

AOSpine North America Community News Summer 2016





Table of Contents

Content	Page
AOSNA Chairman's Message	3
AOSpine North America Board and Committees	4
Upcoming AOSNA Courses	5
14th Annual Fellows Forum a Huge Success	6
AOSNA Joins the Inaugural One AO Leadership Meeting	7
Global Spine Journal	9
AOSNA 2016 Young Investigator Research Grant Awards	10
Committee Updates	11
Women in Spine Surgery Task Force	13
New Board Members	14
AOSNA Welcomes Elizabeth Walker as Regional Director	15
Call for Applications	15
AOSNA Reception at NASS 2016	16
Member Spotlight	17
AOSNA Community News	18



AOSNA Chairman's Message

Dear AOSNA Members and Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the spring issue of the AOSpine North America Newsletter. Two-and-a-half years ago, I had the great honor of becoming the AOSNA Chair. The other day, I looked at my calendar and realized that time does fly by without us noticing. As you may know, my 3-year term as AOSNA Chair is coming to an end and sadly, this will be my last message as the outgoing Chair of AOSNA.

It has been a privilege and honor to serve as your AOSNA Chair. It is amazing how far we have come in this time, although it certainly would not have been possible without the dedicated members of the AOSNA Board and Committees. I would like to sincerely thank the following individuals for their dedication and service: Joe Cheng, for his leadership in providing ongoing educational opportunities for our spine profession; Tom Mroz, for his insight in providing high quality clinical evidence to improve the outcomes of spine and spinal cord conditions. In addition, thanks to Norman Chutkan for his tireless efforts to engage our membership and Ted Choma, for his commitment to make our fellowship program one of the highest acclaimed programs in North America. I also want to thank the invaluable AOSNA team, for all they have done for the organization. And finally to Nancy Holmes, who recently retired as Regional Director, many thanks for her dedication and hard work, which made my job as Chair much easier.

On August 1, I will hand over the role of AOSNA Chair to Darrel Brodke. In addition, AOSNA recently welcomed Elizabeth Walker, who took over as Regional Director (replacing Nancy Holmes) at the beginning of this year. Therefore, I leave AOSNA in their capable hands and I wish Darrel all the best as he accepts the responsibilities of his new role.

As I move from the position of Chair to Past Chair, I am glad this is not farewell, but just a change of roles. It is a pleasure for me to continue to work with the Board and members of AOSNA to improve and elevate our profession.

I look forward to seeing you at AOSpine events in the coming years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Fehlings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "M" and "F".

Michael Fehlings

Chairman – AOSpine North America



AOSpine North America Board and Committees

AOSNA Board

Michael Fehlings	Chairperson
Darrel Brodke	Chair Elect
Joseph Cheng	Education Committee Chair
Tom Mroz	Research Committee Chair
Norman Chutkan	Community Development Committee Chair
Ted Choma	Fellowship Committee Chair

AOSNA Education Committee

Joseph Cheng	Chair
John Devine	Chair Elect
Rick Bransford	
Dean Chou	
Bradley Jacobs	
Eric Klineberg	
Alpesh Patel	
Steve Theiss	

AOSNA Research Committee

Tom Mroz	Chair
James Harrop	Chair Elect
Paul Arnold	
Samuel Cho	
Wellington Hsu	
Mohammed Shamji	
Michael Steinmetz	

AOSNA Community Development Committee

Norman Chutkan	Chair
Lali Sekhon	Chair Elect
Michael Daubs	
Ripul Panchal	
Patrick Pritchard	

AOSNA Fellowship Committee

Ted Choma	Chair
Christina Goldstein	
Brandon Lawrence	
Bob Molinari	
Dan Sciubba	

Did You Know?

You can now stay updated on the latest developments in AOSpine. The AOSpine News App is freely accessible for everyone and available on the Apple App store. You can read about the latest articles, get valuable information regarding research, education, and find out more about upcoming events while you are on the go.



Upcoming AOSpine North America Courses/Webinars in 2016

AOSNA Webinar Series:
Revision Surgical Spine Surgery
and Cervical Deformity
June 22

Oral Board Review
June 27
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

AOSNA Webinar Series:
Odontoid Fractures – Operative
and Non-Operative Considerations
in the Elderly
August 10

Principles and Treatment of Spinal
Disorders for Residents
August 19-20
Toronto, Canada

Principles and Treatment of Spinal
Disorders for Residents
September 9-10
Orlando, FL

AOSNA Webinar Series:
Cervical Myelopathy – Natural
History, Treatment Options
and Strategies for Reducing
Complications
September 21

Complex Spine Surgery:
Innovations in Practice (with
Hands-on Bioskills Lab)
November 11-12
Las Vegas, NV

Did You Know?

