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Women's Surgery Center
Advanced Minimally Invasive and Robotic Surgery
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Tel: (423) 400-6607

2nd Site Visit: July 11-12, 2010
Accredited: 3 years

Faculty:

J. Stephen Rich, M.D., FACOG, FACS, Director
Robert S. Furr, M.D., Assistant Director
C.Y. Liu, M.D., FACOG, FACS, Director Emeritus
Donald H. Chamberlain, M.D., FACOG, FACS
Alfredo Nieves, M.D., ACOG, AAPM
Joseph S. Bird, Jr., M.D., FACOG
Michael L. Sprague, M.D.
John D. Stanley, M.D., FACS, FASCRS,
Shauna Lorenzo-Rivero, M.D., FACS, FASCRS

2-Year Program

Description of Program: The AAGL Fellowship in Advanced Minimally Invasive Gynecologic and Robotic Surgery in Chattanooga, TN was established by Dr. C.Y. Liu in 1997, and is the oldest continuous gynecologic endoscopic fellowship program in the United States. Our Fellows have gone on to be leaders in the field of Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS) at both major academic institutions and in private practice.

Fellowship Overview

The Women's Surgery Center of Chattanooga, Tennessee and its affiliate organizations propose that to become a proficient minimally invasive surgeon, a provider must have:

- a broad understanding of advanced gynecologic disorders, especially ones that often end in a surgical intervention
- extensive surgical and clinical expertise that focuses not only on laparoscopic surgery, but also on advanced abdominal and vaginal surgery
- an excellent understanding of research methodology and evidence-based practice principles

By participating in multiple, large, community-based referral practices, the MIS Fellow will receive broad exposure to medical and surgical managements of complex gynecologic disorders. Participation in programs offered by The University of Tennessee College of Medicine-Chattanooga provides exposure to a rich academic environment, as well. It is an ideal setting to provide additional training for post-graduate fellows seeking clinical and academic expertise in these fields.

Our primary goal is to train those who will provide top quality patient care and education, and be leaders and innovators in gynecologic MIS and in treatment of advanced gynecologic disorders such as pelvic pain, endometriosis, pelvic organ prolapse, urinary incontinence, and menopausal care.

Training Objectives and Fellowship Description

The Women's Surgery Center of Chattanooga, Tennessee and its affiliate organizations offer a two-year Fellowship in MIS and Advanced Gynecologic Disorders designed to be started after completion of a four-year residency in obstetrics and gynecology.

Collectively, we perform over 447 benign gynecologic surgeries per year, 74% of these cases are minimally invasive, 25% are vaginal, and 1% are abdominal. In our gynecology practice about 411 new patients are seen annually, along with over 2332 return visits.

Patients are referred from gynecologists, primary care physicians, and other specialists from Chattanooga and its surrounding communities. We also see a growing number of patients who are self-referring after learning of our experience with laparoscopic surgery from physicians, friends, or the Internet. The nature of our practice and experience in advanced MIS affords us the opportunity to treat complicated cases. As a result, fellows in this training program will receive an exceptional level of laparoscopic and gynecologic training.

Graduating fellows will be proficient in all aspects of gynecologic laparoscopic surgery, including:

- Complicated hysterectomies (total and subtotal)
- Conservative and definitive surgery for all stages of endometriosis
- Techniques for pelvic floor reconstruction (with and without the use of mesh grafts)
- Hysteroscopy (operative and diagnostic)
- Urologic surgery (partial cystectomy, ureteral repair and reanastomosis)
- Robotic surgery

Furthermore, this is a clinically broad fellowship that allows post-graduate trainees to gain extensive experience in a variety of advanced gynecologic disorders such as chronic pelvic pain disorders (e.g. endometriosis, irritable bowel syndrome, interstitial cystitis), vulvovaginal disorders (e.g. vestibulitis, vulvar dermatoses, vulvodinia, chronic vaginitis) and much more. *Pain management will be taught in closely mentored clinical settings, and will be influenced by relationships with The Pelvic Pain and Reconstructive Surgery Center in Chattanooga, TN.*

This fellowship also places significant emphasis on academics by promoting fellow research, publication, and opportunity for direct one-on-one teaching of residents. Each fellow will be required to complete a research project, present at national meetings, and finalize a manuscript for publication by the end of the second year of the fellowship. Fellows will be required to attend regular didactic core lectures which will not only focus on the aforementioned clinical topics, but will also include specific of lectures on research methodology, publication requirements and obtaining research funding. *Additionally, fellows are required to participate in the journal club, case report review and grand rounds.* Overall, each fellow will devote approximately 80% of their time to clinical/surgical duties and 20% to research and teaching projects.

