

**UCLA**

# Neurosurgery

NEUROTECHNOLOGY EDITION

*Connections*



DR. AUSAF BARI WITH THE MRI-GUIDED FOCUSED ULTRASOUND MACHINE.

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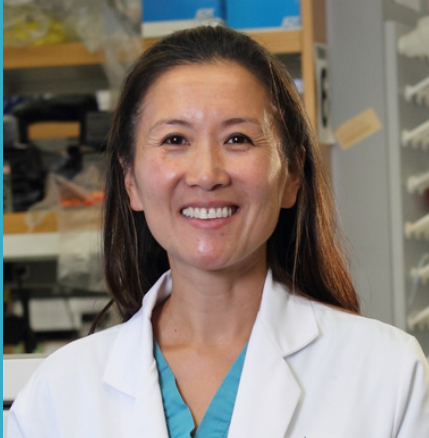
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# FROM THE CHAIR



**Linda Liao, MD, PhD, MBA**

Professor and W. Eugene Stern Chair  
Executive Medical Director  
UCLA Department of Neurosurgery

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the Summer 2023 Edition of the UCLA Neurosurgery Connections newsletter!

As the W. Eugene Stern Professor, Chair, and Executive Medical Director of the Department of Neurosurgery at UCLA Health, I am delighted to share some updates about our department.

In exciting news, we will be hosting the Visionary Ball this year for the first time since 2019! The event will be held on Wednesday, October 11, 2023 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. Byron Allen will be presented with the Visionary Award, Johnese Spisso, MPA will receive the Medical Visionary Award, and Erika Kort will be given the Courage Award.

In addition, the event will feature a variety of patient voices and spotlight some of the groundbreaking technology harnessed by our neurosurgery team to provide the highest level of care to our patients. To learn more about the Visionary Ball, please visit [our website](#).

In this edition of the newsletter, we will highlight a selection of the innovative Neurotechnology utilized by our physician-scientists for treatment and research.

From the use of stereotactic radiosurgery to improve outcomes and treatment processes for patients with brain metastases (page 2), to utilizing laser interstitial thermotherapy as a minimally invasive surgical option for brain tumors and drug-resistant epilepsy (page 3), our team of neurosurgeons is harnessing cutting-edge technology to improve the quality of life for patients with neurosurgical conditions. Additionally, recent FDA approvals for technologies like MRI-guided focused ultrasound enable the treatment of essential tremors (page 4) in patients ineligible or resistant to traditional therapeutic modalities. Lastly, using neurotechnological advances in brain stimulation while patients sleep (page 5) opens the door for boosting the process of memory consolidation and recall.

From all of us at the UCLA Department of Neurosurgery, we wish you good health and the best summer to you and your families!

Warm regards,

*Linda M. Liao*

# STEREOTACTIC RADIOSURGERY

## Optimizing Patient Outcomes Using Stereotactic Radiosurgery (SRS) for Brain Metastases

Brain metastases are a type of brain tumor that arise due to cancer that has spread from another area of the body. Brain metastases are one of the most common forms of brain cancer and impact between 70,000-400,000 individuals per year in the United States.

Stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) is a mainstay in the treatment for this type of brain tumor. In contrast to surgical interventions, SRS is a non-invasive therapy that works by delivering highly

focused radiation to specific targets in the brain. Due to its precise nature, which is achieved through advanced imaging and planning, SRS allows surgeons to treat tumors while keeping the surrounding brain structures safe. Dr. Won Kim, who serves as an Associate Professor of Neurosurgery and Radiation Oncology and the Co-Director of the Stereotactic Radiosurgery and

Brain Metastasis Program at UCLA, utilizes SRS when treating brain metastases.

Single-fraction SRS (sfSRS) is one form of SRS that involves delivering a single, high dose of radiation to a tumor. However, attempting to treat larger tumors with a single radiation dose increases spillage to the surrounding brain structures, and thus the associated toxicity to treatment. As an alternative, neurosurgeons have implemented hypofractionated SRS (hfSRS), which spreads the radiation across multiple doses. This allows the delivery of lethal doses of radiation to the tumor

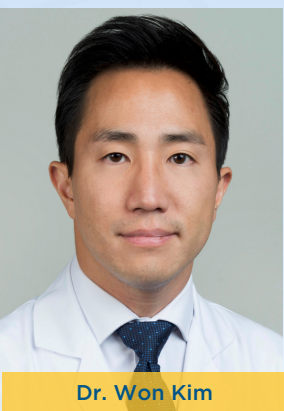
while being gentler on the brain. Although studies have demonstrated clear superior tumor control with hfSRS, it is still unclear if these modalities are equivalent in regard to complications.

