An Update from Haiti

Funding, Progress and Patient Care

The University of Miami has received more than $7-million in donations for its relief efforts in Haiti through the University’s Global Institute/Project Medishare. The University was also recently awarded a $500,000 grant from the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund to support the ongoing medical relief efforts for earthquake survivors. More than 100 of the University’s doctors, nurses, and other staff members have traveled to Haiti since the earthquake to volunteer in the University’s 240-bed tent-hospital.

The rapid and extensive response of the University was made possible by the 15 year pre-existing relationship with Haiti through the contribution of Project Medishare, a program co-founded by Barth Green, M.D., professor and chair of the department of neurological surgery. Miller School of Medicine physicians were the first to arrive in Haiti, less than 24 hours after the earthquake. The team, led by Dr. Green, hit the ground running, treating patients and conducting life-saving procedures with basic instruments and alcohol in make-shift ORs.

This effective system has found representatives from the departments of neurological surgery and neurology working side-by-side, as one unified team diagnosing and treating patients with care, speed and precision.

“Few groups have been able to deploy an effective system, and we were the first to be able to do so because Barth Green and the Global Institute at UM have such a deep knowledge of the region and its people,” said Miller School Dean Pascal J. Goldschmidt, M.D.

“Many patients who are seeking care travel five to six hours or more over the roughest of roads to get to UM/Medishare Hospital. One patient, with multiple lumbar fractures and partial lower extremity paralysis, traveled five hours on a collapsed beach lounge to reach our facility,” said Aaron Cohn, Neurology ARNP, who spent a week in Haiti.

Neurology nurses, like Aaron Cohn and Ginna Gonzalez, Director of Nursing, have been diagnosing patients upon arrival and then consulting with members of the neurosurgical team who are rotating into the tent-hospital. These include Dr. Barth Green, Dr. Michael Wang, Dr. Allan Levi and Dr. John Ragheb. Specializing in areas such as spinal cord injury, spinal reconstruction, spinal surgery trauma and pediatric neurosurgery, these doctors have completed up to 15-16 cases in one weekend.

In the tent-hospital, before surgery is considered, patients are first diagnosed based upon their medical history (via a translator), and a physical and neurological exam focusing on weakness, deep tendon reflexes, decreased sensation and decreased movement. Assessments are also conducted for anterior, central or posterior spinal cord syndrome. There is only one x-ray machine to identify injury sites with fracture, disc herniation, secondary to subluxation of the inervertebral joint, narrowing of joint space and inappropriate alignment.

Procedures have included adult and pediatric traumatic amputations, maxillofacial surgery, closing of head injuries and treatment of pneumothorax. Patient trauma conditions are ranging from strokes, MI and crush injuries to gunshot and motor vehicle trauma. The UM/Medishare tent hospital is currently considered the Trauma 1 center for Port au Prince and the surrounding area and is averaging several hundred patients a day and running at maximum capacity.

This mounting necessity for a greater care capacity has accelerated the vision of Dr. Barth Green to create a full time critical care facility in Haiti. “One quarter of a million deaths and an equal number of injuries, many of which are catastrophic. The University of Miami and the Project Medishare team has been privileged to have the opportunity to take a leadership role in the resuscitation but the commitment now is for the next 15 years, not just the short-term.”

Despite a focus on the future, there is still a considerable amount to be done on the ground now. Volunteers are committed to supply the hospital with necessary personnel for months but standard procedures like the basic patient assessment continue to be a challenge without all of the modern conveniences like CT, CT-angio, MRI, PET, etc.