The following is an outline of the curriculum:

Clinic – Clinics are held all day on Monday and Tuesday (from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm).

Fellows are expected to participate in the evaluation of all new and established patients. Fellows will obtain the patient history and will perform problem specific exam with Dr. Furr. The findings of the examination, necessary laboratory tests and plan of treatment will then be discussed with the patient by the fellow and/or Dr. Furr.

Surgery – Surgery schedule varies according to the surgical work load of Faculty.

Fellows participate as co-surgeon to the attending Faculty. It is anticipated that fellows work in the operating room 3 to 4 days per week.

Robotic Surgery - In addition to the laparoscopic experience, the fellowship in MIS provides extensive experience in robotic surgery as well. Under the direction of Drs Furr and Chamberlain, the Fellow has the opportunity to participate, on average, in 3 - 4 major robotic procedures per week. It is expected that the Fellow complete the requirements for da Vinci certification prior to the completion of their Fellowship program.

Journal Club – Fellows will attend a monthly journal club.

Hospital Rounds – Fellows are expected to make daily hospital rounds, to write detailed progressive notes and manage post-operative patients under the supervision of the Faculty.

Research Projects – Fellows are to select two research projects within the first three months of their fellowship. The research projects are to be approved by Faculty and are conducted under the supervision of individual Faculty preceptors. Every Fellow is expected to submit and present their research papers/video in the Annual Scientific Meeting of the AAGL and/or the ASRM.

Fellows are expected to attend a regularly scheduled didactic lecture series. In addition, the second year fellow is expected to present 1 grand rounds and 2 resident lectures. Once a month fellows will attend a journal club that emphasizes clinical and research methodology. Annually, the fellows will attend an approved Biostatistics and Research Methodology course.

Teaching and Call Duty Responsibilities

Fellows will frequently interact with residents during surgical cases and at The University of Tennessee College of Medicine-Chattanooga, Department of OB/Gyn meetings. Fellows are expected to serve as teachers and to promote resident education in a positive and thorough manner. Fellows will be asked to prepare 1 to 2 didactic lectures for the residents each year and present at one grand rounds during the second year of the fellowship. In addition, fellows will be required to conduct two major research project and present at national meetings as appropriate. Fellows receive first-call on all Women's Surgery Center patients. Fellows are expected to conduct inpatient daily rounds. As part of the inpatient experience, fellows will also cover emergency room and inpatient consultations.

Mentorship, Evaluation and Career Development

This program will focus intensely on career development and practice management through regular mentorship and evaluation meetings. Each fellow will be scheduled to meet with Faculty preceptors on a bi-monthly basis. Fellows will also be evaluated by all fellowship faculty members on a quarterly basis. Each evaluation will be reviewed with the trainee. Fellows will have the opportunity to discuss progress, problems or future plans with Faculty. Any problems will be addressed in a formal manner with an inquiry, discussion and plan of action that is agreed upon by the Faculty member and the fellow. When agreement cannot be reached, help will be obtained first from the program director and lastly from the fellowship grievance committee.

Application Requirements and Selection Process

All applications must be made through the AAGL website (see <http://www.aagl.org/applications>) and must be complete before an applicant can be offered an interview.

Once an applicant is determined to have met the eligibility criteria, the program director may invite them for an interview. Interview days begin at 7:00 am and include one-half day in interviews and one-half day observing scheduled surgical procedures. We also invite all applicants to dinner with the current fellows on the night prior to their interview date. Our program participates in the AAGL Fellow Matching Program.