Dr. Kim, alongside a multidisciplinary team of radiation oncologists, including fourth-year Neurosurgery resident Dr. Maya Harary, investigated the rates of seizure frequency following the use of sfSRS and hfSRS for brain metastases.

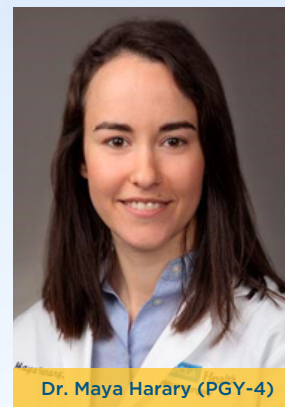
The researchers conducted their study by retrospectively reviewing 444 cases of brain metastases treated at UCLA between 2013 and 2020. They did not find any statistical difference in the post-SRS seizure rates between sfSRS and hfSRS, suggesting they had comparable side effect profiles. However, larger tumor volumes being treated, or planning target volumes (PTVs), were associated with higher risk of seizures following radiosurgery.

Thus, by utilizing SRS data, the researchers were able to determine factors, including higher PTV, that impact patients' post-seizure outcomes. This enables a patient's team to better predict seizure outcomes and respond accordingly.

Read the full article [here](#).



Dr. Won Kim



Dr. Maya Harary (PGY-4)



# LASER INTERSTITIAL THERMOTHERAPY

## Delivering Minimally Invasive Surgical Options for Brain Tumors and Drug-Resistant Epilepsy

The past decade has brought significant advances to the world of minimally invasive surgery, offering patients short hospitalizations, low complication rates, and the chance to return to their everyday lives quicker than traditionally allowed by open surgeries.

Since 2013, MR-guided laser interstitial thermotherapy (LITT) has emerged to become a mainstream treatment alternative for patients with brain tumors and drug-resistant epilepsy. Originally used for patients who may not have otherwise been brain surgery candidates or had difficult to access tumors, LITT has become the upfront choice for a wide range of tumor types and epileptogenic lesions.

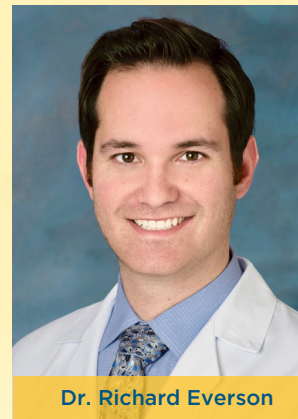
MR-guided LITT is performed by inserting a fiber optic-coupled laser probe under MRI stereotactic guidance into the target area within the brain. This is typically done through a small, 5mm incision in the scalp. The laser then delivers thermal energy to the tumor or epileptic zone to destroy diseased tissues. At UCLA, Neurosurgeons like Dr. Richard Everson use the Monteris NeuroBlate® System for LITT procedures, which offers the most advanced software and surgical technology.

As an early adopter of laser ablation surgery, UCLA has been at the forefront of the tremendous growth in the use of laser technology for brain tumors and radiation necrosis in both the adult and pediatric segments. LITT is also used to ablate

identified epileptogenic foci that cause seizures. Because the treatment spares more healthy brain tissue than conventional surgery, LITT may also better preserve neurocognitive function in these patients.

The accumulating evidence in favor of LITT has prompted endorsement from groups like the American Academy of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), and the American Association for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (ASSFN).

Dr. Everson and fellow researchers are currently examining how the size and shape of lesions can be used to predict the effectiveness of LITT, as well as using advanced MRI modalities to measure tumor response to thermal damage. Additionally, they are investigating how LITT can interface with other treatments, including how it may be united with the direct delivery of drugs and other agents like immunotherapy directly into the tumors.



Dr. Richard Everson

To learn more about how UCLA Neurosurgeons are using LITT, visit our site [here](#).

