University of Pittsburgh | Department of Neurology

Neurology News & Notes

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Message from the Chair

In this month of June, I'm grateful to our faculty, trainees, and staff, as everyone has continued to provide high quality patient care through every facet of our department, while still innovating and advancing education and research in neurologic diseases.

I would like to wish congratulations to the 2023 graduates of our residency and fellowship programs and for their successful completion of training! Our UPMC Neurology training programs are some of the most rigorous in the country, and each of you will be well-prepared to embark on your independent careers. Congratulations again, and best wishes for a successful future.

Once again, I'm encouraging all staff members – whether you work in Oakland or at a community neurology location – to feel free to send any news or accomplishments of yourself or your colleagues to Lauren Stanick (stanickld@upmc.edu) so she may feature them in this newsletter. This can include anything from service anniversaries to a community engagement event. While *Neurology News & Notes* most often features faculty and trainees, we would like to feature staff as well.

I am very excited about the future of department – with the capable hands and bright minds we have at our disposal, we will no doubt be able to continue advancing the department in a positive direction!

Cheers,

Page B. Pennell, MD, FAES
Chair and Henry B. Higman Professor of Neurology

Awards

UPMC-ALS Center Achieves Certified Treatment Center Designation for ALS

The UPMC-ALS Center, led by Tawfiq Al-Lahham, has achieved the designation of Certified Treament Center of Excellence by the ALS Foundation. Certified treatment centers are defined as providing outstanding care and services to the regional patient population through multidisciplinary treatment, active involvement in research, and ongoing process improvement. It's through a complex continuum of care and collaboration between providers, institutions, ALS Association territories that patients, families and caregivers and better prepared to address the challenges of living with ALS.

The designation was awarded after a year of completing a checklist of requirements - such as having a large, active clinic - and an in-person site visit by ALS personnel where they observed clinic operations for an entire day.

The requirements of the ALS Association's Certified Treatment Centers of Excellence Programs include the following components:

- A strong relationship with the local ALS Association partner
- A multidisciplinary team of nursing and allied health professionals assigned to the patient population
- A neurologist with a specific knowledge base to evaluate and treat people living with the disease
- Active involvement in ALS-related research
- Ongoing process improvement initiatives

Takashi Kozai and Franca Cambi Awarded Multi-PI R01 Grant

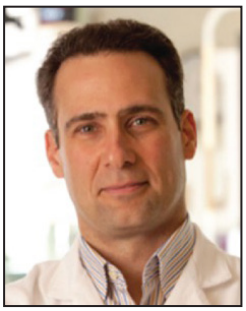
Takashi Kozai

Franca Cambi

Takashi Kozai (PI) and Franca Cambi (co-PI) have been awarded a multi-PI grant funded by NIH/NINDS. The project is titled "Mechanisms of Oligodendrocyte Activity on Chronic Brain Implants and Recording Performance". The project represents a collaborative effort between Bioengineering (Kozai) and Neurology (Cambi) and is based on the PI's pioneering work to demonstrate that oligodendrocytes and myelin play a critical role in supporting neurons, neural network integrity, leading to improved Brain-Computer interface performance.

The project will explore the mechanisms underlying pharmacological and ultrasound or electrical based strategies to enhance oligodendrocytes and myelin health and the role of probe design in improving recording performance by influencing oligodendrocyte physiology. The study design draws on the expertise of the PIs and uses a combination of multi-modal measurements including electrophysiology, two-photon microscopy, and gene profiling of oligodendrocytes and neuronal activity. At completion of these studies, Kozai and Cambi expect to have established the specific roles of oligodendrocytes and myelin in recording performance and gained mechanistic knowledge on their neuroprotective function and translation.