The year 2016 marks the ten-year anniversary of the publication of the first modules of AO Surgery Reference. This year also denotes the length of time that it has taken to complete the publication of coverage of the entire appendicular skeleton, as well as CMF and Spine. This web application serves as a valuable resource for the management of fractures. To access AO Surgery Reference, please visit: www.aosurgery.org

**For more information about the
courses or to register, please go to:**

<http://www.aona.org>

14th Annual Fellows Forum a Huge Success



In keeping with the decade long tradition, the 14th Annual AOSNA Fellows Forum took place on March 31 – April 2, 2016 in the beautiful Banff Springs Hotel in Alberta, Canada. The AOSNA Board welcomed Distinguished Keynote Speakers: Dr. Zoher Ghogawala from Lahey Hospital in Burlington, Massachusetts and Dr. Michael Grevitt from Queens Medical Center in the United Kingdom, as well as the 100+ AOSNA Fellows, Fellowship Directors, and Faculty from the US and Canada.

The Fellows Forum provided the Fellows an opportunity to interact with other Fellows and Fellowship Directors to exchange ideas and knowledge that centered on the advancement of disciplinary spine care. The scientific program consisted of lectures, fireside case conferences, and a new optional afternoon lecture series was offered this year. The highlights of the program were the presentations given by each Fellow focusing on his/her research at their institution.

Each Fellow's presentation was evaluated in a peer-reviewed process by the Faculty and Fellowship Directors. The scores were tallied and awards given for the best clinical and basic abstract as well as best poster presentation. The winners of this year's Fellows Forum Awards were presented to Ilyas Aleem, MD (Mayo Clinic) for the best clinical abstract, Rodrigo Navarro, MD (Weill Cornell Medical College) for the best basic science abstract, and Jefferson Wilson, MD (Thomas Jefferson University) for the best oral poster presentation. These three winners will be invited to participate as faculty in the 2017 Fellows Forum.

Congratulations to our Award Winners as well as the rest of the Fellows for their hard work and outstanding research presentations.



AOSNA Joins the Inaugural OneAO Leadership Meeting



AOSpine North America participated in the inaugural OneAO Leadership Meeting at the Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, FL from Feb. 4-6 in Orlando. This meeting gathered together the leadership representatives, associated committee members, and senior surgeon statesmen from the four AO North America Clinical Divisions. The three-day meeting was an outstanding opportunity to share and discuss important AONA news and issues as well as share mutually interesting science and medical practices.



The clinical division boards joined the general session for a video link presentation by Rolf Jeker, CEO and Vice-Chair of AO Foundation, which featured the AO Foundation State of the Union. This was followed by Suthorn Bavonratanavech, the President and Chair of AO Foundation, offering a reflective presentation "From Participant to President".

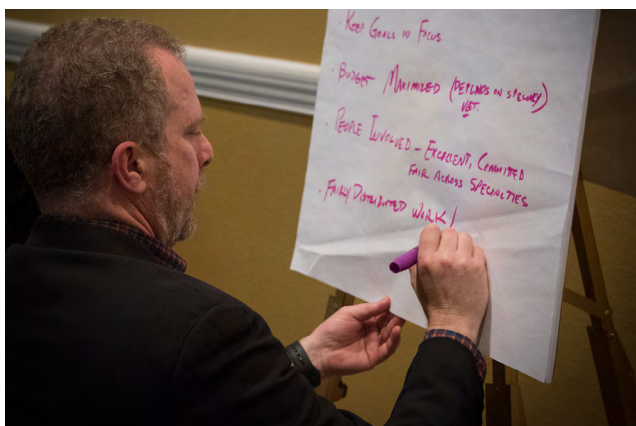
Other sessions offered the opportunity for the specialties to come together to discuss the Faculty Education Programs and Webinars, as well as the opportunity for members of similar Committees (Education, Research, Fellowship, and Community Development) to meet with colleagues from other Clinical Divisions and discuss common issues and best practices.



This was a great opportunity for interaction between the Committee Members of the various Clinical Divisions. A new “Senior Statesmen” category discussed ways to keep our AONA senior members engaged and assure we do not lose the “institutional memory” of the organization.

The networking event included a trip to the Kennedy Space Center where the group experienced “Atlantis” in a 90,000 square foot facility that featured the Shuttle Atlantis along with 60 interactive exhibits. It is the culmination of a challenge made by President Kennedy at the beginning of his presidential term to put a man on the moon by the end of the 1960 decade. This fits well with the challenge of the One AO concept we are presently undertaking and was an awe-inspiring experience that will be remembered forever.

