "operative," and, hence, may be better-suited for a concurrent pregnancy. Some fellowship programs are custom made and thus more flexible. Some may rely less heavily upon the fellow in the call schedule, allowing less disruption of a program should the pregnant neurosurgeon need to temporarily adjust work hours or type. All of this talk, however, assumes that women can perfectly time their pregnancies to coincide with a particular time in their careers.

The Pregnant Neurosurgery Attending

For the Neurosurgeon in practice, oddly, pregnancy may be especially difficult to manage. The concept of taking time from practice is complex. The high degree of subspecialization in Neurosurgery today may leave even a large practice without coverage in a specific subspecialty if the Pregnant

Neurosurgeon takes a pregnancyrelated leave of absence. As with hiring of female neurosurgery residents, concerns about future pregnancy may give pause to a practice considering hiring a woman. Creative workforce solutions such as locum tenens, neurosurgery job virtual billboards and job-sharing may be responses to this challenge.

In academic neurosurgery, time off as a neurosurgery attending may produce delays in promotion and academic advancement. The Pregnant Neurosurgeon (or one planning pregnancy) may be perceived as less serious or committed to Neurosurgery. Even the issue of Board Certification for an early-career female Neurosurgeon may be complicated by the timeline imposed by the case accrual needed to meet board requirements. The woman who finds herself having completed well over a decade of preparation to become a Neurosurgery attending thus faces a difficult choices between a running career start and (finally) beginning a family.

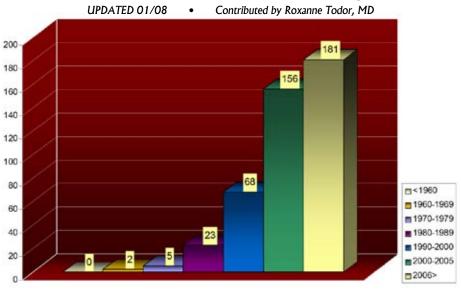
Pregnancy and Neurosurgery: The Future

Not all women Neurosurgeons wish to have children. But for the ones that do, the challenges faced by the Pregnant Neurosurgeon, although surmountable, are currently great. A discussion of Pregnancy in Neurosurgery sparks consideration of recruitment, advancement and retention of women neurosurgeons, neurosurgery work safety, and employment law as well as a host of other difficult topics. It is my hope that Organized Neurosurgery will continue its efforts to optimize the contribution and experience of both genders in neurosurgery, and consider these challenges as it moves toward the future.

REFERENCES

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- $2. \, Student \, Doctor \, Forum. \, http://forums.student doctor.net.$
- 3. Nurminen T. Shift work and reproductive health. Scand J Work and Environ Health, 1998; 24: 28–34.
- 4. Cross KLR. The pregnant surgeon. Bulletin of The Royal College of Surgeons of England, 2006; 88, vol 4: 137-139).

Board-Certified U.S. Women Neurosurgeons







Kali Evans-Raoul Founder and President The Image Studios

oin us for the Spring 2008 Women in Neurosurgery Meeting and Ruth Kerr Jakoby Lecture

Tuesday, April 29, 2008
6-8 p.m. • Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers • Sheraton 2

"Image Impact: Your Professional Presence"

Studies have shown that over 80% of career success is attributed to image and exposure. This interactive presentation reinforces the importance of Image and Exposure – two critical factors of success. The exciting session explains the core components of visual, verbal and non-verbal image; and allows participants to gain insight into their own "first impression" and how to control it.

Kali Evans-Raoul, founder and president of The Image Studios, launched her successful Chicago-based image communication firm in 2000 out of a commitment to helping others understand, define and present their own message. She holds a Chemical Engineering degree from Carnegie Mellon University, and has worked in research & development, marketing and consumer education for a range of companies, including L'Oreal, Kraft Foods, and the boutique hair care and beauty company Dudley Products. She has spent over 25

years in the personal care product and service industry, and has experience in both creating and running a business.

