The Interventional Endoscopy Program at Northwestern Medicine combines state-of-the-art endoscopic procedures and extensive clinical expertise in diagnosing and managing patients with disorders of the gastrointestinal tract, bile ducts, and pancreas. The use of advanced technology allows our physicians to remove early cancers and treat more complicated diseases in the most minimally invasive fashion possible.

Northwestern has one of the largest interventional endoscopy programs in the Chicagoland area and performs nearly 3,500 interventional procedures per year. Together, faculty members Drs. Srinadh Komanduri, Rajesh N. Keswani, and David Shapiro represent the most productive and comprehensive interventional endoscopy program in Chicago. Our Interventional Endoscopy Program excels not only in providing care, but also in training future leaders in endoscopy through our advanced interventional endoscopy fellowship training program.

Exceptional Patient Care and Outcomes

The ultimate goal of our highly skilled team of physicians is to provide timely (less than 48 hours) and exceptional patient care. The interventional endoscopists function as a part of a larger multidisciplinary team that includes surgeons, oncologists, hepatologists, radiation oncologists, radiologists, dietitians, and behavioral therapists. This thoroughly holistic approach to disease allows our patients to receive comprehensive care that is tailored to their needs and provided by physicians with the foremost expertise in their respective fields.

We are extremely fortunate at Northwestern to have a dedicated team of interventional nurses who support the complex aspects of advanced endoscopy. The success of our program is due in large part to our nursing staff, which is, by far, one of the most talented in the country. Our interventional endoscopy nursing group consists of the core primary interventional clinic nurses, our interventional endoscopy procedural team, and our inpatient nurse practitioner. Similar to the success of our multidisciplinary physician teams, the synchronized interaction of these critical nursing components has significantly improved patient outcomes and satisfaction. Furthermore, the success of our clinical research program also is dependent on our nursing teams. These professionals ensure that patients feel comfortable as a part of any clinical investigation. The entire team has an exceptional work ethic, goes above and beyond on a daily basis, and provides the foundation for interventional endoscopy at Northwestern Medicine.

The Forefront of Innovation

The Interventional Endoscopy Program at Northwestern Medicine is a leader of new technology and research in interventional endoscopy.

Our team of physicians is comprised of key thought leaders and experts in many areas of endoscopic therapeutic interventions including:

- Endoscopic ultrasound with fine needle aspiration
- Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) with cholangioscopy and pancreatoscopy for difficult stones and strictures
- Complex colon polyp resection
- Endoscopic mucosal resection (EMR) and endoscopic submucosal dissection (ESD) of upper GI tumors
- Radiofrequency ablation of Barrett’s esophagus and bleeding
- Pancreatic pseudocyst drainage and necrosectomy
- Single and double balloon small bowel enteroscopy
- Palliative stenting of the GI tract and pancreaticobiliary malignancy
- Celiac plexus block
- Endoscopic suturing
- Endoscopic therapies for obesity

“Our program at Northwestern continues to be a leader in innovation in endoscopy while focusing on superior patient care and outcomes.”

Srinadh Komanduri, MD, Director, Interventional Endoscopy Program
Clinical Research

Northwestern’s Interventional Endoscopy Program is one of the most active in performing clinical studies as they relate to quality and patient outcomes. Our primary goal is to continually improve patient care in endoscopy by investigating the newest technologies and procedures before they become mainstream. The program also focuses on quality measures in endoscopy, which can ensure that patients receive the best possible care when they undergo these complicated procedures.

Current active research includes:

Quality improvement in endoscopy: There are multiple initiatives looking at every step of the patient experience in colonoscopy, from bowel preparation to physician adenoma detection rates, to ensure the best outcomes. Dr. Keswani has published and presented extensively on his research in this area.

Long-term outcomes of patients undergoing endoscopic therapy for Barrett’s esophagus: Dr. Komanduri is one of the most experienced therapeutic endoscopists in treating Barrett’s esophagus in the country. His research focuses on limiting the recurrence of disease after therapy and further understanding which patients are most receptive to particular types of treatment. Additionally, he is in the process of looking at quality measures for endoscopists performing these treatments to ensure that patients will always have optimal outcomes.

Outcomes of ERCP and cholangioscopy for bile duct stones and strictures: Drs. Komanduri and Keswani have extensive experience with cholangioscopy (bile duct endoscopy) for complicated diseases of the bile and pancreatic ducts. Northwestern was the first center in Chicago to offer digital cholangioscopy (Spyglass DS), starting in March 2015. Initiation of a multicenter registry in digital cholangioscopy and completion of a systematic review of all the current studies available for this technology will ultimately identify where the gaps are when we are treating difficult bile duct stones or cancers of the pancreas and bile ducts.