# MRI-GUIDED FOCUSED ULTRASOUND

## New FDA-Approved Technology Offers a Minimally Invasive Solution for Drug-Resistant Tremors

For individuals with Essential Tremor or Parkinson's Disease, loss of normal motor function can not only be physically debilitating, but also challenging to process emotionally. Medication therapy and deep brain stimulation (DBS) are two of the most common forms of treatment physicians use for these conditions, although both have their drawbacks.



Dr. Ausaf Bari

DBS, a traditional surgical treatment for certain movement disorders, involves implanting electrodes into the brain. These electrodes function like brain pacemakers and are programmed to transmit electrical impulses to impact the brain regions responsible for a tremor. However, the downside to DBS is that it is a surgical intervention, meaning that

it carries the risk of surgical complications, and involves living with a device implanted in the brain.

Drugs are also available to treat tremors, but they can have limited efficacy, primarily due to tolerance to their effects and the development of limiting, undesirable side effects. In fact, some forms of tremor can prove to be resistant to drugs altogether, leaving patients with fewer treatment options.

Recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a new form of treatment for drug-resistant Essential Tremor and Parkinson's Disease called MRI-guided focused ultrasound (MRgFUS). MRgFUS, in contrast to DBS, is an incision-less, non-surgical procedure, which eliminates the risks that usually accompany surgery. Additionally, MRgFUS is

completed in one short outpatient appointment and the results are seen immediately.

UCLA is one of four academic medical centers on the West Coast that offers this procedure. MRgFUS is performed as a joint effort between the departments of Neurosurgery and Neurology, and Dr. Ausaf Bari, UCLA Neurosurgeon and Director of the Functional and Restorative Neurosurgery Program, performs the highest volumes of the procedure in Southern California.

MRgFUS works by utilizing high-energy ultrasound beams to target and lesion the area of the brain that is responsible for the tremor. A unique aspect of the procedure is that it is completed while the patient is awake and without anesthesia. "We use direct feedback from both the MRI machine and the patient themselves," explains Dr. Bari. "This allows us to find the sweet spot for the tremor in each patient and get precise results with immediate feedback."

MRgFUS is a valuable alternative for patients whose tremor has not responded to medications, are otherwise ineligible for DBS, or simply do not want to undergo a surgical procedure. After the treatment, the results are typically permanent, and patients see a meaningful reduction or complete elimination of their tremor.

Dr. Bari and his team recently celebrated a major milestone with MRgFUS when they completed the first second side MRgFUS thalamotomy on a patient with essential tremor at UCLA Health.

Learn more about MRgFUS [here](#).

# STIMULATION FOR MEMORY

## Stimulating the Brain During Sleep May Unlock Potential for Improving Memory

As the population ages, researchers are working to find ways to mitigate the impact of memory degeneration and disease. Sleep is one intriguing arena that is being tapped into to boost memory.

When we sleep, our brain goes through the process of memory consolidation, or the transformation of recently acquired information into long-term memories. Dr. Itzhak Fried, Professor of Neurosurgery and Director of the Epilepsy Surgery Program at UCLA, is studying ways to utilize this process to improve memory while we sleep.



Dr. Itzhak Fried

To investigate how sleep and memory intertwine, Dr. Fried and his team utilized deep brain stimulation (DBS), a technology designed to treat a variety of disorders. Using the implanted DBS electrodes, researchers selectively stimulated areas of the brain's frontal cortex in conjunction with signals from the hippocampus, the memory center of the brain, to explore

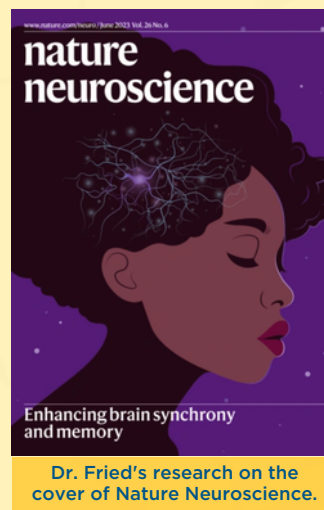
how this would influence memory. Researchers specifically ensured the synchronization between the stimulation of the frontal cortex and the recording in the hippocampus to enhance the exchange of information between these structures.

