Head and Neck Grows to Six

Two more fellowship-trained head and neck surgeons are joining the department allowing further differentiation and specialization of the surgical services we provide.

J. Kenneth Byrd, M.D., a native of Lexington, SC, completed fellowships in advanced head and neck oncologic surgery and skull base surgery at Pittsburgh. He has excelled at every step of his academic career, graduating Phi Beta Kappa from USC and AOA from medical school before undertaking his residency at MUSC. His research focus will be on comprehensive outcomes assessment in head and neck cancer, and will require an upgrade of our existing tumor registry. Clinically, his efforts will center on all aspects of ablative head and neck surgery.

Jessica Peck, M.D. pursued microvascular training with Mark Wax at OHSU following her residency at Tripler Army Medical Center, where she received numerous teaching awards. She will provide comprehensive reconstructive capability within the department. She has a research interest in quality of life as it relates to free tissue transfer in the head and neck.
Spring in Augusta means beautiful azaleas, Mediterranean weather, and another exciting Master’s tournament with Georgia graduate Bubba Watson the victor. This year it also heralds the soon-to-be-named third chair of Otolaryngology at GRU.

The timing for the transition couldn’t be better as we continue our steady expansion in faculty members, surgical volumes and all other productivity-based metrics (including a quadrupling of the wRVU’s since becoming a department in 2002). Our stable crew of senior faculty provides mentorship and opportunities for our residents, fellows and junior faculty. The future is very promising.

David J. Terris, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Porubsky Professor and Chairman

Faculty Honors

Achih Chen became the second member of our faculty to be featured on The Doctor’s show. He showcased his “total face rejuvenation”.

Michael Groves received the MCG Exemplary Teaching Award for Graduate Medical Education.

Sarah Mowry successfully passed the American Board of Otolaryngology Neurotology Subspecialty Examination.

Gregory Postma was an invited speaker for the Advanced Practices in Voice and Dysphagia conference in Las Vegas, the University of Arizona’s ENT in the Desert conference, and the European Laryngologic Society in Antalya, Turkey. He was visiting professor at Mother Teresa Medical Center in Skopje, Macedonia.

David Terris was a guest speaker for the Saudi Arabian Otolaryngology Society and the Chinese Thyroid Association. He was an oral examiner for the American Board of Otolaryngology, was elected to the Board of Directors of the GA Chapter of AACE, and was appointed to the ATA Clinical Affairs Committee and the Editorial Board of VideoEndocrinology.

Endocrine Book Total Reaches Four

Drs. David Terris and Will Duke teamed up to produce the Thyroid Center’s third and fourth books devoted to endocrine surgery. Following a comprehensive thyroid and parathyroid text published in 2009 and a textbook on preventing complications in endocrine surgery released last year, the first-ever full-size book entirely devoted to parathyroid surgery has just hit the bookstands (and Amazon). A book on minimally invasive thyroid and parathyroid surgery co-edited with former fellow Michael Singer was also recently published.

Five Fellowships Available

Endocrine Surgery (contact Dr. David Terris: dtarris@gru.edu)
Rhinology/Sinus Surgery (contact Dr. Stil Kountakis: skountakis@gru.edu)
Laryngology (contact Dr. Gregory Postma: gpostma@gru.edu)
Facial Plastic Surgery (contact Dr. Achih Chen: achen@gru.edu)
Head and Neck Oncologic Surgery (contact Dr. Arturo Solares: csolares@gru.edu)
A 15-year-old male presented with a five-month history of left-sided nasal obstruction, epistaxis, and facial swelling. On presentation, there was obvious left-sided facial fullness (Fig 1).

An MRI was consistent with a large juvenile nasopharyngeal angiofibroma (JNA) occupying the infratemporal fossa, orbital apex, and contralateral nasal cavity (Fig 2). A multidisciplinary team consisting of Drs. George Harris (pediatric otolaryngology), Arturo Solares (skull base surgery) and Scott Rahimi (neurosurgery) completed a combination procedure consisting of preoperative embolization, intranasal debulking, and endoscopic removal of the tumor (Fig 3). This was completed without any external incisions, to the great satisfaction of the family. Postoperative imaging revealed complete tumor resection, and serial examinations have revealed no evidence of recurrence.

There has been a wave of interest in pediatric otolaryngology in Augusta, starting with one of last year’s chief residents (Drew Prosser, see story above) and blossoming to include our upcoming graduate (Claude Harbarger) and our two rising chief residents (Brian Ho and Jessica Van Beek-King) pictured here with the pediatric otolaryngology team, who helped inspire this interest. Claude will pursue his fellowship training at UAB in Birmingham, Brian recently matched at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital and Jessica recently matched at the University of Chicago.
We have a long history of providing comprehensive endocrine courses for surgeons and endocrinologists around the country. This year we also took on the responsibility of educating the public. Two months after our successful eleventh consecutive cadaver-based thyroid/parathyroid symposium (featuring Greg Randolph, Janice Pasieka and several other experts), we hosted our fourth public symposium at the Augusta Marriott. This interactive experience featured lectures by Drs. Will Duke and Ted Chin on the state-of-the-art evaluation and surgical techniques used to manage nodular thyroid disease, and allowed members of the community to interact directly with physicians to learn more information about this common condition.

Ultrasound Screening a Hit

We have conducted free thyroid screening in our department in the past, but this year we packed up our portable ultrasound and took our show on the road. Dr. Will Duke performed thyroid screening at the Plant Vogtle nuclear facility, which included neck ultrasound (see photograph). Fifteen of the nearly 100 individuals screened required follow-up assessment. We anticipate providing this service on an ongoing basis in the future.

