



THE JOINT SECTION ON TRAUMA
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS
and
CONGRESS OF NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS



August 19, 1986

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George W. Sybert, M.D.
Department of Neurosurgery
University of Florida Health Center
Box J-265
Gainesville, Florida 32610

Re: Neurosurgical Management of Spine and Spinal Cord Injuries

Dear George:

In the process of recruiting for the position of Assistant Chief of Neurosurgery at the San Francisco General Hospital, among other characteristics for this position I have looked for young neurosurgeons with broad training in management of spine and spinal cord trauma. I have found remarkably few training programs which offer such training. The overwhelming majority of neurosurgeons who treat spine trauma do so in conjunction with orthopedic surgeons and, in the main, neurosurgical residents are not capable of managing a number of injuries by themselves. With the growing number of orthopedists with specialty training in spinal surgery, more and more decompressive procedures routinely done by neurosurgeons in the past are now being done by orthopedists. This is getting to be progressively true in trauma, I suspect.

I think the Joint Sections on Spine and Peripheral Nerve Disorders and on Trauma could perform a major service to neurosurgery by identifying or encouraging the establishment of neurosurgical programs which can offer a complete or nearly complete training in the management of spine and spinal cord disorders, including trauma. If we could identify several programs, we could begin a nucleus of neurosurgeons who could offer a full spectrum of spine treatments of the highest quality without necessarily collaborating with orthopedic surgeons for traditional stabilization procedures. I believe there are a large number of neurosurgeons in this country who would be willing to spend some fellowship time at such facilities if they then could carry these skills back into their practices. The orthopedists certainly have taken this route and I can see no reason at all why neurosurgery should not do similarly.

I would like for you to consider bringing the matter up for discussion in the next meeting of the Joint Section on Spine and Peripheral Nerves, and I will do the same in the Joint Section of Trauma. I would then like to get together with you to see if we can outline some

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plan which eventually will allow a very broad spectrum of training in management of spine and spinal cord disorders. I will look for you in New Orleans to pursue this informally and see if we can find a way to move forward with this.

Please let me know if you have any specific questions. I look forward to talking with you further about this in the near future.

Sincerely yours,


Lawrence H. Pitts, M.D.

LHP:ss

cc: Joseph Maroon, M.D.
Robert Ojemann, M.D. ✓
Michael Salcman, M.D.
Thomas Gennarelli, M.D.
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