Dr. Fried and his team investigated the impact of

brain stimulation on epilepsy patients who had volunteered to participate in the study after being implanted with DBS electrodes to monitor their seizure activity. In the study, the participants were given images of celebrities paired with photos of animals. The patients then slept one night during which the researchers stimulated their brains, and one night without stimulation. In the mornings, the participants were retested to determine whether they could correctly pair the celebrities with the correct animals and reject decoys. Dr. Fried and his fellow researchers found that the participants performed better on the memory test given the morning after their brains were stimulated than the morning after they slept normally.

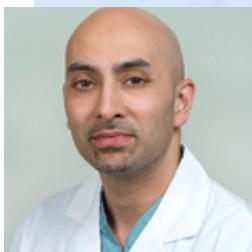
The results of this study indicate the power that sleep might have when developing ways to combat memory loss. Especially for patients with Alzheimer's Disease and other life-altering memory disorders, this research offers hope that there might one day be better ways to treat their conditions.

Read the full article [here](#).





# GRADUATING RESIDENTS



**Azim Laiwalla, MD, PhD, MS**  
**Kaiser Permanente Neurosurgery**

Azim was born and raised in Northern California and completed his undergraduate degrees at UCLA, majoring in Biochemistry and Economics. He followed his undergraduate research passions by characterizing structural and cohesive properties of mussel adhesive protein towards the design of biopolymeric surgical adhesives, and earned a Master of Science degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. His journey then led to Bioengineering, where he developed stroke animal models with Drs. Nestor Gonzalez and Fernando Viñuela in the Departments of Neurosurgery and Radiology, graduating with his PhD from UCLA. Thereafter, inspired by the medicine he researched, he attended DGSOM at UCLA, where he completed his medical degree. Medical school strengthened his passion for neurosurgery, and he began fulfilling his residency at the department of Neurosurgery at UCLA. He has been so grateful for the relationships forged throughout his journey refining his clinical and surgical skills - especially meeting his wife during a department meeting. He would like to thank all the neurosurgeons and staff at UCLA, Harbor-UCLA, Kaiser, Veterans Affairs, and UCLA-Santa Monica for their mentorship and support. Azim is excited to continue his neurosurgery passion at Kaiser Permanente.



**Kunal Patel, MD**  
**Assistant Professor, UCLA Neurosurgery**

Dr. Kunal Patel was born in Cleveland, Ohio and raised in Cypress, California. Dr. Patel graduated magna cum laude from Dartmouth College, double majoring in biology and economics. He graduated at the top of his class with Alpha Omega Alpha honors at Weill-Cornell Medical College, New York, NY and completed a 1-year research Howard Hughes Medical Institute fellowship at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Patel is completing his residency training at the University of California, Los Angeles with an endowed fellowship in neurosurgical oncology. Dr. Patel is an author on over 75 medical research publications, has had his research funded by the Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine, Jonasson Comprehensive Cancer Center, Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and American Brain Tumor Association. He has won research awards through the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, Congress of Neurological Surgeons, and North American Skull Base Society. He has been awarded resident performance awards for research, for the ABNS Board Examination, and for teaching. Dr. Patel will be joining the faculty at UCLA as Assistant Professor with clinical focus on neurosurgical oncology and building a research laboratory focused on advanced imaging in the treatment of glioblastoma.



**Jasmine Thum, MD, MS**  
**Functional and Epilepsy Fellowship, UCSF**

Jasmine Thum was born and raised in Austin, TX. She attended the University of Southern California, where she graduated in four years with both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in biomedical engineering and neuroengineering. Combining her passion for math, engineering, medicine, and research, she found a great fit at the joint Harvard Medical School / Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Health Sciences and Technology program, where she completed her M.D. Excited by the excellent clinical experiences and potential to continue her work in neurophysiology for consciousness, she went to the University of California, Los Angeles for six great years of residency in neurosurgery. While she was in residency, she was awarded a variety of industry and government grants for her research, awarded a school-wide teaching award, and was elected to several national leadership roles in neurosurgery through which she founded a national forum for medical students to learn about neurosurgery residency programs. For her seventh year, she traveled back to Boston for a year-long, fellowship funded rotation in Peripheral Nerve Surgery and Brachial Plexus Reconstruction at Massachusetts General Hospital. This summer, Jasmine will be returning to California once again to complete another subspecialty year of training during her Functional and Epilepsy Fellowship at the University of California, San Francisco where she will continue signal and systems processing research.