The impetus for creating The Image Studios came from Ms. Evans-Raoul's experiences in corporate America, where she watched talented and competent individuals miss out on promotions and advancement opportunities primarily because they weren't recognized as "high potential" individuals. With The Image Studios she has created the business model that provides the tools and process to help individuals move out of the shadows and be seen and heard.

The Image Studios has been featured on ABC's Starting Over, and has been covered in CNN.com, *The Chicago Sun-Times, The Chicago Tribune, Well Magazine* and Crain's. Corporate clients include ExxonMobil, Citibank, KPMG, The Gap, Kraft Foods and PepsiCo. Ms. Evans-Raoul is an active member of the Association of Image Consultants International (AICI), National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), the National Cosmetology Association (NCA), and volunteers monthly with Look Good Feel Better (LGFB). She lives in Chicago with her husband, Illinois State Senator Kwame Raoul, and their two children, Ché & Mizan.

WINS thanks our 2008 Spring Women in Neurosurgery Reception Program sponsors:





2008 American Association of Neurological Surgeons Annual Meeting: FOCUS ON LEARNING April 26-May 1, 2008 • Chicago, IL WINS Highlights

Saturday, April 26, 2008

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007 Hands-On Peripheral Nerve of the Upper Extremities		
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023 Non-Invasive Pre-Operative and Intra-Operative Brain Mapping and Treatment of Epilepsy		
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025 Practical and Technical Aspects of Transsphenoidal Surgery		
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Co-DirectorsGeoffrey T. Manley, MD, PhD; Shelly D. Timmons, MD, PhD Faculty		
Coplin, MD; Domenic P. Esposito, MD, FACS; Michael G. Fehlings, MD, PhD; Anthony Marmarou, PhD; Raj K. Narayan, MD		

Director
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033 Neurosurgical Case Coding: Cranial and Non-Spine Procedures Director
038 Choosing and Developing a Neurosurgical Practice Co-Directors
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WOMEN IN NEUROSURGE

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Authors......Nicholas C. Bambakidis, MD; Elisa Beres, MD; Robert Spetzler, MD

AANS/CNS Section on Peripheral Nerve

806 Patient Satisfaction after Brachial Plexus Surgery

807 Tissue-Engineered Nerve Grafts with a Capillary-Like Network Authors......Marie-Noëlle Hébert-Blouin, MD; René Caissie, MD; Line Jacques, MD; François Berthod, PhD

AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurosurgery

ModeratorSarah J. Gaskill, MD, FACS

838 Congenital Hydrocephalus Still Beats the Shunt Technology: Programmable Shunts Did Not Change the Scenario of Revisions

Authors......Christina Notarianni, MD; Papireddy Bollam, MD; Prasad Vannemreddy, MD; Gloria Caldito, MD; Esther Wylen, MD; Brian Willis, MD; Anil Nanda, MD

839 Correlation of Cognitive Deficits and Noninvasive Measurement of ICP and CBF in Hydrocephalus

Authors..... Roberta P. Glick, MD; Terry Lichtor, MD, PhD; Aaron Lee, BS; Noam Alperin, PhD 840 Evaluation of CSF Drainage by Subcutaneous Ventricular Reservoir and Permanent Diversion Procedures in the Management of Posthemorrhagic Hydrocephalus in Premature Infants

Authors......Vijayakumar Javalkar, MD; Prasad Vannemreddy, MD; Gloria Caldito, MD; Anil Nanda, MD

841 Parent Assessment on the BRIEF Correlates with Executive Performance of Children with Shunted Hydrocephalus

Authors.......Maureen A. Lacy, PhD; Emily Astria, BS; Christina Lee; David Frim, MD, PhD; Scott Hunter, PhD; Martin Oliveria, PhD; Kristen Kasza, PhD

Thursday, May 1, 2008

BREAKFAST SEMINARS

Socioeconomic Plenary Session

902 The Effect of Transfer and Emergency Department Admissions on Mortality of a University Neurosurgical Service

Authors......Ronald L. Hammers, MD; Susan Anzalone, BS; T. C. Origitano, MD, FACS

