Gene Therapy to Prevent Amputation in Patients With Critical Limb Ischemia

The Section of Cardiology is studying the effectiveness of innovative angiogenic gene therapy in promoting new blood vessel growth and preventing amputations in patients suffering from critical limb ischemia, the most severe form of peripheral arterial disease. During the 12-month study, participants will receive four injections of the investigational medication or a placebo into the leg muscle at two-week intervals.

Participants must meet the following criteria:

- Be 50 years of age or older
- Have stable skin ulcers or noninfected gangrene on a foot or leg
- Be diagnosed with PAD at the stage of critical limb ischemia

This is a partial list of inclusion and exclusion criteria. The principal investigator at Rush is Jeffrey Snell, MD. For more information, contact Christina Giannoulis at (312) 942-9489.

Stenting and Aggressive Medical Management for Preventing Recurrent Stroke in Intracranial Stenosis

The departments of neurology and neurosurgery are participating in a five-year, NIH-funded study to determine the best course of treatment to reduce the risk of stroke patients suffering another stroke. Investigators will compare the effectiveness of aggressive medical management of high cholesterol and hypertension combined with stenting to widen a narrowed intracranial artery vs. intensive medical therapy alone. Rush is the only site in Chicago participating in the study, which is the first to look at the long-term benefits of Wingspan, the only FDA-approved stent designed to open clogged arteries in the brain.

Participants must meet the following criteria:

- Be between 30 and 80 years of age
- Have had a stroke or transient ischemic attack within 30 days of enrollment
- Have stenosis of a major intracranial artery

This is a partial list of inclusion and exclusion criteria. Demetrius Lopes, MD, is the principal investigator at Rush. For more information, contact Dr. Lopes at (312) 315-9174.

State-of-the-Art Cartilage Repair

The center offers a full range of advanced treatment options for cartilage defects, including the following:

- Rush is the only hospital in Illinois — and one of the few nationwide — using cartilage transplants to repair damaged shoulder joints. For younger patients in severe pain, with limited movement because of cartilage injury or wear, transplants are a new and emerging option that can help them return to an active lifestyle.
- Orthopedic surgeons at Rush are among the most experienced in the world at meniscus transplantation and pioneered surgical techniques that are performed in an outpatient environment almost entirely arthroscopically.
- An advanced technique for cartilage regeneration, autologous chondrocyte transplantation involves harvesting cells from a patient’s own cartilage, then reimplanting the cultured cells into the knee to repair and resurface areas of cartilage loss.
- For smaller defects, osteochondral autografts are small sections of the patient’s own bone and cartilage that are removed from a nonweight-bearing area of the knee and transplanted into a damaged area.
- Allograft reconstruction, used to repair larger areas of bone and cartilage loss, involves transplanting a piece of freshly donated cartilage and bone rather than the patient’s own tissue.

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Programs and Services Spotlight

Cartilage Restoration Center at Rush

One of the busiest centers of its kind in the nation, the Cartilage Restoration Center at Rush provides comprehensive treatment for patients with cartilage defects resulting from wear or trauma to the knee, ankle, hip, shoulder and elbow joints. The goal of treatment is to reduce pain and disability while minimizing the number of surgeries patients will need over their lifetimes.

The multidisciplinary center features seamless collaboration between orthopedic surgeons and basic scientists in the areas of biochemistry, biomechanical and materials testing, histology, immunohistochemistry, and tribology and wear analysis. The team is led by Brian Cole, MD, MBA, an orthopedic surgeon with Midwest Orthopaedics at Rush, who recently co-authored the first textbook about biologic joint reconstruction (published in January 2009).

These experts are considered worldwide leaders in cartilage restoration techniques as well as translational research on innovative methods for harvesting, preserving and assessing tissue. The following are among the many contributions by cartilage physician-researchers at Rush:

- They were instrumental in determining optimal prolonged fresh preservation techniques — now used by tissue banks nationwide to preserve donated cartilage.
- They helped develop an impaction profile that tells surgeons the optimal amount of force to use when inserting grafts during implantation — findings that led to industry-wide changes in the instrumentation and procedures used during cartilage transplants.