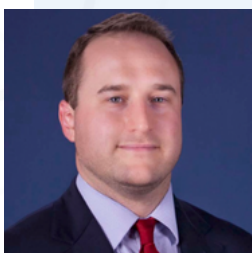
# INCOMING RESIDENTS



**David Lauzier, MD**

**Medical School: Washington University, St. Louis**

David grew up in Western North Carolina as the oldest child of two immigrants from Quebec. He was fond of numerous outdoor activities and enjoyed playing many sports, including soccer, football, and basketball alongside his younger brother, who is currently in medical school. David attended the University of North Carolina where he studied Biology, Chemistry, and Art History. Excited by immunology research he performed during his undergraduate studies alongside wonderful experiences shadowing physicians, he continued his studies at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine. In medical school, his mentors in interventional neuroradiology and neurosurgery stimulated his interests in cerebrovascular neurosurgery. He hopes to combine his clinical interests in cerebrovascular diseases with his prior experience in immunology research during residency.



**Zachary Olmsted, MD, PhD**

**Medical School: SUNY Downstate**

Zach was raised by his mother in Syracuse, NY and completed his undergraduate degree in Nanoscale Engineering. He then earned his MD/PhD from SUNY Downstate in Brooklyn. His doctoral thesis focused on applying human pluripotent stem cell technologies to the study of human nervous system development in a dish and the design of transplantable neuronal network therapies for spinal cord injury repair. Zach is excited about the complementary fields of spine and neuromodulation and is passionate about restoring neural function after injury by any means, including cellular technologies, biomaterials, and nervous system-electromagnetic interfaces. He feels that the study of nervous system development can be used to understand mechanisms and triggers of neural regeneration. For fun, he attends live music events or visits any place with a good view. He feels grateful for the opportunity to be supported by the world-class UCLA team and looks forward to advancing our understanding of the nervous system and neurosurgical care as a resident.



**Alexandra (Sasha) White, MD, MA**

**Medical School: Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine - Case Western Reserve**

Sasha is half-Russian-half-American and grew up between Moscow, Russia, and the United States. After finishing high school in Moscow, she studied biology and comparative literature at Columbia University, becoming interested in the role of the humanities in medicine. At medical school at the Cleveland Clinic, she discovered a love for neurosurgery, especially for how the specialty balances concrete, technical challenges in the operating room and broader questions of selfhood and identity. She was drawn to the extensive opportunities for translational research in neurosurgery, especially in functional and skull base neurosurgery. Having obtained an MA in Bioethics while in medical school, Sasha is passionate about exploring the complex ethical dilemmas faced by neurosurgeons and their patients. She is thrilled to be back at UCLA after completing a sub-internship here last summer, and excited about the clinical training and the rich research opportunities in both neurosciences and ethics.



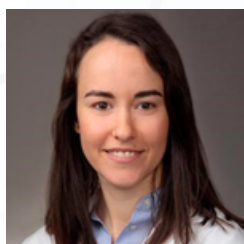
# RESIDENT RESEARCH DAY



On Wednesday, June 7, 2023, the UCLA Neurosurgery Department held its third annual Resident Research Day!

UCLA Neurosurgery Resident Research Day is an event that enables PGY-4, PGY-5, and PGY-6 residents to gain public speaking and presentation experience during a fun, lower-pressure event designed to mimic podium talks at national meetings. Alumni of the UCLA Neurosurgery residency program participate in the event as discussants and provide constructive feedback and advice.

Awards are presented during Resident Research Day to the top three research presentations. Congratulations to this year's winners: Dr. Maya Harary, Dr. Joseph Bell, and Dr. Bayard Wilson!



