Neurosurgery Update

continued from front page

practitioners, neuro-oncology fellows, and clinical and research assistants can be found. Patient examining rooms and a conference room are also within this space. Dr. Robert Martus has been the director of the Brain Tumor Center since 2000, taking the reins from Dr. Robert Ojemann.

The Staff

The neurosurgical staff in the BTC is composed of Dr. Fred Barker, Dr. Bob Carter, Dr. Paul Chapman, Dr. E.A. Chiocca, Dr. Rees Congrove, Dr. E. Emad Eskandar, Dr. Brooke Sweantgen, and Dr. Robert Ojemann. The center’s neuro-oncologists are Drs. Tracy Batchelor (the center’s executive director), D.A. Ellison O’Neill, Dr. John Henson, and Dr. Fred Hochberg. Radiation oncology expertise is provided by Dr. Jay Loftier, Dr. Arnav Chakravarti, and Dr. Annie Chan. Neuropathologic expertise is available through Dr. Tessa Hedley-White, David Louis, and Matt Frech. The BTC also offers social work and psychological expertise to our patients.

The staff meets in a weekly conference to review patient care and treatment options as well as to review cases that were submitted from outside institutions or physicians for an opinion.

NABTT

For malignant tumors of the brain, we currently belong to the NABTT (New Approaches to Brain Tumor Therapy) consortium that encompasses multiple institutions in the Eastern and Southern USA. Through this consortium, several phase I and II clinical trials of novel chemotherapeutic and biologic (gene therapy and immunomodulatory) agents are performed for patients afflicated with malignant gloma, metastases and lymphoma. In addition, brain tumor investigator-initiated or company-sponsored clinical trials are also being performed. For example, a phase 1 trial for patients with malignant recurrent gloma using intratumoral injections of ONX-011, a replicative tumor-selective oncolytic virus, was recently completed.

BTC efforts are being supported not only through clinical revenue, but also through government grants. We were recently awarded a neuro-oncologist research training fellowship to allow for training of two neuro-oncologists per year. A multimillion dollar program (July 2002 – December 2004) was recently awarded to the MGH by the National Cancer Institute as part of a Center of Excellence in Brain Tumor Research. This program is designed to bring together basic and clinical research laboratories from BTC clinicians and other collaborators to form a clinical expertise available in the center for research project initiation and completion. Finally, the generosity of several patients allows for funding of several research projects.

In summary, a vibrant and compassionate collection of experts and ideas tries to provide the best possible care both in terms of standard and innovative therapies.

Alumni News of Note

Steven Bren was awarded Physician of the Year by the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer & Research Center in Tampa, Florida.

Paul H. Chapman, chief of pediatric neurosurgery at the MGH, was named the first Nicholas T. Zervas Professor in Neurosurgery, starting July 2002.

Zoher Ghogawala is coordinating with Lawrence Borges and Dr. Edward Burton, a national multi-center clinical trial looking at fusion versus no fusion for patients with symptomatic spinal stenosis with a grade I spondylolisthesis. (Continued on page 2)

Resident Research Rotations

Joseph Neimat, M.D. (Dr. John Assad and Dr. Emad Eskandar Laboratory @ HMS) (July 2001 – December 2002)

The focus of research is to elucidate the role that the basal ganglia play in motor decision-making. It is believed that the basal ganglia act to select desired movements from among unwanted movement possibilities. To demonstrate this role, a task has been designed that requires the subject, in this case a macaque monkey, to select a single motor action from a variety of choices. The firing of neurons in the various nuclei of the basal ganglia is then recorded while the monkey is performing its task. Through this research, it is desired to correlate movement selection to distinctive patterns of firing in the basal ganglia.

Khalid Abbed, M.D. (Dr. Ennio Chiocca Laboratory @ MGH) (July 2002 – June 2004)

Focus of research involves two projects. The first project involves a look at how new neurons may be differentiated from adult bone marrow cells and appears within the spinal cord at the site of injury. The second involves using tumor-selective, oncolytic viruses to treat malignant gliomas.

Zvi Williams, M.D. (Dr. David Louis Laboratory @ MGH) (January 2003 – December 2004)

Beginning January 2003, Dr. Williams will be investigating neuronal mechanisms in the basal ganglia that underlie planned movement. This work will be done with awake behaving primates and rely on electrode recordings to look at variations in neuronal activity.

Daniel Cahill, M.D. (Dr. David Louis Laboratory @ MGH) (July 2002 – December 2002)

Involved with microarray gene expression analysis to develop more accurate classification of brain tumors. Using these expression data, we are trying to identify the genetic alterations that drive the formation of different types of brain tumors.

