

Help expand cardiac and stroke care



Dr. Navraj Heran is one of a small group of physicians in British Columbia who uses endovascular techniques to treat brain aneurysms and strokes.

The Third Eye of Dr. Navraj Heran

Royal Columbian Hospital neurosurgeon and researcher Dr. Navraj Heran wants to open his third eye. The highly trained endovascular neurosurgeon believes that a new Multipurpose Interventional Suite with state-of-the-art biplane x-ray technology will provide RCH neurointerventionalists with a radical new view inside patients.

"Right now, our single plane angiography machine gives us only one view of the inside

of the patient," says Dr. Heran. "With a biplane unit, we would be able to see from different angles, as it would provide us with multiple views of the patient's blood vessels, enabling us to perform complex procedures with higher precision, speed and safety."

Dr. Heran is one of a small group of physicians in British Columbia who uses endovascular techniques to treat brain aneurysms, strokes, carotid stenosis and brain vascular malformations,

and his research has been widely published in North American medical journals.

Endovascular treatment involves insertion of a catheter and guidewire into the femoral artery in the patient's leg and navigating it through the blood vessels under x-ray guidance, into the patient's neck and head. Coils, glue material, stents and angioplasty balloons are then placed in the diseased blood vessels via the catheter and guidewire to correct the ailment.

One of the revolutionary endovascular treatments that Dr. Heran performs involves the usage of platinum coils. He is the only neurosurgeon trained to perform the coiling method in the Fraser Health region.

Like miniature slinkies, platinum coils are folded gently into an aneurysm or subarachnoid hemorrhage (also known as a hemorrhagic stroke, as in the

case of Carol Thorpe (see 'Carol's Story') one by one to stop the bleeding.

Approximately 150 endovascular neurosurgical services are performed at RCH each year, and that number continues to grow.

"If we can treat an aneurysm or stroke in a way that has them walking out of here the next day, then we certainly want that for more patients," says Trudy Robertson, RCH Neurosciences Clinical Nurse Specialist. Robertson states that the average length of stay for treatment of a ruptured aneurysm patient is days less for a coiled procedure than for open-brain surgery.

"Having said that, it is a very selective process by which patients are chosen for the coiling procedure," she says. "It depends on their clinical situation and their overall health condition, among other factors."



Minimally invasive procedures, such as aneurysm coiling, rely on advanced diagnostic imaging equipment to guide instruments through the patient's blood vessels.



Ron Gale and Carol Thorpe are happy to be getting married, thanks to the life-saving interventions performed by Dr. William Siu and Dr. Navraj Heran.

Carol's Story...

In April 2010, Carole Thorpe, a healthy 53-year-old woman, had a sudden stroke. A CT scan at her local hospital showed she had a massive bleed inside her head known as a subarachnoid hemorrhage. She was transferred to Royal Columbian Hospital (RCH) where Dr. William Siu, Department Head, RCH Medical Imaging, found a large brain aneurysm.

Dr. Navraj Heran determined that her aneurysm would be best treated by using endovascular techniques.

Due to the complexity of the aneurysm, Carol had a total of six angiograms and four coiling/stenting sessions between April and September 2010 at RCH to fully treat the aneurysm. She slowly recovered from the coma, temporary blindness and speech and mobility problems. "Her recovery is close to being a miracle," says Dr. Siu.

Ron Gale, Carol's lifelong partner, kept vigil at her bedside during the five month period she spent at RCH. "The staff was absolutely fantastic and Carol received great care. We got engaged at Royal Columbian Hospital after a thirty-year relationship. I was totally amazed at what they were able to do with Carol at RCH. They saved her life."



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Dr. Kennely Ho

Warning signs of a possible stroke

RCH Neurologist Dr. Kennely Ho is a physician champion for Fraser Health's Stroke Strategy. He advises to call 911 immediately if you think you may be having a stroke. "Even if a warning sign was definitely there and then went away again after a few minutes, call 911 immediately," urges Dr. Ho. "It may still be a strong indicator that a major stroke may soon occur."

The five warning signs

WEAKNESS

Sudden weakness, numbness, or paralysis in your face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of your body.

VISION PROBLEMS

Blurred or decreased vision in one or both eyes or double vision that does not clear with blinking.

TROUBLE SPEAKING

Sudden difficulty speaking, slurring or understanding simple statements.

HEADACHE

Sudden, unexplainable, and intense headache that is different from any headache you have had before.

DIZZINESS

Severe dizziness, loss of balance, or loss of coordination, especially if another warning sign is present at the same time.

"My Stroke of Insight" is a stroke of genius for patients

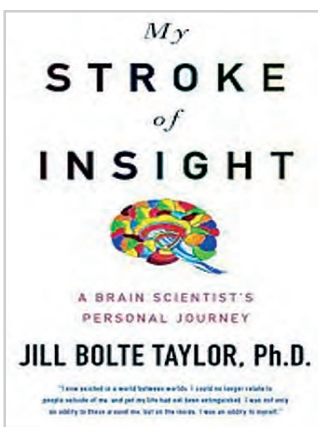
An insightful and compelling narrative is told by Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, a Harvard-trained brain scientist who, at age 37, experienced a massive brain hemorrhage that irrevocably impacted her logical, sequential left brain. It took her seven years to recover and to become her "new" self.

Bolte Taylor's journey describes how, in the process of healing, she discovers the wonders of being human. Most profound and moving is her Appendix B "Forty Things I Needed Most", where she lists simple, thoughtful comments that offer practical advice to caregivers who are assisting the healing process of a brain-injured person, such as:

- I am not stupid, I am wounded. Please respect me.
- Approach me with an open heart and slow down your energy. Take your time.

- Honour the healing power of sleep.
- Speak to me directly, not about me to others.
- Love me for who I am today. Don't hold me to being the person I was before. I have a different brain now.

"My Stroke of Insight" is available in paperback at most bookstores and on **Amazon.com**



Review written by Julie Coghlan

"The Multipurpose Interventional Suite is something that is desperately needed and will elevate the ability of RCH to deliver treatment of heart disease and stroke."

~ Dr. William Siu, Director of Medical Imaging, RCH

Thank You

We acknowledge these individuals, corporate and community organizations (and those who prefer to remain anonymous) for their generous donations, received between January and May 2011, towards the Multipurpose Interventional Suite campaign.

We sincerely apologize for any errors or omissions

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Articles by Shannon Henderson and Julie Coghlan
Photography by Jerald Walliser

RCH Foundation needs your help

The Multipurpose Interventional Suite will make all the difference for 1,400 more cardiac and stroke patients annually to get the diagnoses and treatment they need more quickly and closer to home.

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