From the Chair

We are happy to send you the latest issue of Neurotransmissions, the UW Department of Neurology’s newsletter for colleagues, alumni and friends. This newsletter was created to share the exciting developments in our department, including the latest information on research, clinical resources and education.

Our lead story in this issue covers the UW Medicine Comprehensive Stroke Center at Harborview Medical Center. It serves the five-state region known as WWAMI, comprising Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho. As such, it is a critical resource for numerous community providers and patients, providing the most advanced stroke care via our round-the-clock TeleStroke program and by direct transport. With the help of our partner Airlift Northwest, we can care for patients from the most remote areas when time is of the essence. The Center, recently certified by the Joint Commission, is also a hub of important stroke research.

In addition, we take our mission of training the region’s next generation of stroke specialists very seriously. WWAMI is originally a program of the UW School of Medicine; over the past 30 years, 60 percent of its graduates have chosen to remain within the region to practice. With the aging United States population, the need for stroke neurologists is becoming more pressing, and our department is privileged to help fill it.

“From Our Residents” salutes our 2016 graduating class of adult and pediatric residents. Please join us in wishing the most recent group of trainees well as they embark on additional training or begin practice.

Are you a former Department of Neurology trainee? Neurotransmissions is seeking someone to connect with fellow alums and gather notes of their adventures. You need not write a column, but simply contact a few alumni and alumnae twice a year and send us what you’ve gleaned. For more information, contact Megan Schade at schadm@uw.edu.

As always, we want to make Neurotransmissions as relevant and useful to you as possible. Please contact us with suggestions and advice for future issues. Though you may not be on campus every day as we are, you remain an essential part of all that we do.
What is a top cause of permanent adult disability in the United States and a leading cause of death, with nearly 800,000 incidents a year? If you answered "stroke," you’re right.

Fortunately, stroke is one of the UW Department of Neurology’s leading areas of clinical care and research. The UW Medicine Comprehensive Stroke Center at Harborview Medical Center is a Joint Commission-certified Comprehensive Stroke Center serving approximately 800 patients each year. “It offers a depth and breadth of knowledge not available elsewhere in the area,” says Kyra Becker, M.D., UW Professor of Neurology and Neurological Surgery.

Specialists provide 24-hour emergency and acute inpatient stroke care. The center has 8 board-certified vascular neurologists on staff, along with neurovascular surgeons and interventional neuroradiologists.

“Harborview has a large neuroscience ICU to care for patients with complex strokes,” says Becker, director of vascular neurology services. “Patients with less severe strokes receive care on the neurosciences specialty unit or stroke unit.” Nurses in the neuroscience ICU and neurosciences specialty unit have specialized training in caring for patients with neurologic illnesses.

**A regional stroke resource**

The center is a key resource for WWAMI—Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho. “Providers can call from anywhere, day or night,” says stroke center director David Tirschwell, M.D., M.Sc., UW Professor of Neurology. A faculty member carries the stroke center call phone (“Stroke Phone”) so consultation is available at a moment’s notice. The TeleStroke partnership offered by the Stroke Center offers many benefits to referring physicians and hospitals, including specialist review of radiology images via private network with immediate feedback. Partners also have access to online diagnostics and treatment protocols.

**A center for stroke research**

In January of 2013, Tirschwell received funding from the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association for an epidemiological study of stroke in people with HIV. “As HIV treatments improve, people are living longer,” says Tirschwell. “But characterizing age-related diseases such as stroke in this population has not been done well yet.” The project will help define incidence and risk factors for cerebrovascular events in HIV-infected persons, focusing on traditional risk factors (including age), HIV itself and the use of anti-retroviral drugs.

Becker has a National Institutes of Health grant to study how post-stroke infections worsen patient outcomes. She is collaborating with Shawn Skerrett, M.D., UW Professor of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. About 30 percent of stroke patients develop infections in the hospital; pneumonia, in particular, is associated with worse outcomes. “In a clinical study done at Harborview, patients who developed infections were less likely to recover to the point of walking independently,” Becker says.

The mechanism may be an autoimmune reaction that worsens brain injury. Becker is also studying the effect of antibiotic selection on outcomes.

Tirschwell and Becker are co-Principal Investigators of a NINDS funded Regional Coordinating Center in the NIH StrokeNet, a recently formed national network of regional networks designed to perform stroke clinical trials more efficiently. As a result, the Stroke Center is involved in several NIH-sponsored, multi-site clinical trials, including a trial of deferoxamine for patients with intracerebral hemorrhage, called i-DEF. “Because of our unique referral status, we see a disproportionate percentage of patients with intracerebral hemorrhages, as will be studied in i-DEF,” says Tirschwell. “We have a great interest in caring for these patients and have published papers related to outcomes in this subgroup of very severe strokes.”