The meeting was well received with 114 AONA surgeon leaders in attendance. This is an exciting time for AO North America! The energy and camaraderie at this inaugural meeting exemplifies the AO organization. The One AO Leadership Meeting will convene again in 2018.



Global Spine Journal – devoted to the study and treatment of Spinal disorders



Global Spine Journal (GSJ), the official journal for AOSpine International, is an international peer-reviewed journal devoted to the study of all spine fields. Global Spine Journal is an umbrella name that encompasses both Global Spine Journal and Evidence-Based Spine-Care Journal (EBSJ). GSJ and EBSJ were previously two separate AOSpine publications that merged together in 2015 to create one unique journal with diversified content. Currently, each issue of the journal contains a special EBSJ section that features content that is specific to EBSJ. Global Spine Journal currently publishes 8 issues per year, and we release both a paper copy and an online copy for each issue. Global Spine Journal is led by Editors-in-Chief Jeffrey Wang, MD; Jens Chapman, MD; and Karsten Wiechert, MD. Global Spine Journal has a large editorial board that is comprised of orthopaedic and neurological spine surgeons from around the world.

Global Spine Journal is devoted to the study and treatment of spinal disorders, including diagnosis, operative and non-operative treatment options, surgical techniques, and emerging research and clinical developments. The journal is essential reading for all researchers and clinicians specializing in the spine. The journal promotes communication among spine surgeons, orthopedic surgeons, and neurosurgeons across the globe by providing an integrated and balanced view of the clinical and basic science studies of spinal disorders. Evidence-Based Spine-Care Journal (EBSJ) is dedicated to finding, describing and developing the highest quality evidence for treating and managing spinal disorders. EBSJ focuses on comparative studies of effectiveness and seeks to stimulate further areas of high quality spine-related research. EBSJ sets the stage for Evidence-Based practice and will influence the future of spine surgery for years to come. EBSJ is a unique concept with regard to format and streamlined presentation of information. The goal is to provide an accurate and concise presentation of information that can be grasped at-a-glance by busy spine surgeons. EBSJ also works with Spectrum Research, which is a group of epidemiologists and they help the authors that are writing the unique Systematic Reviews as well as provide methodological reviews for the EBSJ Original Research. With a multi-disciplinary scope, GSJ features Original Research and Review articles. EBSJ features Original Research (with methodological review), Systematic Reviews (with help from an epidemiologist), and Narrative Reviews.

In 2015, Global Spine Journal became an Open Access Journal, which means that a subscription is no longer required to read articles. All articles are open for anyone to read online, and articles are posted online as efirst articles to when they are accepted, and before they are assigned to an issue. This decision was done in order to increase our online usage and citations. Since the move to Open Access last year, online usage increased 600%. However, the Open Access platform eliminates subscription fees, which means that authors must pay a publication fee in order to publish in an Open Access journal. However, Global Spine Journal is unique because the publication fee is waived for any article where at least one author is an AOSpine member. This is a great member benefit for AOSpine members and means that members can publish multiple papers in GSJ for no cost.

As the official journal of AOSpine, GSJ tries to provide benefits to AOSpine members. As mentioned before, the Open Access fee of \$1,500 is waived for all AOSpine members who submit articles. All members also will receive a free paper copy of every issue of the journal. GSJ also provides other unique benefits. GSJ lists every reviewer as a member of our editorial board on the masthead as a way to recognize all of the work that our reviewers do for the journal. We also have yearly awards for the best clinical paper, best basic science paper and top 4 reviewers and these awards include a cash prize. GSJ also does not impose strict word counts and we don't impose restrictions on how many authors can be listed on a manuscript. GSJ strives to be unique from other journals and we pride ourselves on providing an open and friendly process for authors.

Global Spine Journal understands the importance of being indexed. We are currently indexed in Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) PubMedCentral and Google Scholar. We have applied for our official JCI indexing and we are waiting for a decision. We also plan to apply to MEDLINE and SCOPUS next year. We will inform our authors and readers when we receive any updates on indexing.

Global Spine Journal is always looking for more content, and we are taking new submissions now. All articles can currently be submitted to www.editorialmanager.com/gsj. There you can find instructions to authors and information on how to submit to the journal. If you have any questions about GSJ, you can always email Managing Editor Danielle Lieberman at globalspinejournal@aospine.org. Please don't forget to follow Global Spine Journal on Facebook and Twitter to get the most up-to-date information on the journal!



