Department of Surgery Sections

Urology

The Section of Urology is establishing itself as a full-service department with strong emphasis in a number of subspecialties, including oncology, voiding dysfunction, infertility, and reconstruction. The Residency Training Program continues to flourish, anticipating formal RRC approval for expansion to two residents per year.

Dr John Heaney deserves enormous credit for having developed one of the premier interdisciplinary clinical oncology programs in the region. The addition of Dr John Seigne to the Section, an MD Anderson fellowship-trained oncologist and late of the H Lee Moffitt Cancer Center of the University of South Florida, gives the institution a level of comprehensive oncological expertise enjoyed by few cancer programs in New England. Dartmouth-Hitchcock boasts a fully mature, minimally-invasive surgical approach to prostate and renal cancer, and under the auspices of Drs Marc Ernstoff and Christopher Tretter of Medical Oncology, an integrated approach to all genitourinary malignancies.

Dr Ann Gormley maintains a national leadership position in the area of female urology and urinary incontinence, chairing a number of NIH/NIDDK incontinence subcommittees and serving as the Society of Female Urology and Urodynamics editor for the Journal of Urology. Her participation as an invited speaker at the International Continence Meeting, attests to her established reputation in her subspecialty.

Dr Ajay Nangia, appointed jointly in Urology and Ob-Gyn, continues to build the Male Factor Infertility Program at DHMC. Tapped by the Societies of Andrology and the Study of Male Reproduction to chair a number of subcommittees, Ajay’s stature in his area of expertise continues to evolve.

Dr Lori Lerner, a Dartmouth residency graduate and fellowship trained in laser prostatectomy, has initiated our minimally-invasive BPH program while continuing her clinical activities at the VA. An invited discussant at next year’s annual American Urological Association meeting, Lori’s reputation in the area of obstructive uropathy is solidifying.

The recruitment of Dr Paul Merguerian by the Section of Pediatric Surgery last summer fills a void left by

William Bhihle, MD
Acting Section Chief
Associate Professor of Surgery
the departure of Dr Marc Cendron. His enormous clinical experience and commitment to resident education and research immediately improved the Residency Program and the institution.

Dr William Bihrle, Section Chief at the VA and formerly of the Lahey Clinic, brings to the Section experience in reconstructive urology and an interest in general urology.

**Patient Care**

Professional and ancillary stability allows the Section to concentrate on providing our patients and referring providers with a full menu of urological services delivered in a timely fashion. The recruitment of Ms Kelly Hammil-Lemay, NP, as a dedicated service provider working with Dr Ann Gormley in the areas of female urology and voiding dysfunction permits improved access to this important and growing niche of our specialty. Drs Heaney and Seigne, aided by Laura Stempkowski, NP, continue to expand the GU oncology program, providing comprehensive evaluation and treatment to a widening community of patients and physicians. With two experienced laparoscopic surgeons, the institution is uniquely positioned to remain on the forefront of this important and evolving approach to the treatment of GU malignancies. Tangibly, evidence of this is seen in the burgeoning number of oncological index cases, specifically, laparoscopic radial prostatectomies and laparoscopically-assisted complete and partial nephrectomies. Collaborating with his colleagues in diagnostic radiology, Dr Seigne has established a dedicated PSA/prostate biopsy clinic. The laparoscopically-assisted live donor nephrectomy program continues to expand under the guidance of Dr John Seigne and represents an example of successful collaboration with the Section of Transplantation Surgery. The Section offers a minimally invasive laser-based option for the treatment of BPH (benign prostatic hyperplasia) under the direction of Dr Lori Lerner. Employing holmium laser energy, obstructing prostatic tissue is either ablated or enucleated, resulting in decreased hospitalization and shortened convalescence.

**Education**

2005 represents a seminal year for the Dartmouth Program in Urology. In June, we graduated two residents under the recently reconfigured 2-1-2-1 block. Based on the successful integration of a second resident into a thriving clinical program, the Section, under the capable stewardship of Dr Ann Gormley, plans to petition the Urology RRC for permission to complete the transition to a two resident program. The affiliation with the urology group based at Concord Hospital provides our residents with exposure to a high volume of urological services in a community setting. A joint quarterly conference with our Concord colleagues solidifies this important relationship.

Our two rising chief residents, Drs Sean Corbett and Tom Schwab, anticipate pursuing fellowship and academic careers in pediatric urology and oncology, respectively. The Residency Program remains almost impenetrably competitive with over 150 applicants vying for last year’s lone position. Dr Brian Kowal, a 2005 DMS graduate, begins his urological career this summer.
Department of Surgery Sections

Research
Six months of the PGY-4 year is protected for resident research activity. The Section, realizing that basic investigation requires time and mentoring, has committed to improving the resident experience in this area. Under the supervision of Drs Merguerian and Nangia, the Section is establishing a focused procedure for the development of clinical and basic research. Ajay, a past recipient of the Harmes Scholarship award and recently a Hitchcock Foundation Grant awardee, introduces residents to the basic science of infertility. He and Dr Sean Corbett, one of our chief residents, have identified a role between vitamin D and male factor infertility. Dr Curtis Crane, our current research resident, is investigating the use of photodynamic therapy (PDT) in treating prostate cancer using a rat model. Curtis works in the laboratory of Dr Bin Chen, a research colleague in the Borwell labs. Clinically, Dr John Heaney’s laparoscopic radical prostatectomy data base represents the basis for an impressive array of abstracts, presentations and manuscripts, each coauthored by a resident. He, Dr Marc Ernstoff, and Dr Tom Schwaab, a chief resident, coauthored a paper on the immunological effects of autologous tumor vaccines in patients with renal cell cancer which appeared as the lead article in the Journal of Urology. Dr John Seigne boasts coauthorship on nine manuscripts and presentations within the last year on topics ranging from the complications of brachytherapy for prostate cancer to the role of PET scanning in the evaluation of renal cancer. Dr Paul Merguerian is mining the CHAD VCUG (voiding cystourethrogram) database while Dr Ann Gormley describes a novel surgical approach to treating female stricture disease.

Faculty Activities
Section faculty gives generously of their time and expertise to regional and national organized urology. The Section is home to two former Presidents of the New England Section of the American Urological Association. Prominently, Dr Ann Gormley serves as Chair of the AUA Audio Visual Committee and sits on the ABU Exam Committee. Dr Ajay Nangia chairs the Ethics Committee of the American Society of Andrology as well as directing the Travel Award Fellowship for his society. Dr John Seigne, the New Hampshire state representative to the New England Section of the AUA, sits on the AUA Superficial Bladder Cancer Guidelines Panel. In all, the faculty hold officer and committee positions on over 20 regional and national urological societies.