Effectiveness of endoscopic mucosal resection for large colon polyps: Northwestern is an expert referral center for the removal of large colon polyps. Dr. Komanduri presented data on a multicenter outcomes study for large colon polyps of more than 600 patients at Digestive Diseases Week 2015. This is the largest United States experience to date. His group is specifically looking at predictors of success and recurrence of endoscopic resection to ultimately improve endoscopic techniques and limit the need for surgery. Dr. Keswani also presented data on the outcomes of patients who underwent surgery for benign polyps. His data further supports the importance of referral of benign polyps to an expert center such as Northwestern prior to consideration for surgery.

Novel diagnostic tools for diagnosis of pancreatic cystic lesions: Drs. Komanduri and Keswani continue to explore the impact of novel technologies and current paradigms for diagnosis of these common lesions. While cysts in the pancreas are mostly benign, some can lead to pancreatic cancer. As such, the team at Northwestern continues to investigate novel strategies to improve on current diagnostic tests to differentiate these cysts. Dr. Komanduri will be presenting the outcomes of current testing of fluid obtained by endoscopic ultrasonography (EUS) at Digestive Diseases Week 2015.

Difficult colonoscopy and the impact of balloon enteroscopy for previously failed colonoscopy: Dr. Keswani has pioneered the role of balloon enteroscopy to complete colonoscopic examination when standard colonoscopy fails. This happens quite often and, prior to the work of Dr. Keswani and others, there was no good option for examining the colon to prevent colon cancer. Dr. Keswani has published a landmark paper in this field that has fundamentally altered the strategy gastroenterologists utilize when approaching these difficult cases.
Comparative effectiveness of novel endoscopic tools for tissue acquisition of malignancy: Drs. Komanduri and Keswani have published many studies looking at various types of tissue acquisition for malignancy in the GI tract. Most recently, Dr. Komanduri authored a technical statement on EUS-guided tissue acquisition. This paper will have a major impact on all patients undergoing EUS procedures. The group continues current investigations in ERCP and EUS for improvement in efficiency, quality, and outcomes for patients needing endoscopic procedures.

Advanced Interventional Endoscopy Educational Training Program

The Advanced Interventional Endoscopy Training Program at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine is a one-year, intensive clinical training program. The program, which encompasses all aspects of advanced interventional endoscopy, including ERCP, EUS, and all advanced endoluminal interventions, is intended specifically to train the next generation of expert therapeutic endoscopists for a career in academic advanced endoscopy. The training program is designed to be procedure-intensive and endoscopically broad-based, covering all aspects of interventional endoscopy and endoscopic oncology.

In addition to performing several hundred ERCP and EUS procedures in one academic year, the advanced endoscopy trainee gains considerable experience in pancreaticobiliary and endoluminal therapeutics consultation, and in endoscopic oncology. Northwestern’s robust and active programs in surgical oncology, gastrointestinal and minimally invasive surgery, bariatrics, and liver transplantation offer unique experiences in complex endoscopic procedures involving patients with challenging surgical endoscopic issues and anatomy. All members of the Northwestern interventional endoscopy faculty team are involved in research, including institutional and multicenter clinical trials. This gives the advanced endoscopy trainee excellent opportunities to not only participate in clinical investigation, but also to further his or her publication experience.

NORTHWESTERN MEDICINE

Northwestern Memorial HealthCare and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine are seeking to impact the health of humankind through Northwestern Medicine. We aspire to be the destination of choice for people seeking quality healthcare; for those who provide, support, and advance that care through leading-edge treatments and breakthrough discoveries; and for people who share our passion for educating future physicians and scientists. Our commitment to transform healthcare and to be among the nation’s top academic medical centers will be accomplished through innovation and excellence.

Our Interventional Endoscopy Program within our Digestive Health Center is successfully combining multispecialty clinical care with groundbreaking research—all with a goal of providing exceptional care for patients today and in the future. We invite our loyal donors and interested friends to join us in advancing the Interventional Endoscopy Program at Northwestern Medicine and ensuring our success through gifts of outright support and endowment. Philanthropy provides crucial funds to advance the research of our exceptional clinician-scientists, as well as supports state-of-the-art care and the training of our next generation of experts.

For more information about supporting the Interventional Endoscopy Program, please contact:

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