



Following his talk on stem cells, Richard Burt, MD, is toasted by well-wishers at Grant Hospital. Shown from left are: B. H. Gerald Rogers, MD; Dr. Burt; Richard Abrams, MD; Jason Abrams, premed student at Northwestern University; and Julian J. Rimpila, MD.

Northwestern physician uses stem cells to treat Crohn's disease

He is the first physician to use stem-cell transplants to treat Crohn's disease, and Richard Burt, MD, chief of immune therapy and autoimmune disease at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, explained how. In a talk entitled "Autoimmunity in Chronic Inflammatory Disease," given before the Grant Hospital medical staff in September, Dr. Burt described how he took stem cells from the patient's own blood and reset the immune system so it no longer attacked the intestine.

The groundbreaking case involved a 22-year-old female who was down to 80 pounds and had to be fed intravenously. She suffered from chronic diarrhea and faced having a colostomy. She had failed all medical therapy. Two and a half months after receiving the stem-cell transplant she had no diarrhea or abdominal pain and was eating and returning to a normal weight.

Dr. Burt's visit to Grant Hospital in September was organized by Dr. Julian J. Rimpila, chairman of continuing medical education at Grant. "I took great interest in this work because of my own early research on the immunology of inflammatory bowel disease at the University of Chicago in the 1960s and 70s. I thought Dr. Burt's work was a significant breakthrough in our understanding of and treatment of Crohn's disease," Dr. Rimpila said.

Polish-American Medical Society elects new officers

The Polish-American Medical Society (PAMS) held elections during its September meeting. PAMS's new officers for 2001-2003 are: Anna Szpindor-Watson, MD, president; Bronislaw Orawiec, MD, vice-president; Marek Rudnicki, MD, vice-president; Dorothy Anasinski, DDS, treasurer; and Teresa Migielska, DDS, secretary. Drs. Janusz Danko, Marek Gawrysz, Ewa Kiljanska-Buch, Anna Najder, Ewa Radwanska and Miroslaw Sochanski were elected to the board.

Minimally-invasive hip replacement at Rush--Patients home within a day

Orthopedic surgeon Richard Berger, MD, of Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, is pioneering a new approach to hip replacement surgery that allows patients to walk within hours and go home within a day.

"We use a cementless prosthesis that grows into the bone, and the patients walk out of the hospital on crutches the day after the operation," said Dr. Berger, who is also a CMS member.

The new technique employs the same prosthetic hip implants used in ordinary hip replacements, but the equipment is less bulky. Dr. Berger helped develop the new retractors, drills and files that are specially shaped to squeeze through a few small portals instead of the standard 12- to 18-inch incision.

Minimally invasive hip replacement surgery has also reduced the operating time to one and one-half hours, less than the average time required for traditional hip replacement surgery.

"The surgical technique is somewhat complicated, but you become more proficient with each operation," said Dr. Berger. "However, this is the kind of operation that probably will only be done by orthopedic surgeons who do a large number of joint replacements each year and are comfortable with learning the intricacies of the new surgical approach." ■