

Advancing surgical skills

Hands-on lab teaches shoulder arthroscopy techniques

Physicians, orthopaedic residents, and health care professionals from around the Washington area gathered to learn the latest techniques in arthroscopic shoulder repair and reconstruction at Commonwealth Orthopaedics' fifth Surgical Skills Lab in November. Five Commonwealth physicians who specialize in sports medicine and arthroscopic shoulder surgery served as instructors and mentors to a group that included Commonwealth surgeons and physical therapists, Georgetown University Medical School residents, and a small number of outside physicians.

"We've made tremendous inroads in shoulder arthroscopy in the last few years, including advances in techniques and equipment that have steadily improved outcomes," says George Aguiar, MD, one of the presenting physicians. "We want to share this with the medical community. The lab is an excellent forum to exchange information and ideas, review outcomes and techniques, and give everyone the opportunity for some hands-on training."

The lab featured lectures and instruction, with Commonwealth surgeons using cadavers to demonstrate the latest shoulder arthroscopy advancements in arthroscopic superior labral anterior-posterior (SLAP), Bankart, and rotator cuff repairs.

"The presenting physicians come from a generation of orthopaedic surgeons trained from residency in these arthroscopic techniques," says Susan Kenney, RN, nurse manager for Commonwealth Orthopaedics Surgical Suite. "In the lab setting, the step-by-step technique is reviewed for these routine arthroscopic procedures."

For the first time, Commonwealth Orthopaedics' physical therapists were invited to participate. "Physical therapy is a key component to the success of any surgery, so we wanted to give them a bird's-eye view

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of how these procedures are done and how they impact a patient's rehabilitation," Dr. Aguiar says.

This was also the first time outside surgeons attended the lab, and Dr. Aguiar hopes to invite more of them in the future. Commonwealth also plans to expand the labs to include advances in minimally invasive knee surgery, cartilage restoration and transplantation, joint resurfacing techniques, and unilateral knee and total joint replacement.

"These labs have tremendous benefit on many levels," Kenney says. "The surgeons have the rare opportunity to 'show and tell,' while also getting valuable feedback from their professional peer group. The orthopaedic residents get hands-on practice, step-by-step instruction, and explanation allowing them to become more comfortable performing these procedures. Finally, our Commonwealth patients can expect the best possible surgical outcomes provided with cutting-edge technology and advanced surgical skills of our physicians."



George Aguiar, MD, earned a BS in Biology from Georgetown University and his medical degree from Georgetown University Medical Center, where he completed his surgical internship and orthopaedic residency. Dr. Aguiar's practice includes primarily sports medicine and adult knee and shoulder reconstruction. With extensive experience in total hip and knee replacements, Dr. Aguiar's special interests also include arthroscopic rotator cuff and labral repairs, ACL reconstruction with grafts, arthroscopic shoulder instability repair, ankle arthroscopy, and total knee replacement procedures.



From left: David J. Novak, MD, and George Aguiar, MD, two Commonwealth Orthopaedic surgeons, discuss the latest techniques in arthroscopic shoulder repair at the fifth Surgical Skills Lab held in November.



Susan Kenney, RN, CNOR, RNFA, is the Nurse Manager for Commonwealth Orthopaedics' ambulatory surgery center in Herndon. As a former member of the orthopaedic team at Georgetown University Hospital, Kenney is pleased to support the orthopaedic residency program and assist the Commonwealth organization through her active involvement in coordinating the Educational Skills Labs at Commonwealth Orthopaedics.

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