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CYBER MUSEUM

Section Home

About the Section

- About the AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery
- Application for Membership
- Membership Information
- Online Directory
- Bylaws / Rules & Regulations

Community

- Newsletter
- Mailing Lists
- AANS/CNS Washington Committee
- AANS Online Career Center
- CNS Job Placement Service

Education

- Fellowships
- Publications / CME
- Gateway to Medline
- Selections from Amazon.com
- AANS Meetings Calendar
- CNS Meetings Calendar

Awards & Grants

- Neurosurgery Sponsored Grants
- AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery Awards & Grants

Cerebrovascular Neurotrauma Pain Pediatric Spine Stereotactic & Functional Tumor

[View Printer Friendly](#)

Section: AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery

Pediatric SHORT CUTS

AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery



Editor: Jeffrey H. Wisoff, MD

From the Chair

Pediatric Neurosurgical Education: A Lifelong Pursuit

Andrew Parent, MD

In the past, pediatric neurosurgeons were fundamentally self-taught. They designated themselves as a loose confederation of mutually supportive surgeons who focused their practice in pediatrics as they developed the techniques and methods necessary to their evolving subspecialty.



Pediatric Neurosurgery: An Evolution

In fact, Harvey Cushing, MD, appointed Franc Ingraham, MD, at the Boston Children's Hospital to concentrate his efforts in pediatrics, and thus evolved this focus of education in neurosurgery for infants and children. Subsequently, at some children's hospitals around the country, neurosurgeons developed a focused practice in pediatric neurosurgery, and this later evolved in pediatric neurosurgical fellowship training programs. Your present section chair was trained outside of the fellowship program and may be one of the last section chairs to not be fellowship-trained.

Indeed, the Section on Pediatric Neurosurgery can be very proud of how our subspecialty has taken a leadership role in developing a structured fellowship program that is externally supervised and accredited. Our subspecialty also took a leadership role in establishing the recertification process in pediatric neurosurgery. The continuing education of a pediatric neurosurgeon requires constant updating that is partially accomplished by reading our various journals in pediatric neurosurgery, including the *Child's Nervous System* and *Pediatric Neurosurgery*, soon to be called the *Journal of Neurosurgery: Pediatrics*. This will result in a major increase in circulation, not only nationally, but also worldwide.

Annual Pediatric Section Meeting, Dec. 2-5

In This Issue...

- [From the Chair](#)
- [Feature: Sports and Shunts](#)
- [From the Hydrocephalus Association](#)
- [Meeting Minutes](#)

Your section has worked very diligently to develop the upcoming annual [section meeting](#) in Salt Lake City, which should be a wonderful location in early December. There will be invited lectures on tumor stem cell and medulloblastoma research, deep brain stimulation for dystonia, and a special focus on neurofibromatosis. This is an excellent opportunity to maintain and advance your continuing medical education on focused pediatric neurosurgical topics.

As your section chair, I am honored to represent you at the national organizations. The pediatric neurosurgical agenda, including issues of workforce, recertification, and child healthcare, must be heard, not only by pediatric organizations, but by both the Congress of Neurological Surgeons and the American Association of Neurological Surgeons. Your immediate past chair, Thomas Luerssen, MD, provided superb representation of the AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery. In the tradition of past chairs, who did not avoid contentious issues, he assumed a leadership role in providing solutions to problematic issues. This is a privilege I will endeavor to pursue, and I look forward to hearing from the membership regarding problems or issues about which you are concerned.

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[AANS](#)
[CNS](#)
[ABSTRACT CENTER](#)
[CYBER MUSEUM](#)

Section Home

About the Section

- About the AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery
- Application for Membership
- Membership Information
- Online Directory
- Bylaws / Rules & Regulations

Community

- Newsletter
- Mailing Lists
- AANS/CNS Washington Committee
- AANS Online Career Center
- CNS Job Placement Service

Education

- Fellowships
- Publications / CME
- Gateway to Medline
- Selections from Amazon.com
- AANS Meetings Calendar
- CNS Meetings Calendar

Awards & Grants

- Neurosurgery Sponsored Grants
- AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery Awards & Grants

[Cerebrovascular](#)
[Neurotrauma](#)
[Pain](#)
[Pediatric](#)
[Spine](#)
[Stereotactic & Functional](#)
[Tumor](#)
[View Printer Friendly](#)

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Editor: Jeffrey H. Wisoff, MD

Feature

Sports and Shunts

Opinion Survey Asks, To Play or Not to Play

Jeffrey Wisoff, MD

The recent paper "Sports and Shunts: Who Can Play?" addresses the neglected, but important question as to whether children with cerebrospinal fluid shunts should be restricted from participation in organized athletic activities.