Substernal Goiter Makes for Easy Delivery

Often the presence of a substernal goiter can pose surgical challenges. In this patient who was referred for management of hyperparathyroidism, however, the serendipitous finding (on in-office ultrasound) of a large substernal goiter ipsilateral to the parathyroid adenoma (see sestamibi image, Figure 1) eventually made the parathyroid surgery easier. Upon delivery of the goiter (Figure 2), the parathyroid adenoma could be seen attached to the anterior surface of the thyroid. She had a prompt drop in the intraoperative parathyroid hormone level (Figure 3).
Weathering the Storm

The Eleventh Otology Update and Temporal Bone Symposium will go down in the annals of our robust CME programs as perhaps the most interesting and creative. We suffered through the epic Ice Storm of 2014 that struck Augusta at precisely the scheduled time of the Temporal Bone Course. The flights of the featured guest speaker were of course cancelled. Nevertheless, through the magic of Skype, Dr. Bruce Gantz was able to deliver his lectures in living color from the comfort of his office in Iowa. Those that braved the inclement conditions and made the journey enjoyed the lectures and laboratory time.

Innovative Otologic Procedure

Dr. Sarah Mowry recently performed the second Hybrid Cochlear implant in the United States outside of a clinical trial. The patient had experienced significant high frequency hearing loss, but had residual low frequency hearing. She was struggling to participate in her normal activities. The Hybrid system was recently approved by the FDA for these patients and expands the possibility of hearing to a wider population with severe hearing loss.

On the pediatric side, Dr. Mowry also performed the first endoscopic middle ear surgery at the Children’s Hospital of Georgia. The patient had a cholesteatoma of the anterior portion of the middle ear that was difficult to access through traditional approaches. It was removed successfully and the endoscopic approach allowed the child to have a minimally invasive approach to this difficult-to-access area. The drum was completely healed and mobile at the child’s one-month follow-up visit.

Audiology Offers Latest Hearing Device

GRU Audiology Associates now offers the SoundBite non-surgical bone conduction hearing device for appropriate candidates. Dr. Sarah King, Keith Axelson (hearing aid technologist) and Dwain Greene (front desk coordinator) continue to provide stellar audiologic services as the group looks to build on these strong foundations.
Dean's Summer Research Fellows

We have established a long tradition of hosting medical students pursuing research-oriented careers, who have successfully competed for a Dean's Summer Research scholarship. This year is no exception as six students will work with five of our faculty to develop their research skills. Thomas Holmes will work with Stil Kountakis, Leslie Peard with Tony Hughes, Burton Dunlap and Sushma Reddy will work with Paul Weinberger, and Amanda Bradley and Brian Sullivan have teamed up with the endocrine unit (Drs. Terris and Duke).

Selected Publications


Hail

Joshua Yelverton  
VA Commonwealth  
Rhinology Fellow

Christopher Johnson  
Naval Med Ctr San  
Diego  
Laryngology Fellow

Steven Bomeli  
Univ of Pittsburgh  
Endocrine Surgery  
Fellow

Colin Fuller  
Texas A&M  
PGY-1

Christopher Leto  
Univ of Kansas  
PGY-1

Farewell

Jose G. Gurrola, II  
will join the faculty at  
University of Virginia

Rebecca J. Howell  
will join the faculty  
at University of  
Cincinnati

Katrina Chaung  
will enter private  
practice in Dallas, TX

Hachem Jammal  
will enter private  
practice in Saudi Arabia

Claude Harbarger  
will do a pediatric otolaryngology  
fellowship at UAB

Consultants of the Year

We are pleased to announce that the  
Immunopathology Team was the unanimous  
selection for the Department of Otolaryngology  
Consultant of the Year for 2014. They consistently  
provide exceptional point-of-care intraoperative PTH  
assay support, and went beyond all expectations  
during the February ice storm.

Welcome New Staff

It just keeps getting better. One  
of the hardest jobs in our  
department is that of the surgery scheduler. It requires a  
tremendous amount of energy, organizational skills, and patient  
compassion. We are fortunate to have recruited an individual who  
embodies each of these characteristics. Ashley Silas is already having a  
major impact. She successfully implemented iRequest, reformatted and fine-tuned the schedule  
structure, and is working hard to improve the  
experience of our many surgical patients, including  
renovating the scheduling office. Our patients are in  
great hands.

Employee of the Month

Dwain Greene was voted by his co-workers as APAS Desk Operations Specialist employee  
of the month for June. His attributes on the survey included: “Dwain is always willing to help,  
goes above and beyond for the patients. He helps other clinics when has not been asked to  
help and he has a great attitude. He’s friendly, loyal, honest and has a positive personality”.  
Dwain received a certificate and a gift packet thanking him for going the extra mile.
Skull Base and Temporal Bone Dissection and Otology Update

February 5-7, 2015
Augusta, Georgia

Program Co-Chairs

Sarah E. Mowry, MD
Assistant Professor
Georgia Regents University

C. Arturo Solares, MD
Associate Professor
Georgia Regents University

Register early. Participation in the Lab is limited.

Airway on the Island

August 2015
Kiawah Island, South Carolina

Program Co-Chairs

Gregory N. Postma, MD
Professor
Georgia Regents University

Paul M. Weinberger, MD
Assistant Professor
Georgia Regents University