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Pairing Advanced Technology with Skilled Hands and Sharp Minds

In our quest to provide ever-improving outcomes to our patients, we constantly strive to find newer and better ways to diagnose and treat medical conditions – from the most common to the exceedingly rare.

In this issue of Physician’s Forum, you will read about two cutting-edge therapeutic approaches – one for common cataract surgery, and the other used to restore quality of life despite a rare GI diagnosis.

While the Centurion Vision System® featured on page 6 could not be more different from the Peroral Endoscopic Myotomy (POEM) procedure described in our cover story, the spirit of innovation that drives our staff to continually adopt leading-edge technology is a common thread that sets Mount Sinai South Nassau apart.

Having the latest technology is equally essential during the diagnostic process. In this publication, you will read about upgrades to our diagnostic imaging capabilities, including the availability of cardiac MRI, designed to provide clinicians with the most accurate information on which to base treatment decisions.

Even the most advanced technology is useless unless it is paired with the skilled hands and sharp minds of highly trained and experienced professionals. This publication highlights the educational and research achievements of our residents, medical staff, and advanced practice professionals. I invite you to learn more about our Residency Graduation, clinical research and didactic opportunities on page 8, and exceptional nurse practitioners and physician’s assistants on page 11.

I am certain we would all agree that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. However, the core of medicine is discovery, improvement, and refinement. The patients we serve and the communities where we live and work motivate us to continue to reach new heights in the care we provide. On behalf of those patients, thank you for the work you do and for your continued support of Mount Sinai South Nassau and our shared mission.
Mount Sinai South Nassau Adds Specialists in Endocrinology, Neurology, Epilepsy, Head and Neck Oncology, and Gastroenterology

Rohit Ranganath, MD, specializes in endocrine and head and neck oncology. He earned a medical degree at Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences in India and completed a residency in otolaryngology and head and neck surgery. He completed a second residency in general surgery at Mercy Catholic Medical Center in Darby, Pennsylvania, followed by a fellowship in head and neck endocrine surgery at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. He is board certified in general surgery.

Ling Cui, MD, earned a medical degree from Beijing University of Chinese Medicine in Beijing, China, and completed an internal medicine residency at Bronx Care Health System. She was fellowship trained in diabetes, endocrinology and metabolism at Med Star Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. Dr. Cui is fluent in both Chinese and Korean.

Calvin G. Yu, MD, specializes in neurology and epilepsy and is board certified in neurology. Dr. Yu earned a medical degree from Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, DC. He completed a residency in neurology and was fellowship trained in epilepsy at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, a Harvard Medical School teaching hospital. He is fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese.

Pranay Srivastava, MD, is board certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology. Dr. Srivastava earned a medical degree from Ross University School of Medicine and completed a residency in internal medicine at Nassau University Medical Center, where he served as Chief Resident. He was also fellowship trained in gastroenterology at Nassau University Medical Center and is the author of numerous journal articles on gastroenterology.
Swallowing. The basic biological function is something most take for granted. But not Samantha Piquette. Five years ago, Ms. Piquette, then an 18-year-old college freshman, experienced difficulty swallowing food, especially bread, pretzels, or any acidic foods like tomatoes. “I wasn’t able to eat anything without it getting stuck in my throat,” said the Farmingdale resident. “I would have to drink a half-gallon of water to eat half of my meal.”

Her primary care physician diagnosed chronic acid reflux exacerbated by anxiety, prescribed an antacid, and recommended she eat smaller meals. Despite treatment, swallowing became “progressively worse,” she recalled. Her physician then added a proton pump inhibitor to her regimen to cut acid secretions.

Two years later, shortly before her college graduation, Ms. Piquette, then 22, became alarmed when she began vomiting after eating or drinking liquids, especially ice water. Making matters worse, she started experiencing nighttime coughing with a burning pain in her chest.

Her doctor recommended she see a gastroenterologist who performed an endoscopy and noticed she was retaining a large amount of water in her esophagus, even though Ms. Piquette had nothing to drink for more than a dozen hours before the procedure.

The gastroenterologist referred her to Iman Andalib, MD, Director of Surgical Endoscopy and Director of Endoscopy at Mount Sinai South Nassau, for evaluation and treatment.