Clinical Trials to Advance Cartilage Restoration

Physician-researchers at the Cartilage Restoration Center at Rush are currently exploring two innovative methods for repairing articular cartilage of the knee. After leading successful phase II trials, Rush is now enrolling patients in phase III trials for the cartilage autograft implantation system (CAIS) and the DeNovo NT/ET (natural tissue/engineered tissue) graft. Rush is the leading site in the country for both trials.

- The DeNovo NT/ET trial involves implantation of cartilage generated from juvenile chondrocytes.
- In the CAIS trial, cartilage tissue is minced into small fragments, placed into scaffolds and implanted into the defect, where it generates healthy new tissue.

For more information, including inclusion and exclusion criteria, contact Michelle Karlin at (312) 432-2381.
INTRODUCTIONS

The following is a list of physicians who joined the Medical Staff of Rush University Medical Center between November 1 and December 31, 2008. The Medical Staff Office and the Office of Marketing and Communications have made every effort to publish accurate information that is as complete as possible; if, however, the information below is incorrect or we have omitted information, we apologize and ask that you contact Muriel Coleman in the Medical Staff Office at (312) 942-5496.

Rema A. Gupta, MD
Consultants in Endocrinology
Internal medicine - endocrinology
(312) 842-6163
rema_gupta@rush.edu

Edward F. Hollinger, MD, PhD
University Transplant Program
General surgery - abdominal transplant
(312) 942-4252
edward_f_hollinger@rush.edu

Mohammad A. Khan, MD
Internal medicine
(708) 660-5017
mohammad_a_khan@rush.edu

Shaila Pai-Vermas, MD
Rush University Internal Medicine - West Loop
(312) 942-6313
shaila_pai-vermas@rush.edu

Sepehr Sani, MD
Neurosurgery
(630) 978-6770

Carla R. Scannello, MD, PhD
University Rheumatologists
Internal medicine - rheumatology
(312) 942-0719
carla_scannello@rush.edu

Mondira Sengupta, MD
University Rheumatologists
Internal medicine - rheumatology
(312) 563-2800
mondira_sengupta@rush.edu

Yeija Zhang, MD, PhD
Midwest Orthopaedics at Rush Orthopedics
(312) 942-4661
yeija_zhang@rush.edu

Kudos

Rush recently received the Outstanding Achievement Award from the American College of Surgeons’ Commission on Cancer. The American College of Surgeons gives the award to programs that demonstrate a “commendation” level of compliance with seven standards, including cancer program leadership, cancer data management, clinical services, research, community outreach and quality improvement as well as a compliance rating with 29 other standards. The cancer program at Rush has received the award each of the two times it has been surveyed.

IN THE NEWS:

Rush Honored With Chest Pain Center Designation

In January, Rush became the first hospital in Chicago to be designated as an accredited chest pain center by the Society of Chest Pain Centers. To earn chest pain center accreditation status, hospitals must meet or exceed a wide set of stringent criteria, including significantly reducing the amount of time it takes for a patient experiencing potential symptoms of a heart attack to see a physician; creating more effective systems to get patients into the cardiac catheterization lab in the shortest amount of time; and providing a specialized observation setting where physicians are better able to monitor patients when it’s not clear whether they are having a coronary event.

To meet these criteria, Rush has implemented numerous strategies, including the following:

• The emergency department now has a single tele-pager activation process that rapidly calls six health care specialists, including an interventional cardiologist and two additional cardiologists, to the emergency room to quickly determine an accurate diagnosis and initiate treatment. Unlike at many hospitals, members of the emergency department staff at Rush have the authority to activate this process without a cardiologist’s consultation based on certain diagnostic criteria.

• Emergency department and cardiology department faculty and staff meet once a month to review cases and discuss potential improvements. These meetings also include personnel from the departments of quality improvement, hospital administration and nursing.

The accreditation process required close coordination between the emergency department, cardiology, pharmacy, internal medicine and other departments across the Medical Center. To coordinate and implement the new protocols for addressing chest pain, Rush has created a multidisciplinary leadership committee consisting of physicians, nursing leaders and representatives from pharmacy, security, environmental services and other areas.

“This is a great accomplishment for our team. We strive to be leaders in the management of acute coronary symptoms within the Chicago community. This achievement is consistent with our commitment to quality and is a testament to the whole team, which has been working tirelessly to achieve this important milestone,” says James Calvin, MD, section chief of cardiology.