What’s INSIDE

If you are interested in volunteering or donating to the efforts of Dr. Green and his team please visit http://umglobalinstitute.com

Pg. 2 - Message from the Chairs of Neurology and Neurological Surgery, Clinical Trials
Pg. 3 - Third Annual Symposium - Evelyn McKnight Donor Wall Dedication Ceremony, Haiti: A Vital Head Trauma Diagnosis
Pg. 4 - In The News, What’s Next, Resident Spotlight - Dr. Jose Gutierrez – PGY-3
For more information on Neurology clinical trials please call 1-877-977-7724.
Evelyn F. McKnight Center for Age Related Memory Loss
Third Annual Symposium & Donor Wall Dedication Ceremony

On February 3, 2010, The Evelyn F. McKnight Center for Age Related Memory Loss held their Third Annual Symposium at the Miller School campus in Miami, Florida. The symposium featured lectures on cognitive aging disorders presented by a multidisciplinary team from the Departments of Neurology, Psychiatry, and Radiology. Following the symposium, the Neurology Department hosted a Center dedication and luncheon attended by the McKnight Brain Research Foundation trustees, Miller School of Medicine Dean, Dr. Pascal Goldschmidt, as well as Department of Neurology faculty and staff.

Dr. Ralph Sacco, Chairman of the Department of Neurology, stated “The generous support of the MBRF will help us toward understanding and alleviating the age-related changes in memory and brain function”. The Center’s team of scientists, researchers, and clinicians, is led by Scientific Director, Dr. Clinton B. Wright, who noted, “Organizing the presentations helped me see more clearly what we have accomplished, as well as how much there is to do. I am excited to keep pushing our mutual goals forward.”

In 2002, the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine was selected to receive a $5 million gift from the McKnight Brain Research Foundation to create the Evelyn F. McKnight Center for Age-Related Memory Loss in the Department of Neurology, which opened in 2008. The Foundation’s gift, matched by a $3,500,000 grant from the Schoninger family and $1,500,000 from other donors, will help scientists and physicians at the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine unlock the mysteries of why some people lose memory as they grow older. Among the four Centers/Institutes established by the McKnight Brain Research Foundation in the United States, the UM Center is the only one focusing on translational research. The Center has also established the Neurobehavioral Clinic and Health Aging Program where patients receive comprehensive neurological, neuropsychological, and nursing assessments. Our physicians spend time with both the patient and caregivers to be able to provide the proper medical treatment and support to individuals with memory and other cognitive disorders.

Evelyn F. McKnight, a former nurse, and her husband, William, chairman of the board of the 3M Corporation for 59 years, were interested in the influences of the natural aging process. In addition to funding the McKnight Center at the University of Miami, the foundation has also funded three other McKnight Institutes at the University of Alabama, University of Arizona and University of Florida.

J. Lee Dockery, a trustee of the McKnight Brain Research Foundation, noted “The trustees were excited and pleased with the progress being made in transforming the Center’s research initiatives in the direction of clinical translation. We believe that under your capable leadership the mutual goals and objectives of the research partnerships between the University of Miami, the MBRF and the other institutions supported by the MBRF, will lead to productive collaboration and development of the translational research leading to the understanding and strategies for interventions in age related cognitive decline.”

They had to wait another 18 hours before Coralie could be transported to Miami. It was a risk to delay surgery, but Dr. Green sat with Coralie the entire night, stabilizing her neck and making sure she was conscious. “Those first hours and night seemed to go on forever as more and more patients crowded into our small, impromptu field hospital at the UN headquarters,” said Dr. Green.

The following morning, January 14, 2010, Coralie was flown to Jackson Memorial Hospital where she received a total body scan and was diagnosed with four types of trauma. The most prevalent being a moderate head injury with epidural hematoma on the left. It had grown by 30% over three days, was causing headaches and a mass effect on the brain and needed to be removed. She sustained fractures of the spinous processes of the C5 C6 C7 in the cervical spine and fractures of lumbar transverse processes of L2 L3 L4. She also had a blowout fracture of her right orbital floor. Coralie underwent surgery for her head injury by Dr. Ross Bullock, University of Miami Professor of Clinical Neurosurgery and world-renowned neurotrauma surgeon and researcher.

