UC San Diego Welcomes Chris Wahl, the new Chief of Sports Medicine

The UC San Diego Department of Orthopaedic Surgery welcomed the arrival of Dr. Christopher Wahl on Wednesday, November 7, 2012 at an evening reception hosted in his honor. Physicians, community partners, and athletes attended the outdoor festivities to meet, greet, and mingle with the new Chief of Sports Medicine for UC San Diego’s Health System. Hosted at UCSD’s Home Plate Café, the lit baseball field in the background helped to set the stage for the cocktail party. More than 100 guests were welcomed by Robyn Stuhr, Sports Medicine Program Director, including representatives from community-based rehabilitation practices, Competitor Group, the San Diego Chargers, VAVi Sport & Social Club, SeaLions Soccer, San Diego Triathlon Club, Challenged Athletes Foundation, La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club, and San Diego Sports Innovators. Everyone enjoyed small bites, local craft beers and wine. Paul Viviano, UCSD Health Systems CEO and Reid Abrams, MD, Vice Chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, shared warm remarks before turning the microphone over to Dr. Wahl. Dr. Wahl expressed his enthusiasm to be part of the UC San Diego community and shared his vision for innovative care partnered with “old school philosophy” to serve both elite and recreational athletes. After medical school and residency at Yale University, Dr. Wahl completed a sports medicine and shoulder surgery fellowship at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York. He then served as team physician for the University of Washington where he was named repeatedly as a 'Top Doctor’ in US News & World Report, and Seattle Magazine.
Looking back as we closed out 2012 and ushered in the New Year, there is much to celebrate. The UC San Diego Department of Orthopaedic Surgery would like to share our accomplishments over this past year, as well as look forward to what lies ahead. In November, we welcomed Christopher Wahl, M.D., as Associate Professor and Chief of Sports Medicine, and sponsored a reception attended by many of our University leadership, community partners, and faculty. Our second UC San Diego Wayne Akeson Visiting Professor, Lewis Zirkle, M.D., visited us November 14th with two powerful and insightful lectures on providing third world care (personally by him and members of SIGN, his foundation which supports the project with physicians, staff, surgical instrumentation, local surgeon education and hands-on training) both in presentations at Grand Rounds, as well as a WOA sponsored dinner meeting. We have had eight of our own Department of Orthopaedic Surgery faculty recognized in San Diego Magazine’s 2012 Top Docs issue. You will see this special feature within these pages, along with many additional publications, awards, honors, grants by, and special recognitions bestowed upon, our faculty. We have recently launched a new Alumni Giving program featuring places where your gift can have a huge impact on areas such as the Alumni/Resident Program, Musculoskeletal Research, and the Wayne and June Akeson Endowed Fund for Orthopaedic Education or visiting professorships. I want to thank those of you who have provided support to furthering the vision and mission of our department, and those who will in the future.

We hope you enjoy the articles and updates.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Garfin, MD
Distinguished Professor and Chair

Annual AAOS Conference Alumni Event

All Department of Orthopaedic Surgery Alumni, mark your calendars and plan to join your friends and colleagues Thursday evening, March 21, 2013 for the UC San Diego Department of Orthopaedic Surgery Alumni Reception at the AAOS Conference in Chicago. This hors d’oeuvre and wine reception will take place from 6-9pm in the Signature Room atop the 95th floor of the John Hancock Building. Centrally located in the heart of downtown Chicago, on Miracle Mile, this venue boosts the best views and fare in the “Windy City”. We encourage you to join the Orthopaedic Alumni Circle at the $200 level so we can continue this newly established tradition. RSVP to Natasha Montazeri at (858) 246-1562 or via email at namontazeri@ucsd.edu. Formal invitation will follow.
Sports Medicine Teambuilding Day

Our new Chief of Sports Medicine, Chris Wahl, MD and Sports Medicine Program Director, Robyn Stuhr, put together a day of team-building and strategic planning for the extended Sports Medicine team on October 11th, 2012. This included our colleagues in Family Medicine as well as the UCSD Triton Training Room. We met at the San Diego Rowing Club boathouse in the morning to learn how to row together in teams of eight, and then discussed our plans for growth and cooperative care.