903 Assessing the Impact of Certificate of Need Laws in Patient Access to Elective Neurosurgical Care

Authors...... Elana Fric-Shamji, MD; Mohammed F. Shamji, MD, MSc

904 Ventral Surgery Versus Dorsal Decompression with Fusion for Cervical Spondylotic Myelopathy: A Cost Analysis

Authors......Zoher Ghogawala, MD; Rachel Potter; Ellyn Wasserberger, BS; Fred G. Barker, II, MD

Medicare Participation Options CMS Rules Regarding Medicare Participation

Speaker......Katie Orrico, JD

Highlights Contributed by Chris Philips





Marcia Angell, MD

The 2008 Louise Eisenhardt Lecturer: Marcia Angell, MD

The 2008 Louise Eisenhardt Lecturer at the AANS meeting is Marcia Angell, MD. Dr. Angell is a distinguished American physician and author, and the first woman to serve as the editor-in-chief of the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM). She is currently a senior lecturer in the Department of Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. After completing her undergraduate studies in Chemistry and Mathematics at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va., Dr. Angell spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar studying microbiology in Frankfurt, Germany. Dr. Angell went on to complete her medical studies at Boston University School of Medicine and received her MD degree in 1967. She is a board certified Pathologist, having trained in both internal medicine and anatomic pathology. Dr. Angell joined the editorial staff of NEJM in 1979, became executive editor in 1988, and interim editor-in-chief from 1999 until June 2000. She is a frequent contributor to both medical journals and the popular media on a wide range of topics, particularly medical ethics, health policy, the nature of medical evidence, the interface of medicine and the law, and end-of-life healthcare. Her book, *Science on Trial: The Clash of Medical Evidence and the Law in the Breast Implant Case* (1996), received critical acclaim. With Stanley Robbins and, later, Vinay Kumar, she co-authored the first three editions of the textbook *Basic Pathology*.

Time magazine has named Marcia Angell one of the 25 most influential Americans.

Contributed by Lauren Schwartz, MD

2008 Louise Eisenhardt Lecture: Marcia Angell, MD
Tuesday, April 29, 2008 • 11:15 - 11:45 a.m. • Main Hall Convention Center

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Chris Philips Ron Engelbreit Sandy Meyer WINS is sponsoring a private breakfast in Dr. Angell's honor on the morning of the Louise Eisenhardt Lecture at Hyatt Regency McCormick Place, CC12B 4/29/2008 8:30 - 10:00 AM.

For information regarding the WINS Breakfast contact Ann Marie LaCasha at aml@aans.org.

Women in Neurosurgery thanks MGI PHARMA, INC., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Eisai Corporation of North America, Biomet and Leica for their generous support of the Louise Eisenhardt Breakfast at AANS 2008.







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WINS Holds First Regional Meeting

Women in Neurosurgery held it first regional meeting in New York City on December 14, 2007. Despite the weather, the event was well-attended. Members were treated to dinner at BLT Fish in Chelsea. The program included an interactive discussion with two management consultants, Licia Hahn and Susan Longhito, under the title, "Achieving What You Want in the Workplace." Ms. Hahn is the President of her own consulting firm with extensive experience in coaching high-powered executives and CEOs. Ms. Longhito, President of Paideia Communications, is an executive advisor in the healthcare and biotechnology industries. Members were afforded the opportunity to site examples and discuss workplace issues with these experts. WINS would like to thank DePuy Spine/Spinal Dimensions and MGI Pharma for their generous support of this event.



Contributed by Jamie Ullman, MD





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2008 Women in Neurosurgery Bi-Annual Meeting, Reception and Ruth Kerr Jakoby Lecture

- At AANS Meeting, Chicago, IL
- Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers, Sheraton 2
- Tuesday, 4/29/08
- 6-8 p.m.



Kali Evans-Raoul Founder & President The Image Studios

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Announcing...

ELECTIONS!

Women in Neurosurgery elections for Secretary-Treasurer 2008-2009 will be held this summer. You may nominate yourself or others.

EMAIL NOMINATIONS TO: Chris Philips cap@aans.org by June 30, 2008.

Please include a brief statement (2-3 sentences) regarding why you or your nominee wish to serve on the WINS Executive Committee.