“When I saw the quality of care she received at Jackson, I knew we made the right decision to bring her here. I am so thankful for Dr. Green and Dr. Bullock. You can see that they really care. We have been blessed the whole way.”
In The News

Clinton Bush Haiti Fund Awarded 500K Grant to Dr. Green's Efforts
The grant, awarded in February, is supporting the 240-bed tent hospital at the edge of the Port-au-Prince airport that was spearheaded by Barth Green, professor and chair of neurological surgery and co-founder of University of Miami Global Institute/Project Medishare. The grant is specially being used for the purchase of critically needed items that include a 64-slice CT scanner, dialysis machines, angiographic equipment, and digital X-ray, fluoroscopy, and anesthesia machines.

Faculty Profile
Dr. Enrique Serrano has recently joined the Neurology Department as an Assistant Professor of Clinical Neurology in the Epilepsy Division. A graduate of the University of Puerto Rico, he served for four years as a general practitioner and medical officer in the United States Navy. He was then deployed to Iraq serving as the only physician on a naval ship assigned to the Lincoln Battle Group in the Persian Gulf during Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. Following his naval service, he completed his Neurology residency and a Neurophysiology fellowship at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, Georgia.

Prior to joining our faculty, Dr. Serrano worked for several years in private practice in Louisiana and South Florida. His major subspecialty interest is epilepsy including interpreting routine and ambulatory electroencephalograms (EEGs), evaluating and treating patients with seizures, conducting therapeutic trials of medications for the treatment of epilepsy, and in the pre-surgical evaluation of patients with intractable epilepsy.

Resident Spotlight
Neurology Resident, Dr. Jose Gutierrez, was recently selected to present his abstract as a platform presentation at the 2010 American Academy of Neurology Meeting being held on April 10th through the 17th in Toronto, Ontario. Dr. Gutierrez’s abstract titled “HIV-Vasculopathy and VZV-Vasculitis as Cause of Stroke in HIV-Infected Patients” studied cases with multiple cerebral aneurysms in patients with HIV and VV. His conclusions found that HIV was associated to large-artery disease and hemispheric strokes, whereas VZV only affected small arteries and produced smaller, subcortical strokes. All patients were severely immunosuppressed, but only patients with HIV were on HAART. Jose is enrolled in our Resident Clinician Researcher Program, a program aimed to provide residents with necessary faculty mentorship, administrative guidance, infrastructure and research facilities in order for them to pursue rewarding clinical and basic neuroscience research during the period of residency. While enrolled, he has published several manuscripts and begun coursework for his Masters in Public Health Degree. Jose will be continuing his training as a Fellow in Vascular Neurology at the Neurological Institute at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

What’s Next
Dr. Roberto Heros to Receive Prestigious Harvey Cushing Medal
May 3, 2010
Roberto C. Heros, M.D., professor and co-chair of neurological surgery and residency program director, has been selected as the 2010 recipient of the prestigious Harvey Cushing Medal. The award, established in 1976 and given annually since 1977, recognizes an AANS member for distinguished service in the field of neurosurgery. Dr. Heros, who is internationally known in his field, joined the Miller School in 1995. He served as president of the AANS in 2002-2003, and is a past president of the American Academy of Neurological Surgeons. Dr. Heros will receive the Cushing Medal at a special ceremony on May 3, 2010 during the annual AANS meeting in Philadelphia.

Evelyn F. McKnight Center participating in Third Annual Inter-Institutional Meeting of McKnight Brain Research Foundation (MBRF) Funded Institutions
The Evelyn F. McKnight Center for Age Related Memory Loss team at the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine will be participating in the Third Annual Evelyn F. & William L. McKnight Inter-Institutional Meeting of McKnight Brain Research Foundation (MBRF) Funded Institutions being held at the Hilton University of Florida Conference Center, April 28th-30th, 2010. This institute member only meeting, titled “Human Clinical Trials Directed at Age-Related Memory Decline”, will be hosted this year by The University of Florida in Gainesville.