"I wasn’t able to eat anything without it getting stuck in my throat,” said the Farmingdale resident. “I would have to drink a half-gallon of water to eat half of my meal."
Dr. Andalib ordered an esophageal manometry to measure the pattern of muscle contractions and pressures in her esophagus, which revealed “classic achalasia or achalasia Type 1,” he said. “With this type, the esophagus muscles barely contract, so food moves down because of gravity alone.”

Achalasia is very rare; about one in 100,000 are diagnosed each year, according to the Achalasia Awareness Organization and the National Organization for Rare Disorders. The cause of the disorder is still not known. However, researchers suspect it is caused by a loss of nerve cells in the layers of the esophageal muscles.

Dr. Andalib treated the achalasia with peroral endoscopic myotomy (POEM), a minimally invasive procedure performed via endoscopy. By passing a flexible instrument into the scope, a small cut is made in the mucosa of the esophagus. Then the endoscope is passed through the submucosa until it reaches the lower esophageal sphincter, where a tiny cut is made in the muscle to widen the lower esophagus, allowing liquids and food to pass into the stomach. The initial incision is closed with sutures passed through the scope.

“POEM has been shown to be safe and the most effective treatment for achalasia,” Dr. Andalib said. “It is permanent with a response rate of up to 90 to 95 percent,” adding that the benefits of the procedure include less pain after surgery, quicker recovery, and a faster return to normal activities.

For Ms. Piquette, the surgery was “life changing.” “Now, nothing is holding me back. I can drink water, coffee, drink with straws...I can eat everything,” she said, adding that instead of all of the prescriptions she was given for antacid medications, what she needed at the time was “Dr. Andalib.” “He was the first person to say you do have something wrong and I can fix it. He gave me confidence in him that he knows his job.”

**About the Doctor**

Iman Andalib, MD, Director of Surgical Endoscopy and Director of Endoscopy at Mount Sinai South Nassau, is board certified in gastroenterology and specializes in diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy. He earned a medical degree from Ross University School of Medicine in Dominica, West Indies, and completed residency training in internal medicine at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC.

A frequent lecturer at national and international conferences, Dr. Andalib was fellowship trained in gastroenterology at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University in Brooklyn, and in advanced endoscopy at Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

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**About 1 in 100,000 are diagnosed with achalasia each year.**

*Source: Achalasia Awareness Organization and the National Organization for Rare Disorders*
Improving Patient Safety While Restoring Vision

Last February, the world began to appear fuzzy to Deborah Matzen. The 57-year-old administrative assistant who lives in Merrick struggled to read road signs. Colors appeared dull, and traffic and street lights gave off a halo.

At first, the mother of two thought her glaucoma was causing her vision changes. After a visit to her ophthalmologist, Richard Nauheim, MD, Director of the Division of Ophthalmology at Mount Sinai South Nassau, she learned she had cataracts in both eyes. He recommended she first try prescription glasses for near and long-range vision, which did work for several months. But by last November, the glasses no longer helped.

Dr. Nauheim recommended Ms. Matzen undergo cataract surgery using the newest generation of the Alcon Centurion® Vision System®. “This new system contains a computer censor in the handpiece that improves patient safety in the operating room and enhances the surgeon’s stability, efficiency, and control during the procedure,” Dr. Nauheim said.

Ms. Matzen is one of nearly 25 million Americans 40 and older who are affected by cataracts, according to the National Eye Institute.

In March, she underwent cataract surgery in her left eye. “I noticed improvement right away,” she said. “After the patch was removed from my eye, I could see the words on the TV screen and colors appeared vivid.”

About two weeks later, she underwent cataract surgery in her right eye. “After the patch was removed, I didn’t need glasses for distance or reading,” she said, “and I haven’t touched my glasses since the second [cataract] surgery.”

Ms. Matzen said the decision to have cataract surgery was life changing. “I was getting depressed over this [poor vision]. I was struggling, and I wanted to be free of the glasses...I wanted to see.”

Today, she is not only seeing 20/25 without correction, she says, but her glaucoma is cured. “The cataract surgery lowered her intraocular pressure, which is normal now,” Dr. Nauheim said.

“Cataracts no longer impair her vision. She had no complications, and as a bonus, her glaucoma has resolved,” he said.

Source: National Eye Institute

Nearly 25 million Americans 40 and older are affected by cataracts

Cataracts no longer impair her vision. She had no complications, and as a bonus, her glaucoma has resolved.