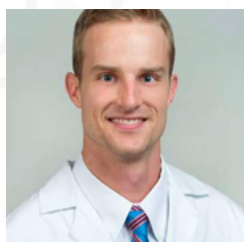
**1ST PLACE - MAYA HARARY, MD (PGY-4)**  
**Mechanisms of Apoptotic Evasion in Meningioma**

**Mentors: Marco Giovannini, MD, PhD; Richard Everson, MD**



**2ND PLACE - JOSEPH BELL, MD, PhD (PGY-6)**  
**Quantifying & Modeling Gait Impairment with Deep Learning**

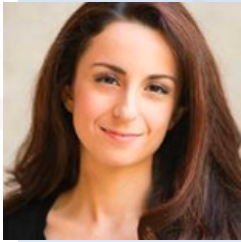
**Mentor: Joel Beckett, MD, MHS**



**3RD PLACE - BAYARD WILSON, MD (PGY-6)**  
**Exploring the Value of Electrical Cervical Spinal Cord Stimulation for High-Functioning Injured Subjects**

**Mentor: Daniel C. Lu, MD, PhD**

# GRANT HIGHLIGHTS



**L.B. RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FOUNDATION—H.H. LEE RESEARCH GRANT**  
**"Drug Resistance Mediated by Extrachromosomal DNA in GBM"**

**Awarded to: Dr. Yagmur Muftuoglu (Resident, PGY-3)**



**L.B. RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FOUNDATION—H.H. LEE RESEARCH GRANT**  
**"Using Spatial Multi-omics to Determine Gene Expression and Cell Type Composition Changes in Mesial Temporal Lobe Epilepsy"**

**Awarded to: Dr. Sheel Shah (Resident, PGY-3)**



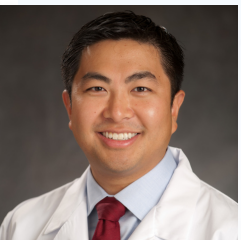
**NIH/NATIONAL CENTER FOR ADVANCING TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE (NCATS)**  
**"Visualization, Quantitation, and Targeting of Infiltrating Glioblastoma Cells with pH Sensitive Amine Chemical Exchange Saturation Transfer Magnetic Resonance Imaging"**

**Awarded to: Dr. Kunal Patel (Resident, PGY-7)**



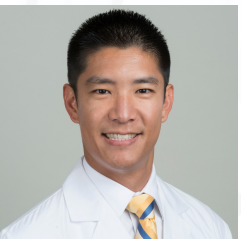
**NATIONAL CANCER CENTER**  
**"Liver Specific Fibrosis Drives Immunosuppression in Metastatic Melanoma"**

**Awarded to: Dr. Robert Prins, Research Scientist**



**MUSELLA FOUNDATION FOR BRAIN TUMOR RESEARCH & INFORMATION, INC.**  
**"Investigating the Mechanisms of Anti-Angiogenic Treatment Resistance in Glioblastoma"**

**Awarded to: Dr. Isaac Yang, Professor**



**DOD-DA-U.S. ARMY MEDICAL RESEARCH ACQUISITION ACTIVITY (USAMRAA)**  
**"Alternative Splice Variant-Derived Neoantigen-Targeted Immunotherapy in Diffuse Hemispheric Glioma, H3 G34-Mutant"**

**Awarded to: Dr. Anthony Wang, Assistant Professor**



## NEW FACULTY

### Welcoming Dr. Gregory Lekovic to the UCLA Neurosurgery Faculty

A Chicago native, Dr. Lekovic enrolled in the Medical Scientist Training Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago after receiving an AB in Biology from the University of Chicago in 1993. He completed his doctoral thesis in the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology on the electrophysiology of the efferent auditory synapse in the turtle, graduating in 2001. While in the MD/PhD program, Dr. Lekovic enrolled in the Chicago-Kent College of Law, also graduating in 2001. He completed neurosurgery residency in 2008 at the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, Arizona, where he obtained advanced Fellowship training in Skull Base / Cerebrovascular Surgery, Radiosurgery, and Complex Spine Surgery. While in Arizona, Dr. Lekovic was adjunct faculty at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law.

After residency, Dr. Lekovic joined the world-renowned House Clinic in Los Angeles, where he performed over a thousand operations for acoustic neuroma and other skull base conditions. Prior to joining UCLA, Dr. Lekovic was the Director of the House Institute Neurosurgery Skull Base Fellowship and Co-Director of the Comprehensive Neurofibromatosis Clinic. He was Co-Director of the Gamma Knife at Good Samaritan Hospital and has published extensively on radiosurgery for skull base tumors. His current research interests include the pathophysiology of vestibular schwannoma, neurofibromatosis type 2, and brainstem implantation for restoration of hearing and neuromodulation. He has authored over 100 peer-reviewed articles, reviews, and book chapters.