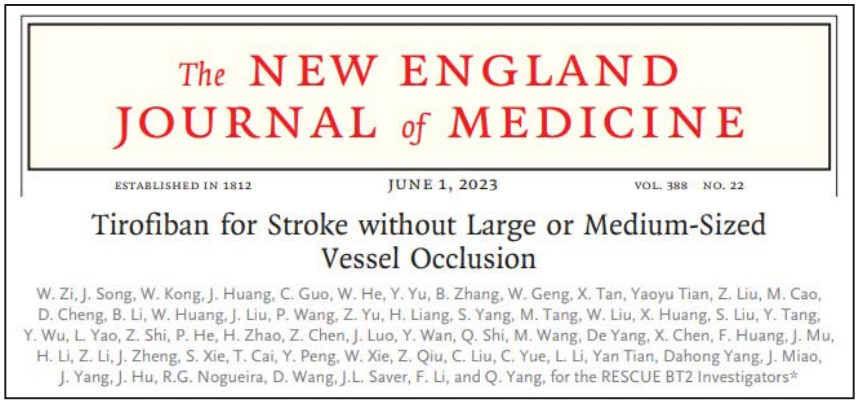
Clinical Trials, Studies & Research



Nogueira Involved in Study Published in NEJM

Investigators published the study, "Tibrofan for Stroke without Large of medium-Sized Vessel Occlusion" in the New England Journal of Medicine on June 1, 2023. The effects of the glycoprotein IIb/IIIa receptor inhibitor tirofiban in patients with acute ischemic stroke but who have no evidence of complete occlusion of large or medium-sized vessels have not been extensively studied This trial involved heterogenous groups of patients with stroke of recent onset or progression of stroke symptoms and nonoccluded large and medium-sized cerebral vessels, intravenous tirofiban was associated with a greater likelihood of an excellent outcome than low-dose aspirin. Incidence of intracranial hemorrhages were low but slightly higher with tirofiban.

Oscar Lopez, co-director of ADRC, pictured in middle



The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

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Tirofiban for Stroke without Large or Medium-Sized Vessel Occlusion

W. Zi, J. Song, W. Kong, J. Huang, C. Guo, W. He, Y. Yu, B. Zhang, W. Geng, X. Tan, Yaoyu Tian, Z. Liu, M. Cao, D. Cheng, B. Li, W. Huang, J. Liu, P. Wang, Z. Yu, H. Liang, S. Yang, M. Tang, W. Liu, X. Huang, S. Liu, Y. Tang, Y. Wu, L. Yao, Z. Shi, P. He, H. Zhao, Z. Chen, J. Luo, Y. Wan, Q. Shi, M. Wang, De Yang, X. Chen, F. Huang, J. Mu, H. Li, Z. Li, J. Zheng, S. Xie, T. Cai, Y. Peng, W. Xie, Z. Qiu, C. Liu, C. Yue, L. Li, Yan Tian, Dahong Yang, J. Miao, J. Yang, J. Hu, R.G. Nogueira, D. Wang, J.L. Saver, F. Li, and Q. Yang, for the RESCUE BT2 Investigators*

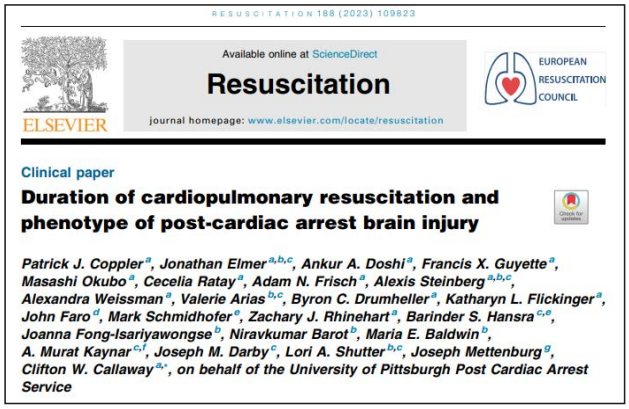
NFL Hall of Famer Jerome Bettis pledges donation to pitt's new National Sports Brain Bank

The University of Pittsburgh launched a National Sports Brain Bank (NSBB) to create a resource to study anyone from professional athletes to recreational athletes who participate in an array of contact sports.

NFL Hall of Famer Jerome Bettis and former Steelers running back Merril Hoge pledged to stand among the first group of professional athletes to participate in the brain bank. The interdisciplinary bank will be led by Julia Kofler, co-director of the Pitt Alzheimer's Disease Research Center. The team will annually evaluate participants over the course of their lives and perform detailed neuropathological examinations of their brains after death, looking for evidence of chronic encephalopathy (CTE), Alzheimer's disease, ALS and other neurodegenerative disease processes.

At-risk athletes from a wide range of disciplines are invited, including the traditional contact sports of football, hockey, soccer, boxng and wrestling, but participation is also open to other activities with increased concussion risk such as cheerleading, equestrian and motocross.

Steinberg, Arias, Fong-Isariyawongse, Baldwin & Shutter Participate in Paper Published in Elsevier



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Resuscitation

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/resuscitation

EUROPEAN RESUSCITATION COUNCIL

ELSEVIER

Clinical paper

Duration of cardiopulmonary resuscitation and phenotype of post-cardiac arrest brain injury

Patrick J. Coppler[a], Jonathan Elmer[a,b,c], Ankur A. Doshi[a], Francis X. Guyette[a], Masashi Okubo[a], Cecelia Ratay[a], Adam N. Frisch[a], Alexis Steinberg[a,b,c], Alexandra Weissman[a], Valerie Arias[b,c], Byron C. Drumheller[a], Katharyn L. Flickinger[a], John Faro[d], Mark Schmidhofer[e], Zachary J. Rhinehart[a], Barinder S. Hansra[c,e], Joanna Fong-Isariyawongse[b], Niravkumar Barot[b], Maria E. Baldwin[b], A. Murat Kaynar[c,f], Joseph M. Darby[c], Lori A. Shutter[b,c], Joseph Mettenburg[g], Clifton W. Callaway[a,*], on behalf of the University of Pittsburgh Post Cardiac Arrest Service

Patients resuscitated from cardiac arrest have variable severity of primary hypoxic ischemic brain injury (HIBI). Signatures of primary HIBI on brain imaging and electroencephalography (EEG) include diffuse cerebral edema and burst suppression with identical bursts (BSIB). Authors hypothesize distinct phenotypes of primary HIBI are associated with increasing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) duration.