The Arthritis Foundation’s Jingle Bell 5kWalk/Run

The Department of Orthopaedic Surgery’s Center for Joint Care was the Starting Line Sponsor for the Arthritis Foundation’s Jingle Bell 5kWalk/Run held in Balboa Park on December 15th. Despite some early rain, intrepid faculty and staff came down to join in the action. Chief of the Joint Service, Scott Ball, MD and his Dustyn Severns, PA (and kids) led the way as they sprinted around the course. Other participants included Gregg Middleton, MD, our rheumatologist, Chris Wahl, MD, Suzanne Wahl, PA, Jeff Chen, MD, Barbara Donnelly, MA and Maureen Benetti, RN, FNP with her team of Bouvier dogs pulling a Christmas-themed cart. Robyn Stuhr, Sports Medicine Program Director, started out welcoming the crowd of participants and then morphed into a snowman for the race. The Center for Joint Care team certainly brought lots of Christmas spirit for a worthy cause and raised $1,020 for the Arthritis Foundation.
Knee pain from cartilage injuries is a common problem that often may not respond to non-surgical treatments such as cortisone and hyaluronate injections. With new advances in surgical techniques and increasing expertise in this area, now many patients with this disorder can get pain relief and treatment for their condition. Upon the arrival of Dr. Chris Wahl to the orthopedic faculty at UCSD, UCSD has acquired an expert in cartilage resurfacing surgery. There is a spectrum of pathology that can be seen in the articular cartilage of the knee. Articular cartilage is the layer of cartilage that covers the bones of the knee joint and has the important function of protecting and cushioning them. Unfortunately it can get injured, resulting in gaps or defects that sometimes go all the way down to bone. In the older population the most commonly seen cartilage problem is one that stems from chronic degeneration, resulting in osteoarthritis and therefore global cartilage loss and damage. In these patients once non-surgical treatments fail, knee replacement surgery is an effective treatment. However in younger populations or individuals who don’t have osteoarthritis and are suffering from more focal, or localized cartilage damage, often described as OCD lesions (osteochondral defect), this is not amenable to knee replacement surgery. For these patients, cartilage resurfacing or restoration surgery is a viable option.

Many patients wonder why cartilage just can’t be grown to replace the old with the new. Cartilage is a type of tissue that divides very slowly and therefore intrinsic repair of cartilage doesn’t occur at the rate we see in muscle and bone. Also healthy cartilage is a sophisticated matrix consisting of multiple co-existing layers in a carefully layered and organized structure that allows it to carry out its function of protecting and cushioning the underlying bone. This makes it a challenging type of tissue to replicate. When cartilage undergoes intrinsic repair process it is unable to resume its initial structure, resulting in a more haphazard unorganized layer of tissue, which can continue to cause knee pain and dysfunction.

Different surgical techniques have been developed in the recent years to attempt to repair painful cartilage defects, leading to an “alphabet soup” of possibilities, including ACI (autologous chondrocyte implantation), OATS (osteochondral transplants), microfracture, and chondroplasty. Chondroplasty, the simplest one, mainly involves shaving off torn edges of injured cartilage, essentially “cleaning it out”. This hasn’t been shown to be very effective in treating symptoms. Microfracture, on the other hand, can be effective in up to 2/3 of patients. It involves drilling down into subchondral bone to induce bleeding, causing release of growth factors and stem cells that form fibrocartilage, a less organized type of cartilage that ultimately fills in the defect; but it is less durable and structurally distinct from the intrinsic cartilage. This surgery is frequently performed but unfortunately it is not always effective, and the effectiveness deteriorates over time (often within a year).

ACI is a two step surgery in which a small sample of the patient’s non-weight bearing articular cartilage, is harvested from the knee and grown in a laboratory. The grown cartilage cells are then transplanted via a
second surgery to fill in the primary cartilage defect. Whereas some studies have showed this surgery to be effective, others have demonstrated less predictable results. It is expensive, time-consuming, and requires 2 separate surgeries. Also, the resulting cartilage has a fibrocartilage structure. Since this tissue lacks the normal cartilage ‘architecture’ durable than intrinsic cartilage.

OATS is a surgical procedure in which “plugs” of healthy cartilage are taken from non-weight bearing aspects of the knee cartilage and transplanted into the cartilage defect. The advantages to this procedure are that it involves transplantation of healthy, living, cartilage. The negatives are that a new injury/cartilage defect is created in a separate part of the knee to obtain the transplant source. Also, since multiple plugs are used to fill in the large gap, they don’t perfectly conform to the shape/size of the defect, and there are tiny gaps between them that get filled in with fibrocartilage. This surgery has been shown to be quite effective in many patients, but many surgeons, including Dr. Wahl, don’t feel comfortable with the idea of creating a new cartilage defect in order to solve an existing one. According to Dr. Wahl, for that reason, it is used primarily for relatively small defects—“It’s like stealing from Peter to pay Paul.”

Dr. Wahl’s approach to cartilage surgery involves maximizing the pros and minimizing the cons of all these procedures. He carefully measures out the size/shape of the patient’s cartilage defect, considers the age and activity level of the patient, and considers all the options carefully. For larger defects, he uses allograft articular cartilage from a cadaver donor knee to transplant into the defect. This prevents donor site morbidity and allows for the transplant to have the structural characteristics of the adjacent intrinsic cartilage. In cases where malalignment of the lower extremity is a major contributor to overloading the location of the cartilage defect, he may also perform an osteotomy which involves shaving off bone to correct the alignment and reduce overloading, maximizing the longevity of the newly transplanted cartilage.