Alumni News of Note

(Continued from page 2)

Roberto Heros completed his term as President of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons.

Michael Layne has been appointed Professor of Clinical Neurosurgery by the Weill Medical College of Cornell University.

Burton Ondrofi has been appointed Professor Chair at the Mayo Clinic.

Harold Wilkinson recently retired from surgery, but will continue a limited consultative practice at MGH and Newton-Wellesley Hospital’s Spine Clinic.

Alumni News of Note

continued from front page

Dr. John Assad and Dr. Emad Eskandar Laboratory at Harvard Medical School.

In summary, a vibrant and compassionate collection of experts and ideas tries to provide the best possible care both in terms of standard and innovative therapies.
Center for Nervous System Repair Opens

Edwards 4 Newly Renovated Laboratory Space

Following a year and a half of extensive renovations, the Edwards 4 research laboratory was completed in December 2002. This new on-campus laboratory, the Center for Nervous System Repair, is devoted to translational neurosurgical projects in cellular neurosurgery and neurotechnology. More specifically, the laboratory will be bringing together scientists who are involved in explorations of neural stem cells, neural regeneration, and applications in the brain, spinal cord, visual and auditory systems. Upon completion of Edwards 4, Dr. Jeffrey Macklin from Children’s Hospital Boston relocated his laboratory to this new space and has become director of the Center. Edwards 4 will also be occupied by Dr. Naye Al-Rodhan, Dr. Bob Carter, and Dr. Emad Eskander.

Ojemann Professorship

We are thrilled to let you all know that we have initiated a fund raising effort to honor someone who has meant a quite deal to the department, Dr. Robert Ojemann, with a Harvard Professorship. As many of you probably know, Dr. Ojemann has been an important member of our department, and we feel that this Professorship will be a lasting tribute to his years of dedicated service, teaching, and mentorship. If you are interested in participating in this special project, please contact Heather Colmore in the Development Office at 617-724-6407.

Neuroscience Series Established

Neurology joined with the departments of Neurology and Psychiatry to establish a year-long neuroscience lecture series. Dr. Jeffrey Macklin organized the Neuroscience portion of series, inviting four lecturers, including Dr. Joseph Martin, Dean of the Medical School who kicked off the series in September. Other lecturers included The William H. Sweet Lecturer, Martin E. Schwab and Robert L. Martuza.

Upcoming Events of Interest

Mark your calendars for the MGH alumni Reception at the AANS Meeting April 26th at 5:30 p.m.

Harvard Saturday Conferences continue the first Saturday of the month.

Call 617-726-8581 for information or to be placed on the notification list.

Student Program News

One of the biggest developments for our residency program is the change to an 88 hour work week for the resident staff. There is a national mandate that this change be in effect for all programs to perform. The new Director of the Operating Rooms, Dr. Richard Wulfhild, has worked hard with members of the Neurosurgical Service to accommodate the increase in volume and the sometimes special needs of neurosurgery.

ICU

The Intensive Care Unit remains a vital part of our service. The ICU is now staffed 24 hours a day by an Intensive Care Unit Fellow or neurosurgical resident, and there is full coverage by attending staff. There is a full ICU fellowship available for two individuals. Dr. Walter Korfosse of Neurology and Dr. Brooke Swearingen direct the unit. There are several ongoing clinical studies including the use of hypothermia in vasospasm, hypothermia in stroke, as well as several stroke protocols. The Neuro Intensive Care Unit nurses remain one of our strongest resources—many have worked in the ICU for years and continue to facilitate movement of patients through the ICU as well as delivering excellent care to the patients who are in the Intensive Care Unit.

Endovascular

One exciting development on the Neurosurgical Service was the recruitment over a year ago of a neurosurgeon to perform endovascular procedures. Dr. Johnny Pyor completed his neurological training at Washington University in St. Louis and then undertook an endovascular fellowship with Dr. Alex Berenstein and remained on staff for five years. He was recruited to the MGH as part of the Neurosurgical Service to perform neurointerventional procedures. Dr. Pyor works in close collaboration with Dr. Jim Rabine of the Radiology Service to cover neuroendovascular procedures. Radiology and Neurosurgery work closely together, and are currently recruiting a third individual for endovascular management of neurologic disease.

Brain Tumor Center

The Brain Tumor Center at MGH comprises multiple physicians in a multi-disciplinary effort to combat tumors of the brain, spinal cord, and peripheral nerves. It is located in the Cox Building Room 315, where offices for physicians, nurses

(Continued on page 2)