To learn more about the UW Medicine Comprehensive Stroke Center at Harborview, visit www.uwmedicine.org/stroke/

To request a TeleStroke consult, contact the UW Medicine Transfer Center at 888.731.4791.
Residency News

Our adult neurology residency is directed by Patricia Oakes, M.D., a general neurologist practicing primarily at the UWMC and Arielle Davis, M.D., a cerebrovascular neurologist practicing at Harborview Medical Center. Drs. Oakes and Davis are proud to announce the names and destinations of our June 2016 graduates:

**Nick Freeburg**
Cerebrovascular fellowship
*University of Washington Hospitals*

**Kevin Gobeske**
Neuro-intensivist fellowship
*Mayo Clinic, Rochester*

**Paul Johnson**
Cerebrovascular fellowship
*University of Washington Hospitals*

**Anny Lin**
Movement Disorder Fellowship
*University of Washington Hospitals*

**Meghan Romba**
Neuro-immunology fellowship
*Johns Hopkins University*

**Ziad Al Soufi Al Sukkary**
practice at Evergreen Health
*Kirkland, Washington*

“Approximately 90 percent of our adult neurology residents do fellowship training at the UW or other institutions,” says Oakes. “Graduates continue to report feeling very well prepared for their next career steps, whether fellowship training or independent practice.”

Faculty News

Recent grants


**Kyra J. Becker**, MD, Professor. Role of HBI-002, an orally administered gasotransmitter, in ischemic stroke. Hillhurst Biopharm / NIH.


Our child neurology residency is directed by James Owens, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Neurology. The program will graduate two residents this June: John Carter and Jason Lockrow. Dr. Owens says, “John and Jason have been absolutely fabulous residents – both individually and as a team. From their initial two years of pediatrics through adult neurology and these past two years at Children’s they have consistently demonstrated excellence in both the cognitive and the humanistic aspects of medicine. We are delighted that they will be staying on for fellowship: John in Sleep Medicine and Jason in Clinical Neurophysiology.”

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Faculty News Continued

Suman Jayadev, MD, Assistant Professor. A Phase 3 multicenter, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, parallel-group study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of aducanumab (BIIB037) in subjects with early Alzheimer’s disease. Biogen.

Nicholas Poolos, MD, PhD, Associate Professor and Vice Chair for Research. Epilepsy and dendritic excitability. NIH.

John Oakley, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor. Understanding the relationship between gene mutation, seizures, and cognitive impairment in Dravet Syndrome. Dravet Syndrome Foundation.

Recent publications


Philanthropy

Individual departments at the University of Washington rely on gifts and donations to operate and maintain many vital research and teaching programs. In the Department of Neurology, gift funds have been established to support research on individual disease states (brain tumors, movement disorders, Alzheimer’s, epilepsy, etc.), training programs providing opportunities for residents to research important topics and travel to scientific meetings, and education and support programs for patients. There are many ways to make a gift to the Department of Neurology and no gift is too small to make an impact. The easiest way to make a gift to Neurology is by going online to https://www.washington.edu/giving/make-a-gift/ and entering “Neurology” in the search box. A list of all funds associated with Neurology will show up including a brief description of how the funds are used. Once a fund is chosen, the site will lead you through the process to complete your donation. For larger gifts, donors often choose to establish an endowment. The principal gift is never accessed in an endowment. Instead, the interest earnings provide a continuous revenue stream for the chosen program or research. For this reason, many donors choose to name an endowment after a loved one or to create a family legacy. The Department of Neurology has benefited from several large gifts recently including $50,000 from a grateful patient to support Parkinson’s research, $10,000 to the Endowed Alzheimer’s Disease Research Fund, and $10,000 to support ALS research. On behalf of the Department, I would like to express our thanks for all of the gifts and donations we receive to support our programs and research. They truly make a difference!

Upcoming events

Inaugural Alumni Day & 2016 Neurology Update MiniSymposium
with Kyra Becker, MD, Christina Marra, MD, Bruce Ransom, MD, PhD and others
Thursday, June 16th, 2016
12:00 noon HUB ROOM 145
TO REGISTER, VISIT: https://depts.washington.edu/neurolog/

3rd Annual Trainee Research Poster Symposium
Thursday, June 16th, 2016
3:30 P.M. HUB ROOM 250

Resident graduation
Thursday June 16th, 2016, 5:30 p.m.
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON CLUB