AOSNA is pleased to announce the results of the 2016 Young Investigator Research Grant Awards

For the 9th year, the AOSpine North America Research Committee has established the Young Investigator Research Grant Award (YIRGA) funding new investigators who have a desire to perform high-quality, clinically relevant spinal or spinal cord research in basic or clinical science. The applicants, all AOSNA subscribed members, sent in a significant number of applications to be evaluated in a blinded peer review process by the Research Committee members.

The final decision was made during the Research Committee meeting in Banff last month. The following investigators will each be awarded a one-year grant of \$30,000 to help with their research.

Dr. Chetan Bettegowda (Johns Hopkins U): "Development of Personalized Biomarkers for Individuals with Primary Spinal Column Neoplasms"

Dr. Gregory Hawryluk (U of Utah): "The Time Course and Predictors of Autoimmunity Following Spinal Cord Injury in Humans"

Dr. Kajana Satkunendrarajah (Wayne State U School of Medicine): "Transplantation of Glutamatergic Interneurons to Enhance Respiratory Recovery Following Cervical Spinal Cord Injury"

Dr. Mohammed Shamji (U of Toronto): "Epigenetic, Genetic, and Proteomic Analysis of Neurotrophins in the Development of Neuropathic Pain in a Rodent Model of Lumbar Radiculopathy"

The projects will be carried out during 2016 and 2017 and the investigators will be invited to present their results at the 2017 Fellows Forum in Banff. Congratulations to the winners – they certainly represent a significant contribution to the quality of research being performed in North America. For AOSNA, it is a pleasure to be able to invest in promising projects like these and to incentivize the members to actively take part in the scientific development of the region.

Committee Updates

Education Committee Update

Spring has been a busy time for the AOSpine North America Education Committee. On April 8th and 9th, AOSNA held the Complex Cervical Spine Surgery and Complications course at the Oquendo Center Bioskills Lab in Las Vegas, NV. This highly interactive course included a comprehensive review of complex spinal resection and reconstruction techniques used in modern cervical spine surgery. The format of the course included case based discussion, didactic sessions and a hands-on bioskills lab. The course co-chairs Dr. Jean-Paul Wolinsky and Dr. Steven Theiss should be congratulated on an outstanding course.

The AOSpine Education Commission recently met at the Global Spine Congress on April 11th in Dubai. Each region provided updates on educational activities and initiatives currently being implemented. The AOSNAEC is working on several initiatives involving simulation, faculty training, online education and needs assessments to ensure our offerings align with our learners needs.

On May 13th and 14th, AOSNA along with Co-Chairs Dr. Dean Chou and Dr. Steven Ludwig offered a Flipped Classroom Minimally

Invasive Spine Surgery and Navigation Course at the CAMLS Bioskills Lab in Tampa, FL. The course included lectures, small group discussions, a bioskills lab and pre-course online activities to help participants prepare for the course. To enhance the overall learning experience and prepare for engaging and dynamic discussions with colleagues and faculty at the course, registered participants will have access to a variety of materials online prior to the course:

- Precourse Reading – Selected key chapters from the book, Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery – Techniques, Evidence, and Controversies (Härtl /Korge, 2012, 1st Ed ISBN: 9783131723819).
- Prerecorded lecture on MIS TLIF Fundamentals.
- Procedural Video of Transforaminal Lumbar Interbody Fusion (TLIF).
- Illustrated Step-by-Step Guide for TLIF Procedure.
- Two online cases posted for discussion (solutions will be presented at the course).
- Archived webinar – Nuances of MIS TLIF: Case Discussions Spanning the Spectrum from Degeneration to Deformity.

Research Committee Update

The research arm of AOSpine North America continues to be a leader in spine research. In 2015 the efforts of AOSpine's research have resulted in 40 publications and 89 abstracts in the peer reviewed medical literature. AOSNA invited many leaders in the spine field to contribute to a focus issue on the Management of the Aging Spine. This focus issue was published online in Neurosurgery in October 2015. At the end of 2015, AOSNA put out our annual Call for Applications for the Young Investigators Research Grant Awards to encourage new investigators to perform high quality research in spine/spinal cord research in basic or clinical science. We received over 20 applications. Each application was put through a rigorous review process and scored based on significance, approach, and feasibility of the study. Four winners were selected and awarded with \$30,000 each. (For a list of winners, please see the announcement on the 2016 YIRGA winners).

A principal objective of the Research Committee is to carry out high quality prospective controlled multi-center studies involving a large number of academic and non-academic clinical sites, dozens

of clinical investigators and thousands of patients across North America. There are several noteworthy multi-centered studies.