— Richard Nauheim, MD, Director of the Division of Ophthalmology, Mount Sinai South Nassau

What test can accurately assess and diagnose these conditions without using ionizing radiation? Cardiac magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). The technology uses powerful magnets and radio waves to allow you to see detailed images of the heart’s chambers and valves and indicate how well they are working.

Patients may not be a candidate for a cardiac MRI if they have metal in their bodies, such as surgical clips in the brain. However, a cardiac MRI can be performed even after many cardiac procedures, including valve replacements, pacemakers, or stents.

“Cardiac MRI is the gold standard for assessment of the functioning of the heart, specifically, the chambers and valves of the heart,” said cardiologist Michael Sood, MD, Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Director of Cardiac MRI.

“The test is also able to acquire images in two dimensions and can diagnose various birth defects of the heart, masses or tumors in the heart, and blood vessel disorders.”

Patients can schedule an appointment with Dr. Nauheim by calling 516-868-7110.

Patients can schedule an appointment for a cardiac MRI, by calling 516-497-7300, extension 4017 or 6261.
Mount Sinai South Nassau’s virtual Eighth Annual Clinical Research Day on April 8 featured presentations from Oren Factor, MD; Amber Vitale, Nurse Practitioner; Alex Tse, MD, PGY-3; and Alison Wiles, MD, PGY-3, who discussed topics from an overview of radiation therapy and evolving trends in the management of acute appendicitis to health disparities during the COVID-19 pandemic to the effect of multimodal pain regimen on opiate use in the postoperative cesarean-section patient.

The event also offered clinical staff members a forum to present their research and receive valuable feedback from their colleagues. The following staff members were among the winners for their poster presentations:

**First Place:** “Celiac Plexus Neurolysis for Pain Control in Stage IV Colorectal Cancer with Carcinomatosis” by Alexandra Vagasi, MD; Chava Blivaiss, MD; Hideo Takahashi, MD; Cesar Sanz, MD; Eric Seitelman MD; and Rajiv Datta, MD

**Second Place:** “The Effect on Nurses’ Level of Confidence and Performance Using Mock Code Simulation in an Acute Care Inpatient Unit” by Carolyn Engel, MSN, RN, CCRN

**Third Place:** “Effect of Multimodal Pain Regimen on Opiate Use in Postoperative Cesarean Section Patients: Eliminating a Language Disparity?” by A. Wiles MD; E. Korn MD; S. Rahimi MD; and C. Dinglas, DO

Mount Sinai South Nassau was victorious in the 2021 Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma’s Challenge. The hospital joined more than 90 trauma centers nationwide in the annual fundraiser to benefit the Chicago-based Association’s Development Fund. Mount Sinai South Nassau contributed more than $10,000 to the fund, surpassing its competitors. The funds benefit the Association’s programs, awards, and scholarships that support trauma leaders committed to preventing injury and advancing trauma research.

Mount Sinai South Nassau faculty and administrators celebrated the graduation of nearly 30 residents on June 24 in five medical specialties. Photos right, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, and Podiatry residents celebrate the big day, along with Surgery and Obstetrics residents (not pictured).

Mount Sinai South Nassau sponsors Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education-accredited residency training in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Psychiatry, and Podiatry. Thanks to the hospital’s partnership with the Mount Sinai Health System, South Nassau’s role as a teaching hospital has grown to nearly 100 residents being trained.
Mount Sinai South Nassau Names
George Xipoleas, MD, FACS, Associate Director of Plastic Surgery

George Xipoleas, MD, has been appointed Associate Director of Plastic Surgery. A partner in the Long Island Plastic Surgery Group headquartered in Garden City, Dr. Xipoleas earned a medical degree from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. He completed a residency in plastic surgery at The Mount Sinai Hospital and a fellowship in aesthetic surgery at The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. He is board certified in plastic surgery and a fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

Gastroenterologist Joins Mount Sinai South Nassau Staff

Gastroenterologist Steven J. Friedman, MD, has joined the Mount Sinai South Nassau staff as part of Mount Sinai Doctors – Bellmore Center for Digestive Health. Dr. Friedman earned a medical degree from the University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor and completed an internal medicine residency and gastroenterology fellowship at McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University in Illinois. He is board certified in gastroenterology and internal medicine.

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Appointments

Family Medicine Residency graduates.
Internal Medicine Residency graduates.
Podiatry Residency graduates.