Dr. Lekovic is dedicated to a patient-centered approach to medicine and to the multi-disciplinary management of skull-base disease, combining principles of head and neck surgery and radiation oncology with neurosurgery for a "360 degree" approach to the patient.

When not doing neurosurgery, Dr. Lekovic enjoys spending time with his family. He is married to pediatrician and author Jill M. Lekovic, MD. They live in San Marino together with their four children.



Dr. Gregory Lekovic

## MILESTONES

### Dr. Isaac Yang and Dr. Quinton Gopen Celebrate Their 500th Superior Semicircular Canal Dehiscence (SSCD) Case

In April 2023, multidisciplinary team Dr. Isaac Yang, Professor of Neurosurgery, and Dr. Quinton Gopen, Associate Professor in the Department of Head and Neck Surgery, completed their 500th Superior Semicircular Canal Dehiscence (SSCD) case.

SSCD is a condition caused by a small hole that develops in the ear canal. SSCD can cause the amplification of patients' internal body sounds, including their heartbeat. Learn more about SSCD [here](#).



### Dr. Ausaf Bari Completes First Second Side Thalamotomy on a Patient for Essential Tremors at UCLA Health

In April 2023, Dr. Ausaf Bari, UCLA Neurosurgeon and Director of the Functional and Restorative Neurosurgery Program, and his team completed the first second side thalamotomy on a patient for essential tremors at UCLA Health. Learn more about MRgFUS [here](#).





## APPOINTMENTS

### Scheduling an Appointment as a Patient

To make an appointment with a UCLA neurosurgeon, please call 310-825- 5111 or visit [our website](#) for more information.

For information about spine related conditions and treatments, visit the [UCLA Spine Center in Santa Monica](#).

Over the past several years, UCLA Health has been dedicated to making services more accessible to patients outside the immediate Los Angeles area. To make a Telemedicine appointment with a UCLA neurosurgeon, please visit [our website](#) or call 310-825-5111.

### Referring as a Healthcare Professional

Our partnership with health professionals in the community is key to our success at UCLA Health. Registered nurses and referral coordinators are available to assist referring physicians. Case managers can access services at UCLA Health through the toll-free UCLA Physician Referral Service phone line 1-800-UCLA-888 (825-2888). Visit [our website](#) to learn more.

## GIVING

Thank you for your interest in supporting the UCLA Department of Neurosurgery. Donations help fund innovative research that has the potential to alter patients' lives. We are grateful for your life-changing generosity.

**[Donate Now](#)**

**If you would like more information, please contact:**

Chantelle Eastman  
Associate Director of Development, UCLA Neuroscience  
(310) 562-9566  
[ceastman@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:ceastman@mednet.ucla.edu)

## COMMUNITY

### Program Highlight: EDI in Neurosurgery

The UCLA Department of Neurosurgery is dedicated to fostering a culture of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) to enhance the quality of our education, research, and patient care. Our mission is to inspire the next generation of diverse neuroscientists and healthcare professionals through strategic partnerships, mentorship programs, and community engagement initiatives.

The UCLA Neurosurgery EDI Committee has spearheaded a variety of projects, including a UCLA-LAUDS Neuroscience Education Series for High School Students and the Black Medical Student Summer Research Program in Neurosurgery. To learn more about our EDI initiatives, visit the site [here](#).

### UCLA Neurosurgery at the AANS Meeting

This year, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) Annual Scientific Meeting was held in our hometown of Los Angeles, CA!

Congratulations to Dr. Kunal Patel (PGY-7) for receiving the Elekta Tumor Section Award and Dr. Joshua Casaos (PGY-4) for receiving the Southeastern Brain Tumor Foundation Award!

Additionally, congratulations to Residents Dr. Shivani Baisiwal (PGY-2), Dr. Joshua Casaos (PGY-4), Dr. Maya Harary (PGY-4), Dr. Jason Kim (PGY-5), Dr. Kunal Patel (PGY-7), and Dr. Sophie Peeters (PGY-6), and Faculty Dr. Sanjay Dhall, Dr. Paul Vespa, Dr. Anthony Wang, and Dr. Isaac Yang for their presentations!