- The Rare Complications of Cervical Spine Study is complete and manuscripts will be published in the Global Spine Journal. This was a retrospective, multi-centered study designed to be the largest attempt to define the rare complications associated cervical spine surgery.
- The efficacy of Riluzole in Patients with Cervical Spondylotic Myelopathy Undergoing Surgical Treatment is a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, multi-center study currently in its follow-up phase. This study will be completed in 2017.
- The Multi-Center, Randomized, Placebo-Controlled, Double-Blinded, Trial of Efficacy and Safety of Riluzole in Acute Spinal Cord Injury (RISCIS) continues to enroll patients, and we have recently added additional study sites to bolster enrollment.
- Finally, AOSpine North America this year has launched a prospective, observational, multi-centered study evaluating surgical treatment of isthmic spondylolisthesis.

Committee Updates

Community Development Committee Update

The AOSpine North America Community Development Committee has been active over the last 12 months on a variety of fronts. Successful initiatives have included the production of an electronic newsletter aimed at keeping membership abreast of AOSNA developments in the U.S. and Canada. The 2nd annual AOSNA Reception was also held in October 2015 at the North American Spine Society meeting in Chicago. The following initiatives are in the pipeline for 2016/2017:

1. Endeavors to improve female spine surgeon involvement in the AO as both members and faculty.
2. Development of an app for both iPhone and Android to bring the AOSpine website to the mobile platform, facilitating member communication and notifications.

3. Development of a Practice Management course focused on the non-clinical aspects of practice management. This would be aimed at surgeons in the first 5 years of their practices.
4. The 3rd Annual AOSNA Reception will be held at NASS in Boston on Wednesday, October 26, 2016.

Sincerest thanks to the outgoing Community Development Chair, Norm Chutkan, M.D. for the work he has done over the past 3 years. Moving forward, Lali Sekhon, M.D. takes over as chairman of the Community Development Committee effective August 1, 2016.

Fellowship Committee Update

In March 2016 the AOSNA Fellowship Committee celebrated the 2-year anniversary of its founding and was proud to co-host the 14th Annual AOSNA Fellows' Forum in beautiful Banff, Alberta. This scientific conference highlighted the exceptional research conducted over the past year by more than 50 fellows from 28 fellowship sites. Other event highlights included an excellent session on transitioning to practice, enthusiastic fireside and afternoon case discussions and the opportunity for attendees to catch up on the research activities of the 2015 YIRGA award winners. A great time was had by all!

In preparation for the upcoming Call for Applications for the 2017-2019 AOSNA Fellowship funding cycle, the committee has been hard at work revamping the site selection criteria and application forms to ensure that site selection is a fair, transparent and merit-based process. In addition, we continue to look for ways to enhance fellowship education and engage fellows in AOSNA both during and after the completion of their fellowship including:

- Production and distribution of a Fellows' Handbook outlining fellowship expectations and need-to-know information.
- Creation and maintenance of a Fellows' Reading List.
- Attendance at the Fellows' Introductory Course which will be held in September 2016 in Seattle.
- Attendance at other AOSNA educational courses.

- Involvement of fellows as bench instructors at resident courses.
- Development of a monthly webinar series for fellowship sites.

The Fellowship Committee, in cooperation with the Canadian Spine Society (CSS), has also been involved in assessment of AOSNA Fellows' attitudes regarding the importance of and their self-reported confidence in spine-related knowledge and procedural competencies. An initial survey conducted in the summer of 2015 had an 82% response rate! A follow-up, post-fellowship survey is currently being administered and dissemination of the survey results in print and presentation format are planned.

In April 2016, Christina Goldstein represented the Fellowship Committee at the first-ever Fellowship Officers' meeting held during the 2016 Global Spine Congress in Dubai. Chaired by Emre Acoroğlu, the Chairman of AOSpine Education from Turkey, this meeting was an opportunity for representatives from North America, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia Pacific to learn about the fellowship programs offered in the different regions, create a consensus definition of an AOSpine Fellowship and begin preliminary discussions about coordinated global educational endeavors and possible integration of the regional fellowship programs.

Did You Know?

Registration for the 2016 AO Davos Courses will open on June 28, 2016. Take advantage of this excellent and unique opportunity to learn from our international faculty, share your experiences, reconnect with friends and colleagues, and further expand your network. Davos is where tradition goes hand-in-hand with the latest and cutting-edge knowledge in the field of trauma and orthopedics.