Urban Serves as Investigator in Article Published in Epilepsia

Managing the progress of drug-resistant epilepsy patients implanted with the responsive neurostimulation (RNS) system requires the manual evaluation of hundreds of hours of intracranial recordings. The generation of these large amounts of data and the scarcity of experts' time for evaluation, necessitates the development of automatic tools to detect intracranial electroencephalographic seizure patterns (iESPs) with expert-level accuracy. investigators developed an intelligent system for identifying the presence and onset time of iESPs in intracranial EEG (iEEG) recordings from the RNS device.

Milestones & Recognition

UPMC Presbyterian Celebrates 10th Anniversary as Comprehensive Stroke Center

During the month of May, which is nationally celebrated as Stroke Awareness Month, UPMC Presbyterian celebrated their 10th anniversary as a Comprehensive Stroke Center. The Joint Commission offers this certification in collaboration with the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association to organizations that are dedicated to high performance when it comes to evaluating and evolving the care patients receive during every point of their stroke care. It is the highest level of certification for hospitals with specific abilities to receive and treat the most complex stroke cases.

Congratulations and well done to every member of our stroke team that makes it possible for us to provide the best treatment for our patients!

Loma-Miller Moderates Talk for Pitt's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Speaker Series

Ingrid Loma-Miller, MD, assistant professor, (pictured at far right) served as the moderator for the most recent edition of the University of Pittsburgh's Health Sciences Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Speaker Series, titled "Weight Bias in Clinical Care". The impact of obesity, the unconscious bias associated with it in healthcare, and the challenges patients have getting appropriate care was discussed.

Fong-Isariyawongse Accepted to AAN's Palatucci Advocacy Leadership Forum

Joanna Fong-Isariyawongse has been accepted for American Academy of Neurology's 2023 Palatucci Advocacy Leadership Forum. This forum will help neurologists become better advocacy leaders in their clinic, institution and community and will take place August 3-6, 2023, in San Diego, California. The Palatucci Advocacy Leadership Forum honors the memory of AAN Board Directors member Donald M. Palatucci, MD, FAAN.

This leadership forum will teach neurologists the following skills:

- *Action Planning:* Neurologists will learn how to create an effective plan that identifies an issue and resolves the problem
- *Media Relations:* Physicians will learn how to sharpen on-camera skills, work with news reporters, and improve confidence in a media setting
- *Grassroots Advocacy:* Get an inside look at how governments work by lobbying for fair reimbursement and learning to draft position statements that affect future legislation

Experienced advocate coaches and staff will assist neurologists in preparing their action plans for optimum success. While at the forum, there will be a multitude of opportunities to network with AAN leadership and other committed colleagues.

Pennell Speaks at UPMC Lunch & Learn Event

Page B. Pennell, department chair and Henry B. Higman Professor of Neurology was a featured speaker at UPMC's most recent "Lunch & Learn" event, which was sponsored by Hall of Fame Health and Off the Field NFL Wives Association. This event focused on topics related to pain management, transition and mental health.

This event was hosted by Charlie Batch – Super Bowl Champion, former Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback, founder of The Best of Batch Foundation – and Latasha Wilson-Batch, who is the treasurer of the Off The Field NFL Wives Association and the Executive Director of Best of the Batch Foundation.

Several UPMC physicians were invited to speak at the event. The panel included:

- MaCalus V. Hogan, MD, MBA – David Silver Professor and Chair of the UPMC

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

- Kenneth C. Nash, MD, MMM – Professor and Vice Chair of Clinical Affairs, UPMC Department of Psychiatry; Professor of Pediatrics and Neurological Surgery
- Tracey Conti, MD – Associate Professor and Chair of UPMC Department of Family Medicine
- Gwendolyn Sowa, MD, PhD – Professor and Chair of UPMC Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- Page B. Pennell, MD – Henry B. Higman Professor and Chair of the UPMC Department of Neurology

Staff Section

Promotions

Congratulations to Maranda McGovern, who has been promoted to Senior APP!