Dr. Wahl reports great success with his preferred mode of cartilage restoration surgery, with athletes often returning to their sport within several months. In fact, he states “the patients often feel so good after the surgery they are aching to go back to sport before I can give them the okay”. Upon asking him how effective this surgery is in his experience, Dr. Wahl gets very excited to reply, “I have seen great success with this procedure and I’ve been really impressed with the positive outcomes that I have seen.” However he cautions that not every patient is a good candidate for this surgery. Dr. Wahl meticulously takes many factors into account in determining who is a good candidate to undergo cartilage resurfacing surgery, including age, size/shape of the cartilage pathology, presence of other pathologies in the knee, and knee alignment. Dr. Wahl’s other areas of expertise include complex multi-ligamentous reconstructions of the knee and shoulder and treating high velocity injuries that include combined ligamentous damage and fracture.
All smiles and good cheer at the 2012 Orthopaedic Department Holiday Party
Many physicians in the Department of Orthopaedics were honored as one of San Diego Magazine’s Top Docs. Congratulations to all!
Introducing Bill Bowman

Bill Bowman, MD, is a widely known and respected Orthopaedic Oncologist in San Diego. Bill came to UC San Diego Health System after 30 years in private practice, where he garnered a reputation as the premier specialist in orthopedic oncology in the region. Prior to that he served as a medical officer in the United States Navy for three years and was stationed on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. Dr. Bowman completed a fellowship in orthopedic oncology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota and his orthopedic surgery residency at UC San Francisco School of Medicine. Bill has been awarded the Francis West Outstanding Teacher Award three times and has been recognized as a “Top Doctor” by San Diego Magazine nine times. Dr. Bowman and his wife, Cindy, recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. They are both avid sailors and, in 1979, bought a boat and clocked more than 20,000 miles in the first two years they owned it. The couple has two adult children.

The Royal Society of Arts and Sciences recognizes Steven Garfin

Steven Garfin, MD was elected a foreign member of The Royal Society of Arts and Sciences in Gothenburg, Sweden. Founded in 1778, it is an independent learned society encompassing different disciplines in sciences, arts and social sciences with only 85 foreign members worldwide. Congratulations, Dr. Garfin, on this amazing honor!
Awards and Honors

David S. Bruce, Excellence in Undergraduate Research Award from the American Physiological Society, 22 April 2012, JR Bachman, undergraduate mentee, based on research presentation to the APS Education Committee to work with Alan hargens, Ph. D.

Henry Chambers, MD, Named to the Cerebral Palsy International Research and Education Scientific Advisory Board, Delegate to World Health Organization Surgery Section.


JR Bachman, undergraduate mentee, Alan Hargens, 2012 David S. Bruce Outstanding Undergraduate Abstract Award from the American Physiological Society, based on abstract, 1-page letter, and support letter. 22 February 2012.

Kevin Anderson, APS/NIDDK Minority Travel Fellowship Award from the American Physiological Society at the Experimental Biology meeting, Alan Hargens, San Diego, CA, 21 April 2012.


The UC San Diego Department of Orthopaedic Surgery is growing and we invite you to join us during this exciting time. We are working to build our programs which include innovative research and excellence in clinical care. The continued success of this growth relies on philanthropic support from people like you who care to make a difference for Orthopaedics and Musculoskeletal medicine. Additionally, we want to keep you up to date regarding our department’s achievements, projects, and events. If you would like to take part in supporting the future of Orthopaedic Surgery at UC San Diego please or for more information on joining the Alumni Giving Program, contact Shawna Fallon, Director of Development at (858) 246-1553 or shfallon@ucsd.edu.
Publications


Publications Continued...


Publications continued...


Wenger, DR “Managing Hip Dysplasia after Triradiate Closure – Treatment for the Adolescent and Young Adult” Instructional Course Lecture. “Surgical Management of Hip Dislocation” Instructional Course Lecture, American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons Annual Meeting


Posters:

Chambers H, and Figueiredo D, “Outcome of Botulinum Toxin A Injections for Painful Dislocated Hips in Patients with GMFCS IV and V Cerebral Palsy” at Pediatric Orthopedic Society of North America
Denver, CO, May 2012.


Visiting Professor

Henry Chambers, MD: Al Dupont Children's Hospital, Wilmington, DE February 2012, St Christopher's Children's Hospital Philadelphia, PA February 2012, Wake Forest University Wake Forest, NC April 2012, Allegheny Hospital Orthopedic Program Pittsburgh, PA May 2012, Cleveland Clinic Cleveland, OH May 2012, Boston Children's Hospital Boston, MA October 2012, University of New Mexico Albuquerque, NM November 2012.

Douglas Chang, MD PhD: The Department of Physical Medicine, Mayo Clinic, Scottsdale AZ, broadcast their Rochester, MN and Jacksonville, FA campuses, 11/29/2012 and Friday 11/30/2012

Courses Hosted

Henry Chambers, MD: Pediatric and Adolescent Sports Medicine Course San Diego, California March 2012

Books and Book Chapters:


Presentations:


Thesis Committees