Women in Spine Surgery Task Force: A Community Development Committee Initiative

While up to 50% of contemporary medical school graduates are female, only 10 to 15% of orthopaedic surgeons and neurosurgeons are women. Unfortunately, the underrepresentation of women is even worse in our chosen subspecialty. Did you know that less than 5% of the members of AOSpine North America are women and only 1 in 65 AOSNA faculty members is a female? Both the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the American Association of Neurological Surgeons have identified recruitment of women into the fields of orthopaedic surgery and neurosurgery as an important initiative, however no such need for recruitment of graduating female orthopaedists or neurosurgeons into the field of spine surgery has previously been identified.

As a first step towards the goal of recruiting more women into the field of spine surgery and increasing female involvement in our organization the AOSNA Community Development Committee, at the request of Dr. Norm Chutkan, has convened a Women in Spine Surgery Task Force which will be co-chaired by Dr. Michelle Clarke, Associate Professor of Neurosurgery & Orthopedics at the Mayo Clinic and Dr. Christina Goldstein, Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Missouri. While this task force is in its infancy, the group intends to work towards quantifying the number of female orthopaedic surgery and neurosurgery residents and spine surgery fellows graduating annually in the United States, identifying barriers to the selection of spine surgery as a career path by female graduates and identifying actionable ways to recruit women to the field of spine surgery and engage them in AOSNA.

Stay tuned for updates on the progress of this important initiative and please contact Chi Lam clam@aospine.org if you have any suggestions or wish to be involved!

AOSNA Welcomes New Board Members

On August 1, AOSNA will welcome three new members to the AOSNA Board as the terms for AOSNA Chair, Research Committee Chair, and Community Development Committee Chair commences.



Darrel Brodke, MD
Incoming AOSNA Chair

Dr. Brodke is a Professor of Orthopaedics and Adjunct Professor in Neurosurgery at the University of Utah. He has been involved with the AO for nearly 20 years and has held many leadership roles in AOSpine North America including his most recent position as AOSNA Education Chair. Internationally, he has also sat on the AOSpine Education Commission and has served as an AO Trustee for the past 4 years. With his wealth of knowledge and breadth of experience in AOSpine, both in North America and Internationally, he will no doubt successfully lead the efforts of AOSNA to become a leader in the world of spine care.

"I am truly honored to take over as chairman of the board of AOSpine North America, a board made up of hardworking, committed, innovative, and forward thinking individuals who I consider my friends. I am following in the footsteps of giants who have molded and shaped who we are today as an organization. While the times seem turbulent, we will continue to focus on our core principles and guide AOSNA into the future together."



James Harrop, MD
Incoming Research Chair

James Harrop, MD from Jefferson Medical College will replace Tom Mroz as Research Committee Chair. Jim has served on the Research Committee for the last 3 years and has published hundreds of peer reviewed articles and chapters for CNS, AANS, Joint Spine Section, NASS, PNS, CSRS, LSRS, in addition to AOSpine. He has also been involved in the AOSpine Trauma and Spinal Oncology Knowledge Forums.

"I am very excited and honored to be asked to assist in continuing the significant strides in the advances in spine care and research. I would like to personally thank: Michael Fehlings, Darrell Brodke, Tom Mroz, Paul Arnold and the entire AO staff and community for this opportunity. The present team and community goal has established the highest standard. My goal over the next three years would be to further continue these standards with the addition of broadening our research efforts to AO community"



Lali Sekhon, MD
Incoming CD Chair

Lali Sekhon, MD is currently in a private practice devoted to spine surgery at the Sierra Neurosurgery Group in Reno, Nevada. Lali was an AOSpine fellow in 1999 and has since served as faculty for the past 15 years. He brings an exciting blend of academic/private practice having worked in both US and Canada. He will replace Norman Chutkan as the Community Development Chair.

"I have the privilege of taking over as section head for the Community Development Committee from prior chair, Norm Chutkan, MD. AOSNA is the only professional organization exclusively representing spine surgeons both neurological and orthopedic. AOSNA is the cornerstone of education, research and evidence-based medicine in surgical spine care in North America. Over the next 3 years members should see exciting developments evolving which include a mobile app to allow easier communication and dissemination of information for members, increased involvement by women in AOSNA and development of courses for private practice spine surgeons to improve non-clinical competencies. We are holding the Annual Reception at the NASS meeting in Boston in October, 2016. I look forward to meeting current and new members there. There has never been a better time to join the AO if you are not member. Join now and become part of the AO network."

Through this passing of the torch, AOSNA would like to thank Michael Fehlings, Tom Mroz, and Norman Chutkan for their contributions, service and dedication to AOSNA.