New Medical Staff

- Rosemary O'Regan-Perretta, PhD
  Psychiatry/Psychology
- John H. Doherty, CRNA
  Anesthesiology
- Dmitry Konsky, DO
  Medicine/Hospitalist Services
- Amit H. Sachdev, MD
  Medicine/Gastroenterology
- Scott J. Koenig, MD
  Surgery/Orthopedic Surgery
- Brian D. Mercer, MD
  Surgery/Orthopedic Surgery
- Tiffany Y. Wu, MD
  Surgery/Orthopedic Surgery
- Laure Sinnhuber-Giles, CM
  Obstetrics/Gynecology/Midwifery
- Alisha Luka, PAC
  Surgery/Orthopedic Surgery
- Hongyan Wang, MD
  Medicine/Internal Medicine
- Mary K. Horan, PAC
  Surgery/Bariatric Surgery
- Samantha Sommer, PAC
  Surgery/Plastic Surgery
- Daniel Chaskin, DPM
  Surgery/Podiatry
- Evan Ginsburg, PAC
  Surgery/Neurosurgery
- Bethania Rodriguez, NP
  Medicine/Internal Medicine
- Timothy Canty, MD
  Anesthesiology/Pain Management
- Mary K. Ellis, MD
  Family Medicine
- Abigail L. Canaletich, PAC
  Surgery/Orthopedic Surgery
- Nicole Stoppelli, PAC
  Surgery/Plastic Surgery
- Ramanjot Kaur, PAC
  Emergency Medicine
- Bariya Chandoo-Esmail, PAC
  Surgery/General Surgery
- Deborah A. Louis, NP
  Psychiatry
- Riane Jacey Medel, PAC
  Surgery/General Surgery
- Michael A. Gorin, MD
  Surgery/Urology
- Teddy Efkaripes, DPM
  Surgery/Podiatry
- Laura Coraci, CRNA
  Anesthesiology
- Keshia Romelus, CRNA
  Anesthesiology
- Chhanda Beckford, CRNA
  Anesthesiology
- Joshua Kalowitz, MD
  Radiology/Breast Imaging
- Adrienne M. Rudden, DNP
  Medicine/Palliative Care
- Natalie L. Poppito, MD
  Pathology
- Melissa Vergara, NP
  Medicine/Nephrology
In Memoriam

Attending Obstetrician/Gynecologist Joon Song, MD, PhD, FACOG, 56

Joon Song, MD, PhD, FACOG, a respected OB/GYN specialist at Mount Sinai South Nassau, died on May 16. He was 56.

In 2020, Dr. Song contracted one of the earliest cases of COVID-19 and was on a respirator for months. He spent time in a rehabilitation center and had a difficult recovery. Despite being able to re-open his practice, he was still coping with the aftermath of the virus. Tragically, he took his own life.

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Dr. Song was the son of an obstetrician/gynecologist and had practiced in the gynecologic field since 1992, receiving a medical degree from Chung Nam National University in South Korea. He completed a five-year residency at South Korea National Medical Center and served as a medical doctor for the South Korean military for three years.

“Dr. Song was a talented gynecologic surgeon and was an early adopter of laparoscopic and robotic gynecologic surgical techniques,” said Alan Garely, MD, Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Division Director of Urogynecology and Pelvic Reconstructive Surgery. “He was well liked and respected by the Operating Room staff, his colleagues, and patients at Mount Sinai South Nassau.”

With his PhD in gynecology and obstetrics earned from Korea University, Dr. Song spent two years as an associate research scientist and was fellowship trained in reproductive biology at Yale University. In 2007, he completed a U.S. residency at Nassau University Medical Center, an affiliate program of Stony Brook University School of Medicine (now Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook University).

Later, he served as an attending gynecologic and endoscopic surgeon at Nassau University Medical Center and at New York Hospital Medical Center Queens (renamed New York Presbyterian Queens). In 2010, he became a clinical assistant professor at Stony Brook University Hospital, and subsequently, a clinical associate professor at NYU Langone Health. In 2012, he opened a private practice.

Mount Sinai South Nassau Dedicates Memorial Portrait of Longtime Mount Sinai South Nassau Surgeon

The portrait of Stratos G. Kantounis MD, a longtime Mount Sinai South Nassau surgeon who died last August at the age of 89, was dedicated at Mount Sinai South Nassau on May 25 with his family in attendance.