The impetus for the paper, which was presented by Jeffrey Blount, MD, of the Children's Hospital of Alabama/University of Alabama at Birmingham at the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons in Denver, was the authors' realization of differing opinions and practices among partners within their own practice group regarding whether to restrict sports activity in shunted patients; this realization prompted a literature search for information about sports and shunts. No papers were found, even with the assistance of medical librarians. The authors then sent an e-mail survey of three questions to every neurosurgeon who was a member of the AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery.

The Survey

Ninety-two responses were obtained. Seventy-seven percent of the neurosurgeons had never encountered a sports-related shunt complication in their practice. Approximately 25-30 events were recalled by neurosurgeons who reported sports-related shunt problems. The most common event was a fracture or disconnection of the catheter. Other observed events included shunt dysfunction, subdural fluid or clot accumulation. The only acute hemorrhage in the whole series occurred in a teenage boy (with normal sized ventricles) who was playing soccer and headed the ball. Wrestling was the most frequently implicated sport.

The authors state that a precise incidence of sports-related shunt complications cannot be calculated due to inherent lack of precision in a survey of this nature, but, regardless of the assumptions

In This Issue...

- [From the Chair](#)
- [Feature: Sports and Shunts](#)
- [From the Hydrocephalus Association](#)
- [Meeting Minutes](#)

undertaken, the incidence of sports-related shunt problems appears to be very low (less than 0.1 percent).

Who Can Play?

Ninety percent of neurosurgeons surveyed did not recommend limiting non-contact sports.

However, opinions were quite evenly divided for contact sports.

- Approximately one-third of neurosurgeons surveyed recommended no participation in contact sports.
- Another third precluded specific sports but allowed others.
- The final third did not restrict sports activity in shunted patients.

An associated manuscript is in the review process and the authors hope for publication within the near future. Anyone interested in commenting or offering additional cases should contact:

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AANS

CNS

ABSTRACT CENTER

CYBER MUSEUM

Section Home

About the Section

- About the AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery
- Application for Membership
- Membership Information
- Online Directory
- Bylaws / Rules & Regulations

Community

- Newsletter
- Mailing Lists
- AANS/CNS Washington Committee
- AANS Online Career Center
- CNS Job Placement Service

Education

- Fellowships
- Publications / CME
- Gateway to Medline
- Selections from Amazon.com
- AANS Meetings Calendar
- CNS Meetings Calendar

Awards & Grants

- Neurosurgery Sponsored Grants
- AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery Awards & Grants

Cerebrovascular Neurotrauma Pain Pediatric Spine Stereotactic & Functional Tumor

[View Printer Friendly](#)

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From the Hydrocephalus Association

LIVE...From Public Television... *It's the Hydrocephalus Association*

This past spring the Hydrocephalus Association was selected by [The Visionaries](#), a unique documentary series, to be the subject of a profile during the series' 10th anniversary season. Presented by WYBE Philadelphia, and distributed to public television stations throughout the United States by the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA), The Visionaries series profiles the work of true philanthropists—people dedicating their lives and careers to the service of others—ordinary people who are making a difference. Hosted by actor Sam Waterston of television's "Law & Order," The Visionaries seeks to discover the magic that occurs when one human being helps another by bringing the nonprofit world into the homes of millions of public television viewers, sharing with them the magical experience of creating positive change.

Filming for the segment on the Hydrocephalus Association took place during the summer on location in San Francisco, St. Louis and Dallas. People with hydrocephalus, from infants to older adults with normal pressure hydrocephalus syndrome, and their families were included in the filming, as was Jack Walker, MD, medical chair of the 2004 National Conference on Hydrocephalus and president of the International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery.

The Hydrocephalus Association's "15 minutes of fame" will be available on public television stations across the country during the 2004 and 2005 viewing season. With an estimated 1.7 million households watching public television nightly, this is a unique opportunity to educate people about hydrocephalus. A video will be available to preview at the association's booth at the December [Pediatric Section meeting](#) in Salt Lake City.