AOSNA Welcomes Elizabeth Walker as Regional Director



At the beginning of this year, AOSNA hired Elizabeth Walker as the Regional Director of AOSpine North America. Elizabeth replaced Nancy Holmes who recently retired after 30 years of service. "Elizabeth has invaluable experience in the healthcare field as well as developing and executing strategies to drive high impact business results. We are fortunate to have a candidate of her caliber. She knows the spine world and will undoubtedly hit the ground running," adds Michael Fehlings, Chair of AOSNA.

Elizabeth is a graduate of the University of Tennessee Knoxville with a Master's Degree in Audiology. In addition to her clinical experience, she also has demonstrated success in Sales, Marketing and Clinical Education. She previously worked as the Senior Director of Global Medical Education at Medtronic Spine and Biologics where she led a cross functional global customer

education team. Elizabeth has over fifteen years of experience working closely with internal and external partners to deliver business results and provide expanded patient access.

"AOSpine has such a rich history of surgeon collaboration, and I am truly excited about the opportunity to work with such an incredible organization. In partnership with the Board and Committee Leaders, as well as the extensive network of Members, I am interested in expanding AO's footprint in North America so that more spine patients around the world can benefit from AOSNA's innovative and important work," **adds Elizabeth Walker,**

Call for Applications

AOSNA Fellowship Site Funding for the 2017/2018 & 2018/2019 Academic Years

The purpose of the AOSpine North America Fellowship Program is to provide funding to institutions that offer intensive learning opportunities for fully trained orthopedic and neurosurgeons interested in spine surgery. Quality, consistency and evidence of academic and scientific excellence at the institution are taken into consideration as part of the peer reviewed selection process. It will be the responsibility of the fellowship site and its program director to ensure that the fellow selected is conversant in principles, indications, planning, techniques and complications of spinal surgery at the completion of his/her fellowship.

A limited number of awards are available; deadline for submitting applications for consideration is September 30, 2016. Funding is awarded to the institution for two - 1 year academic cycles. For guidelines and application forms, please visit www.aospine.org or send an e-mail to Chi Lam at clam@aospine.org.

Join us at the AOSNA Reception at NASS 2016

SAVE THE DATE

NASS 2016

Boston, MA

Wednesday, October 26, 2016
from 6-8pm

Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel



Member Spotlight

Ripul Panchal, MD

1) Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I am an assistant professor and Director of the Spine Fellowship Program in Department of Neurological Surgery, University of California, Davis School of Medicine. My expertise includes adult spinal deformity, failed back syndrome, trauma, tumors, and minimal invasive and complex spinal revision and reconstruction surgeries.

I emigrated with my parents and older brother at the age of nine to Chicago from India. After completing my undergraduate work at Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois, in molecular biology with a Howard Hughes research fellowship, I attended Des Moines University – College of Osteopathic Medicine in Iowa and graduated with Sigma Sigma Phi. I went on to complete a residency in neurological surgery at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center/Western University in Colton, California, and a fellowship in spine at UC Davis Medical Center, Sacramento, California. Now, my wife of 4 years and I have made our home in Sacramento, California.

My research focuses on biomechanics of the spine, spine and spinal cord injuries, and spinal instrumentation involving dynamic surgical guidance technology and image guidance. I also have been involved in national clinical trials involving cervical spondylolytic myelopathy, spinal cord injury, biologics to enhance spinal fusion, and stem cells for lumbar disc regeneration and cervical fusion. I've been honored with a UC Davis Teaching in Excellence award, UC Davis Excellence in Quality, George W. Northrup, DO medical writing award, and Robert C. Erwin Literary Award. I have authored multiple peer-reviewed manuscripts and book chapters, been invited to present my work at an international level and serve as a peer reviewer for multiple journals.

2) How long have you been a member of AOSpine North America and why did you join?

I became a member of AOSNA during my residency. I was invited to become a member after attending AOSpine's course, Principles and Treatment of Spinal Disorders

for Residents. I found the course to be very informative and valuable in my training, and the quality education material presented convinced me to stay a member of the organization and continue attending additional educational AO courses and meetings. Most recently, I attended the AO Spine's Global Spine Congress conference in Dubai.

3) What is your current involvement with AOSpine North America?

Currently I serve as a member of the AOSNA community development committee and am in the process of applying to become a faculty member for the AOSpine.

4) What is your advice on how a young surgeon can get involved with AOSpine?

I would recommend young surgeons attend the offered courses and submit their work to the national meetings. This would be a great place to start since the organization's mission is to improve care through education and research. It allows the leadership and other members the opportunity to get to know you both at a personal and professional level.

5) How do you balance your professional and personal life?

I think the key to balancing your professional and personal life is communication, without which it would be impossible to plan anything within our unpredictable schedules. My wife and I take advantage of any time available to us, whether it is by visiting a local farmers' market or going away on an international trip as time allows.

