



Some members of the MS Center staff, from left: Neurologists Yuval Zabar, MD, and Claudia Chaves, MD; May Bellisle, RN, Patricia Donovan, RN; and neurologist Ann Camac, MD. Other staff of the center include specialists in neuro-ophthalmology, psychology and neuropsychology, urology and pain management.

MS Center Opens at Lahey Lexington

This month, Lahey Clinic marks the opening of a comprehensive center for patients with multiple sclerosis (MS). Based at Lahey Lexington, the center offers the full range of resources used in treating MS.

“Our new MS Center, under the leadership of Dr. Claudia Chaves, will give our patients access to the latest MS treatments, in a convenient location,” says Paul T. Gross, MD, chair of Neurology.

According to the New England chapter of the MS Society, MS is the most common neurological disease affecting young to middle-aged adults, with most being diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50. Nearly 13,000 people in Massachusetts and New Hampshire have the disease.

Although the cause of MS is not known, doctors believe it is an autoimmune disease that damages myelin, the protective layer of nerve fibers in the central nervous system. A disruption of the myelin affects the conduction of electrical impulses to and from the brain. At various points in the course of their illness, patients may experience symptoms such as vision loss, numbness and tingling, weakness or fatigue, gait unsteadiness, double vision, dizziness, cognitive dysfunction, and bladder or bowel dysfunction.

“With this new center, we are able to combine many of the medical services involved in the treatment of patients with MS,” says neurologist Claudia J. Chaves, MD. In addition to the expertise of neurologists and other medical specialists, the center offers on-site MRI, physical therapy and infusion services.

“Lahey Lexington is a very friendly location for our patients,” Chaves adds. “Every service is contained within three floors, and there is an abundance of parking for patients with special needs.”

To make an appointment with a specialist at the MS Center, call 781-744-3250.

Evidence Supports Minimal Access Surgery for Colon Cancer

Lahey Clinic recently took part in a landmark study demonstrating that minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery is a viable alternative to traditional open surgery for treating colon cancer. In fact, researchers found that laparoscopic colectomy may have distinct benefits over open surgery.

Colon cancer is the third most common form of cancer among men and women in the United States. Of those diagnosed, about 90 percent will require colectomy to remove diseased parts of the colon.

The new study, published in the May 13 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, responded to widespread concerns that laparoscopic surgery may lead to greater rates of cancer recurrence at the wound site than traditional open surgery. During the trial, 872 patients with curable colon cancer underwent either open or laparoscopic colectomy and were followed for three years. Investigators found no statistical difference in the rate of tumor recurrence, wound recurrence or overall survival in the two groups.

“This is an important trial showing that minimally invasive surgery for colon cancer is safe, has equivalent survival rates, and has potential benefits,” says Patricia L. Roberts, MD, chair of Lahey’s Department of Colon and Rectal Surgery.

“This is a great advance for both the doctor and the patient,” says David T. Martin, MD, director of the Cardiac Arrhythmia Service at Lahey Clinic. “This system gives us much more information about the patient and the device. It saves the patient a journey to the doctor’s office by allowing us to do a quick check-up. It adds an important new level of comfort for the patient.”

Virtual Office Visit

Lahey Clinic patients were recently the first in Massachusetts to benefit from a new remote heart monitoring system that evaluates their implantable cardiac devices over the Internet. The new technology is available to people with a Medtronic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD) or cardiac resynchronization therapy ICD system for heart failure.

Medtronic’s CareLink Network consists of a patient monitor, a Web site for clinicians, and a separate Web site for patients. The monitor is a small, easy-to-use device that allows patients to collect information by holding a computer-mouse-like “antenna” over their implanted device.

The monitor downloads data about the patient’s heart rhythm and device, and sends it through a standard phone line directly to a secure server. By logging onto the physician Web site, physicians can review the data and make immediate decisions about a patient’s care. Patients can view information about their devices and conditions on their own personalized Web site.

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