The oil painting, commissioned by his surviving relatives, depicts Dr. Kantounis holding a medical journal and hangs in a place of honor inside Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Harbjajan Singh, MD, Medical Library.

From 1978 to 1991, the beloved physician and former Rockville Centre resident served as Chief of General Surgery and Coordinator of the Surgical Residency Training Program at Mount Sinai South Nassau. In 1988, he was elected President of the Medical Staff for a two-year term. From 1967 to 1991, he was a member of the Shell Surgical Group in Freeport and then opened a solo practice in Rockville Centre. In 2001, he retired from full-time practice.

Following his residency training, Dr. Kantounis served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, from 1964 to 1967 and was named Chief of Surgical Services and Acting Commander of the Third Hospital Unit while stationed at the 45th Field Hospital in Livorno, Italy. He was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Meritorious Services in 1967.

Dr. Kantounis’s family members, who made a gift to Mount Sinai South Nassau, were in attendance. They included his daughter, Liz Kantounis Mozer; son-in-law Tom Mozer; son, Jeffrey Kantounis; daughter-in-law Kate Kantounis; and grandchildren, Stratos Kantounis and Annalise Mozer.

If you are struggling with suicidal thoughts or are experiencing a mental health crisis, please dial the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 or visit SuicidePreventionLifeline.org.
Mount Sinai South Nassau Practitioners in the News

Mount Sinai South Nassau Physician and Rabbi Wins Prestigious CDC Award

Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Aaron E. Glatt, MD, Chair, Department of Medicine, and Chief, Infectious Diseases, is a recipient of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Center for Global Health’s Excellence in Partnership Award.

The award recognizes Dr. Glatt’s contributions to reduce the risk of COVID-19 among Hasidic and Orthodox Jewish visitors to central Ukraine during the 2021 religious pilgrimage. Since the onset of the pandemic, Dr. Glatt used Zoom and YouTube to educate thousands in the Orthodox Jewish community about COVID-19 safety and the CDC’s recommendations to reduce spread of the virus.

“Jewish law requires us to listen to the experts when it comes to medical decision making,” Dr. Glatt said. “We certainly fulfilled that mitzvah (commandment) by carefully crafting a religiously and medically sensitive message for all attendees.”

News Notes:

Olanrewaju Esan MD, MBA, FACP, FCCP, FAASM, has been recertified in internal medicine and pulmonary diseases by the American Board of Internal Medicine.


Juan Goez, DPM, Director, Podiatry Division, Department of Surgery, lectured on first metatarsophalangeal joint replacement at the Hospital Ney Arias Lora in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on June 9. The next day, Santo Domingo’s Revista 110 TV channel interviewed Dr. Goez on the advancements in diabetes foot care.

Gastroenterology Fellowship Launches

Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Department of Medicine launched a gastroenterology fellowship on July 1. The three-year program provides clinical training in all aspects of gastroenterology, including endoscopy, colonoscopy, hepatology, and nutrition.

Preparation for Residency

Family Medicine Resident Davinder Pandher, MD, PGY-1, practices a simulation delivery during a July 15 OB Bootcamp. The Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology runs the four-hour Camp, now in its fifth year, for the Family Medicine and Transitional Year incoming first-year residents. Salma Rahimi, MD, Program Director, and Robert Dean, MD, Core Faculty, headed up the training and OB/GYN residents, Xiteng Yan, MD, Chava Welton, MD, and Shelly Thai, MD, hosted the event. Topics included preterm labor, hypertension in pregnancy, and fetal monitoring.

Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Department of Medicine launched a gastroenterology fellowship on July 1. The three-year program provides clinical training in all aspects of gastroenterology, including endoscopy, colonoscopy, hepatology, and nutrition.
Office-based Medicaid providers can now be reimbursed for language interpretation services to limited-English-proficient patients in their offices. This includes language services provided over the phone through companies such as CyraCom, which offers interpretation services in more than 170 languages, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or if you use a certified hospital interpreter for the interpretation. Note: Use of an interpreter must be documented in the EMR to bill Medicaid.

For more information, refer to the “New York State Medicaid Update,” October 2012, V. 28, No. 1, or call the Mount Sinai South Nassau Language Coordinator, Lina Hoyos, at 516-632-3484.