6) What do you do for relaxation in your downtime?

I enjoy going to the gym, hiking, biking, traveling, watching movies and spending time with family. Recently, my wife and I have taken on snorkeling.

AOSNA Community News

Do you have an exciting announcement in your professional or personal life that you would like to share with the AOSNA community? If so, just send us an e-mail to clam@aospine.org and we'll post it in our next newsletter.

Best Paper Award at the Global Spine Congress in Dubai

Congratulations to Dr. Lindsay Tetreault from the University of Toronto. She was awarded the Best Paper Award at the Global Spine Congress in Dubai.



Dr. Nicholas Theodore is the New Director Johns Hopkins Neurosurgical Spine Center



Dr. Nicholas Theodore is the new director of the Johns Hopkins Neurosurgical Spine Center and the Donlin M. Long Professor of Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins University. A nationally recognized expert in brain and spinal cord injury, minimally invasive spine surgeries and robotics, he most recently served as the Chief of the Division of Spinal Disorders at the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, Arizona.

As an award-winning teacher and researcher, he has written or co-authored multiple book chapters, over 175 peer-reviewed journal articles and is co-holder of 10 patents for medical devices and procedures. His research focuses on trauma, spinal cord injuries, robotics and developing an understanding of the genetic and molecular basis of spinal diseases.

Dr. Theodore will begin his new position on July 1, 2016.

For referrals and appointments, please call, 410-502-2383

Johns Hopkins Neurosurgery

600 Wolfe St., Meyer 7-109, Baltimore, MD 21287

hopkinsmedicine.org/neuro/spine

Yale Welcomes Joseph Cheng

The Yale University Department of Neurosurgery is delighted to welcome Joseph Cheng, MD, MS, FACS, FAANS, as Clinical Vice Chair beginning January 2016. Dr. Cheng joins Yale from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, where he was Associate Professor of Neurological Surgery; Director of the Neurosurgery Spine Program; and Co-Director of the Vanderbilt University Spine and Bone Research Laboratory.

At Yale, he hopes to have further opportunities to help shape the direction of neurosurgery and will play a key role in expanding the service lines for neuroscience and musculoskeletal diseases. Early on, he plans to establish a registry for the department. "Our ability to collect data and demonstrate our outcomes on a population level is important," he said, adding that he hopes to foster multicenter clinical trials to determine if interventions can be practically applied at other centers. He is enthusiastic about utilizing Yale's informatics infrastructure - which integrates enterprise-wide electronic health record and clinical research management systems - for data collection and analysis. "Yale has the institutional commitment and support required to establish such a robust infrastructure, and I hope to add to the outstanding team already in place," he said.

Dr. Cheng is also a respected mentor and teacher, who is committed to providing a level of training to residents and fellows that goes above and beyond the knowledge and skill base offered elsewhere. "Training residents is the heart and soul of our academic program," he said. He looks forward to contributing to the high level of training offered at Yale to ensure that doors open for young neurosurgeons.

E-mail address: joseph.cheng@yale.edu

Full-time board certified/board eligible neurosurgeon needed



Sierra Neurosurgery Group, located in Reno, Nevada, is currently recruiting for a full-time board certified/board eligible general Neurosurgeon. The desirable candidate needs to have enthusiastic and hardworking attitude to succeeding in a multidisciplinary group practice that services much of Northern Nevada and Northern California. That candidate must be eligible for a Nevada medical license and unrestricted federal-issued DEA.

The group consisting of eleven (11) neurosurgeons and two (2) pain specialists and is the largest private practice neurosurgery group west of Phoenix. Caseload is heavily spine-based with ample access to intracranial work. Call is 4-5 days per month. 4 hospitals are serviced with one being a level II trauma center. Reimbursement is excellent with great benefits and partnership track.

Sierra Neurosurgery Group offers full service neurosurgical care to patients in Northern Nevada and Northeastern California and has done so for more than 30 years. There are over half a dozen satellite offices. Sierra Neurosurgery Group is the region's leader for neurosurgical services and continually evolves as the premiere resource for spine and brain care in Northern Nevada.

Reno, Nevada, nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, just 8 miles from the California border and only 4 hours drive to the San Francisco Bay Area. Twenty ski resorts surround the city and majestic Lake Tahoe is only 30 minutes away. The area is known for its wealth of outdoor activities. Reno has excellent schools and low crime.

Interested candidates please respond to;

Dyana Selby-Davis, HR/HIM

(775) 789-3930

dyanasd@sierraneurosurgery.com



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