Healthcare Transition Guide for Teens and Young Adults with Hydrocephalus

In This Issue...

- [From the Chair](#)
- [Feature: Sports and Shunts](#)
- [From the Hydrocephalus Association](#)
- [Meeting Minutes](#)

The Hydrocephalus Association announces the publication of its newest resource, *Health-Care Transition Guide for Teens and Young Adults with Hydrocephalus*. This 50-page book, produced under the leadership of Pip Marks, the association's director of outreach services, addresses the complexities of continuation of comprehensive medical services and care for teens and young adults after childhood. The goal of the guide is to give teens, young adults, their families and the physicians who have provided their care during childhood the tools they need to understand and implement the transition to adult-centered medical care.

In a conversational and nonjudgmental tone, the guide directly addresses the young person with hydrocephalus, although for many the transition will be a process that includes parents, medical providers and perhaps friends and teachers. There is a series of worksheets for the reader to complete, including a three-page log entitled "My Medical Information" that we hope will become an integral part of the young person's basic medical history.

A sample copy of the guide will be available at the association's booth at the December [Pediatric Section meeting](#) in Salt Lake City. The guide is available for purchase by doctors and hospitals to distribute to their patients.

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[AANS](#)
[CNS](#)
[ABSTRACT CENTER](#)
[CYBER MUSEUM](#)

Section Home

About the Section

- About the AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery
- Application for Membership
- Membership Information
- Online Directory
- Bylaws / Rules & Regulations

Community

- Newsletter
- Mailing Lists
- AANS/CNS Washington Committee
- AANS Online Career Center
- CNS Job Placement Service

Education

- Fellowships
- Publications / CME
- Gateway to Medline
- Selections from Amazon.com
- AANS Meetings Calendar
- CNS Meetings Calendar

Awards & Grants

- Neurosurgery Sponsored Grants
- AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery Awards & Grants

[Cerebrovascular](#) [Neurotrauma](#) [Pain](#) [Pediatric](#) [Spine](#) [Stereotactic & Functional](#) [Tumor](#)
[View Printer Friendly](#)

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Minutes of Business Meeting

AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Survey

San Diego Convention Center
April 30, 2003

Call to Order - Thomas Luerssen, MD

Approval Minutes -Rick Abbott, MD

Moved for approval and accepted by acclamation.

Financial Report - Jeffrey Wisoff, MD

Dr. Wisoff, treasurer, gave the financial report. He anticipates a net revenue of \$18,000 for fiscal 2003. Our annual meeting continues to be our major expense and it is also our major source of income with sponsorships being critically important to the meeting's finishing in the black.

Committee Reports

Membership Committee- Sarah J. Gaskill, MD

Active

Peter B. Dirks, MD (Toronto)
David H. Harter, MD (NY Medical College)
John A. Lancon, MD (University of Mississippi)
Jeffrey G. Ojemann, MD (Washington University)
Hal Meltzer, MD (San Diego)

After it was moved and seconded, the entire list was accepted by the members by acclamation.

In This Issue...

- [From the Chair](#)
- [Feature: Sports and Shunts](#)
- [From the Hydrocephalus Association](#)
- [Meeting Minutes](#)

Annual Winter Meeting

John Kestle, MD, reported on the upcoming 2003 winter meeting to be held in Salt Lake City from Dec. 2 to Dec. 5. A post-meeting ski vacation package will be offered to registrants. Douglas Brockmeyer, MD, also is planning on a pre-meeting spine course, and a coding course might also be offered following the meeting.

New Business

Neurosurgeons to Preserve Health Care Access - Rick Boop, MD
Dr. Boop reported that an assessment of \$1,000 per year for three years will be made to all neurosurgeons to fund a public relations campaign in support of passage of the Medical Liability Reform Act pending before the U.S. Senate. This will be part of a larger coalition including the representative bodies for obstetricians/gynecologists, orthopedists, cardiovascular surgeons, general surgeons and other high-risk surgical specialties. At present 47 senators have stated their support of the measure. Sixty will be needed to close debate and call for a vote on the measure. Dr Boop stated that there has never been as favorable a time for passage of this bill given the Republican control of both the Senate and House of Representatives, and President Bush's support of the bill. Dr. Boop called for us all to support this measure given its extreme importance.

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