On July 21, U.S. News & World Report announced that the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (RIC) is once again the nation’s best hospital for physical medicine and rehabilitation. This top ranking marks the 25th consecutive year that RIC has earned this prestigious designation, a distinction unique to RIC among specialty hospitals.

“RIC is honored by this enduring affirmation,” said Dr. Joanne C. Smith, President and CEO. “We are proud of our culture of excellence and our commitment to constant improvement and discovery. Our passion is helping patients achieve better outcomes, faster . . . to live better lives. Over the years, RIC’s pioneering spirit has come to define the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation; now we’re revolutionizing it with our new research hospital — the Ability Institute of RIC.”

**RECENT RIC MILESTONES**

- Treated more than 55,000 patients from all 50 states and 70 countries.
- Ranked #1 in research from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- Research at RIC surpassed the $100 million mark in grant funding — that’s 10 times more than the leading competitor.
- RIC directs the Residency Program in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation for Northwestern University.
- Grew in the number of priority patient conditions we treat, e.g., amputations (4%), brain injuries (11%), spinal cord injuries (14%) and pediatric conditions and injuries (22%).
- Dr. Richard Lieber, PhD, formerly of the University of California, San Diego, joined RIC’s Executive Team as Senior Vice President, Research & Chief Scientific Officer.

On April 28, RIC hosted renowned scientist Dr. Grégoire Courtine, PhD, from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL). Over the past decade, Dr. Courtine and his team have developed therapies to restore control over leg movements in rodents with severe spinal cord injuries, an intervention they hope will one day help paralyzed people to walk again.

Traditional research focused on regrowing or reconnecting severed fibers in the spinal cord. Knowing that injury to the spinal cord interrupts the neural network providing information from the brain to the spinal cord, Dr. Courtine’s team concentrated instead on “awakening the network,” i.e., identifying what could re-awaken neural pathways and help the body move on its own.

They discovered a combination of pharmacology, electrical stimulation, robotics and treadmill training that caused a paralyzed rat to walk.

Following months of testing, coupled with chemical and electrical interventions, the rat was not only standing and walking, but also adjusting leg movement to climb stairs. The rat’s brain was now able to relay information to the injury and restore control over the locomotor networks below the injury. The rat’s body was able to be trained to walk, navigate and balance again, all on its own. After many years, human trials are set to begin with people who have recently sustained a spinal cord injury, and RIC is in ongoing discussions with Dr. Courtine.

“This knowledge gives tremendous hope to our patients with spinal cord injuries who have been waiting for a ‘cure’.”

“Because of this work, we now know that the spinal cord can function even when the nerves remain severed,” said Richard L. Lieber, PhD, RIC Senior Vice President of Research & Chief Scientific Officer.
Positions and Awards this year were:

- Residents who received Named Residency positions this year included Dr. Monica Rho, who was honored as Teacher of the Year and Dr. Matthew Oswald, who received advanced specialized training.

- Residents and fellows leading by Drs. Joseph Ihm, Sue Mukerjee, Jim Atchison, David Ripley, and David Chen for their efforts.

- Residents and fellows understudy Dr. Jim Sliwa, now assisted by Drs. Monica Rho, Leslie Rydberg, and Christopher Byers, for their dedication to the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation.

We were excited that Dr. Matthew Oswald, who best displays the art of listening, was honored as Teacher of the Year.

Residents who received Named Residency Positions and Awards this year were:

- **The Walter E. Heller Chief Residents** (made possible by a contribution from the late Mrs. Alice DeCosta), for leadership ability and dedication to the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation: Mary Caldwell, DO, Colin Franz, MD, PhD, Mithra Maneyapanda.

- **The Joanne S. Crown Resident** (made possible by a contribution from the Arie and Ida Crown Memorial Fund in honor of Mrs. Crown, a long-time and committed member of the RIC Women’s Board) for achievements and promise as a leader in the field of rehabilitation—demonstrated through understanding, compassion and appreciation of the quality of life issues for patients: Nassim Rad, MD.

- **The Harris Resident** (made possible by an endowment from the Harris Family Foundation; Mr. King Harris is former Chairman of the RIC Board of Directors), for demonstration of academic excellence through educational initiative and motivation for learning: Samuel Clanton, MD, PhD.

- **The William Randolph Hearst Resident** (made possible by an endowment from the William Randolph Hearst Foundation), for individual whose participation in professional organizations and activities will make a national or regional impact in the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation: Abby Stephens, MD.