Service Anniversaries

Thank you to all who celebrate a service anniversary this month! Your hard work and dedication to helping innovate and provide the best possible care is what helps our department shine. Congratulations on another year of hard work!

Faculty

- Megan Mantica, Faculty – 6/14/2013
- Andrew Levin, Faculty – 6/14/2013
- Emre Cakmak, Faculty – 6/15/2018
- Claire Yanta, Faculty – 6/16/2010
- Ajitesh Ojha, Faculty – 6/16/2011
- Cynthia Kenmuir, Faculty – 6/16/2011
- Alexis Steinberg, Faculty – 6/16/2014
- Ying Sun, Faculty – 6/16/2015
- Madison Pilato, Faculty – 6/16/2015
- Josif Stakic, Faculty - 6/17/2008
- Riddhi Patira, Faculty – 6/23/2018

Staff

- Melanie Mielo, Practice Manager – 6/10/1991
- Aeletha Romano, Professional Staff Nurse, OP – 6/11/2007
- Barbara McElhaney, Office Coordinator – 6/12/1995

- Sarah Porter, Administrative Coordinator – 6/12/2017
- Jessica Gregg, Patient Services Representative – 6/14/2021

Funding & Career Development Opportunities

Neurology Philanthropy Partners

Why should you partner with philanthropy?

1. Philanthropy can result in direct funds for your research, equipment, training, and patient care needs
2. Learn more about how our partners can engage your patients, families, and department alumni to express gratitude to support our mission
3. Work with a partner to come up with a customized approach that works best for you
4. Justin and Stacie are available to meet with you virtually or in-person at your convenience

Justin Meyer
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jrm233@pitt.edu
(412) 482-4319 (call or text)

Stacie McAllister
Grateful Patients and Families
slm162@pitt.edu
(412) 482-4312 (call or text)

Upcoming Events

2023 EEG and Epilepsy in Clinical Practice, September 14-16

This program is an opportunity for a wide range of professionals to expand their knowledge and acquire and improve competencies for providing care to patients with epilepsy and related conditions. This is a 2.5-day course designed to introduce core

Alexandra Urban, MD
Course Co-Director

Anto Bagic, MD, PhD
Course Co-Director

clinical epilepsy and EEG, as well as cutting edge pre-surgical evaluation techniques for drug resistant (DRE) epilepsies. A didactice and interactive format include workshops at the end of each day to encourage audience participation.

Who should attend: Neurologists, neurocritical care specialists, psychiatrists, neurosurgeons, internal medicine and family practice physicians, advanced practice providers, technologists, and trainees in these disciplines.

Course Location:

Biomedical Science Tower S120
UPMC Presbyterian
200 Lothrop Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Tuition:

$350 for physicians (CME credits)
$250 for non-physicians (CEU or other credits)
$150 for UPMC employees

This course is offered as a hybrid model, with online (Zoom) and in-person options available. Tuition is the same for both.

All course lectures will be recorded and made available for all attendees to view via Google Drive for one year after the course.

Scan the QR code to visit our course website

Jorge González-Martínez, MD, PhD
Course Director

Frontiers in Neurosurgery and Neuromodulation: Innovation and Leadership in Epilepsy, Movement Disorders and Spasticity Conference, September 28-29, 2023

The Department of Neurology will have several faculty members speaking at this conference. Join the University of Pittsburgh Department of Neurological Surgery for this two-day presentation and discussion on innovations in epilepsy, movement disorders, and spasticity care. Sessions will be centered around current state-of-the-art treatment methods as well as the future of the neuromodulation field. The symposium is under the direction of Jorge A. González-Martínez, MD, PhD, director of the University of Pittsburgh's Epilepsy and Movement Disorders Program and a world-renowned leader in the care and treatment of epilepsy and movement disorders.

Over the last 20 years, the surgical treatment for patients with epilepsy, movement disorders and spasticity have experienced a dramatic evolution, favoring the improvement of clinical results and safety. In this context, the upcoming neuromodulation field—applied to different neurological conditions—has provided additional treatment alternatives and hope for patients with medically intractable conditions. The Frontiers in Neurosurgery and Neuromodulation symposium is a focused and

practical symposium dedicated to neurologists, general practitioners, mid-level providers, students, surgeons and patients interested in learning and discussing current state-of-the-art treatment methods, as well as the future of the neuromodulation field.

Patients and family members will also get the opportunity to pose questions to our experts during a special "Patient/Family Discussion" session on Friday from 1-2:30 p.m. There is no charge for patients or family members to attend this session, but space is very limited.

Course Location:

Wyndham Pittsburgh University Center
100 Lytton Ave
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Tuition:

Physicians/Administration/General Registration: $300
Nurses/APPs/Students/Residents: $150
First Responders: $0

View the course agenda and register here: https://bit.ly/3B7LONB