- **The Kover Family Resident** (made possible by a contribution from the Kover Family Foundation), for demonstrated commitment to teamwork, interdisciplinary collaboration, quality patient care and the mission of the RIC: Daniel Goodman, MD.

- **The Ike and Florence Sewell Resident** (made possible by a gift of the estate of Florence Sewell, former member of the RIC Women's Board), for demonstrating the greatest potential for a career in academics or research: Craig Ziegler, MD.

- **The Meyer S. Gunther Award** (made possible by a contribution from Dr. Meyer Gunther), given to the resident who best displays the art of listening, understanding, and interacting with patients: Kristen McCormick, DO and Rajiv Reddy, MD (a tie).

- **The Helen Cooper Outstanding Resident Teacher Award** (made possible by a contribution from Dr. Elliot and Renee Roth, in memory of Renee Roth's grandmother, Helen Cooper), given to the graduating resident demonstrating the greatest proficiency in teaching his/her peers through the course of the academic year: Ashwin Babu, MD.

During the same week as Graduation was held, we also recognized excellence in research by residents and fellows with our Annual Sarah Baskin Awards, as follows:

- Meaghan Lynch, MD: “Lower Extremity Motor Function in Chronic SCI after Exposure to Ibuprofen and Intermittent Hypoxia: A Randomized Trial”, 1st Place, Resident Category.

- Samuel Chu, MD: “The Effect of a Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Course on the Accuracy of Joint Palpation in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in Residents”, 2nd Place, Resident Category.

- Steven Makovich, DO: “The Effect of a Mirror on Neuromuscular Control of the Lower Extremities during a Squat Exercise”, Co – 3rd Place, Resident Category.


- David Wozniac, MD: “Body Image Associations with Injury in Professional Ballet Dancers”, 2nd Place, Fellow Category.

We appreciate the intellect, enthusiasm, compassion, and commitment of all of our residents and fellows. Congratulations and thank you to all of our trainees, faculty, and support staff. We look forward to hearing from you about your current and future successes.
I have accepted the electronic medical record, the continuous checking of email on iPhones during meetings and the fact that scores of people know what is happening with my family before I do because I am not on Facebook. I am convinced this is the result of nurture over nature. Neither of my parents finished high school. My father was a janitor at our church and my mother a housewife. There were definite principles we lived by and one was hard work. If you had a job that started at 7 am my parents expected you to be there at 6:30 and ready to start. If I heard it once I heard it a million times, “You don’t have to be the best but you always have to do your best”. There was no assistant or covering janitor so we had no normal vacations. I was expected to be seen, not heard unless I had something to say. On one occasion I was going on and on and telling my parents what a great job I had done on a project in school. After I felt assured I had convinced them as to how good I actually was my father said, “If you are good at what you do people will know and you won’t need to tell them”. When you look at the typical characteristics of those that grew up during the Silent Generation years, a need to work hard, keep quiet and be seen not heard it is clear why I scored a 4 on the survey. If nothing else the survey made me realize what a huge impact my parents had on me. As important it made me realize the huge impact we all have on our children and those we train. An impact that will shape the way they think and perform long after we are gone.

So what can I say about getting a 4 on the Millennial Survey? I can say thank you Mom and Dad because without you I wouldn’t be in a position to write this column.
PUBLICATIONS & AWARDS


- Stefania Fatone, PhD, was awarded funding by the American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association as a co-investigator on “Evaluating outcomes of dysvascular partial foot and transtibial amputation: a systematic review and development of shared decision making resources” (PI: Michael Dillon, PhD, La Trobe University).

- Hargrove LJ, Simon AM, Young A, Finucane S, Halsne E, Fey N, Ingraham K, and Kuiken TA, were awarded the 2015 US Army's Military Health System Research Symposium TEAM Award for Outstanding Research Accomplishment by Academic collaborators.

- Simon AM “Improved weight-bearing symmetry for transfemoral amputees during standing up and sitting down with a powered knee-ankle prosthesis.” RIC’s Sarah Baskin Research Award—1st Place, Faculty Category.

NEWS & EVENTS

SKYRISE CHICAGO
SkyRise Chicago, RIC’s annual fundraiser, took place on Sunday, November 8. This year, there were approximately 2,500 participants who made the 103-floor climb to the top of Willis Tower. Climb participants included many current and former patients, including Senator Mark Kirk (R-Illinois), below, who received treatment after a stroke.


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