



SAN DIEGO SPINE FELLOWSHIP

Duration: 1 year (August 1 to July 31)
Deadline: November 1
Stipend & Benefits: \$75,000/year plus benefits, including personal and educational time-off, and a stipend for educational conference(s).
Location: Scripps Clinic, Scripps Green Hospital; Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla; Scripps Memorial Hospital Encinitas; Rady Children's Hospital, San Diego

Percent of Fellowship devoted to operative care: 70%
Percent of Fellowship devoted to non-operative care: 20%
Research/Publication obligation? 10%

Approximate percentage of exposure to the Spine by region:

Lumbar: 50%
Cervical: 30%
Thoracic: 20%

Approximate percentage of Fellowship exposure to the Spine by diagnostic category:

Degenerative: 55%
Adult Deformity: 25%
Pediatric Deformity: 5%
Trauma: 10%
Tumor: 5%



San Diego 
Spine Foundation

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FACULTY

Gregory M. Mundis, Jr., M.D.
(Fellowship Director &
Past Fellow)



Behrooz A. Akbarnia, M.D.
(Director Emeritus)

Ali Bagheri, M.D.
(Past Fellow)



Ramin Bagheri, M.D.
(Past Fellow)

James D. Bruffey, M.D.



Robert K. Eastlack, M.D.
(Past Co-Director)

Hani Malone, M.D.
(Neurosurgeon)



Stephen Stephan, M.D.

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OBJECTIVE: To train an Orthopedic Surgeon or Neurosurgeon who has completed residency training and is board eligible, to learn the necessary skills, knowledge and indications for spine care, both operative and nonoperative.

Successful completion of the program will produce a spine surgeon who is competent, thoughtful of the decision-making process, humble and who strives to continue the learning process life-long. This individual will be mentored by faculty both during and after fellowship with the hope that he/she will in turn become a meaningful mentor over time. As such, the fellowship program is ongoing and does not conclude at the end of training. It nurtures long-term relationships of mentoring and the ongoing collegial exchange of ideas to improve patient care. All fellows are prepared for entering either the academic or private practice settings upon completion of their training.

- CLINICAL:**
- Annual average operative case load: 350, including adult and pediatric spine deformity, degenerative, trauma, tumor, infection, complex revisions, MIS. The addition of MD Anderson to Scripps Clinic has increased our exposure to patients with spine tumor pathology.
 - Rotations with alternating faculty every 1 or 2 months based on 4 full-time fellows and one NMCSO Orthopedic surgery resident (PGY-3 or 4).
 - Weekly schedule includes fellow's spine conference, research day (one full day/week), 2 full clinic days, 2 O.R. days, and 1 day of physical therapy observation
 - Direct supervision under program faculty to include rounds, reports/documentation, clinical evaluations and assistant surgeon status.
 - Weekend call and spine trauma call is a requirement of fellowship and each fellow is assigned to take call with the attending physician (faculty) on call for that weekend.
 - One-week experience with GSO/SDSF Outreach team in Mexico or Columbia with Dr. Mundis, including clinical decision making, surgery and postoperative care.
 - Fellows are allowed to focus on areas of interest during rotations to ensure they are receiving additional training in those areas.

- RESEARCH:**
- Minimum of 2 research projects to completion, namely submission to scientific program(s) and manuscript completion.
 - Weekly Research meetings held weekly on Tuesdays, which includes access to PhD Orthopedic Researcher as research mentor and to assist fellow with deadlines and project goals.
 - Allowed to travel to scientific meeting to present project, if selected.
 - Presentation of research at Annual AO Spine Fellow's Research Forum in March.
 - Presentation of research at Annual Scripps Orthopaedic Research Forum in July.

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EDUCATION:

- Weekly spine conference with each fellow presenting 2-3 cases representing preoperative indications and postoperative findings with Q&A by faculty and community spine surgeons/international visiting fellows attending conference.
- Several assigned lectures to each fellow, including one elective topic of the fellow's choice near year end. Talks are required to include extensive review of the literature. Q&A by faculty and community spine surgeon/international visiting surgeons to fellows.
- Combined ortho/neurosurgery fellow/residency program lecture series held 1x/month for all west-coast programs.
- Journal Club held every other even month of the year with 6-8 articles selected by faculty/fellows on relevant spine care topics from peer-reviewed journals.
- Spine only M&M and Orthopedic M&M meeting held once a month at Scripps Green Hospital, to include review of literature to discuss current trends on case management/ decision making.
- Attendance at one major scientific meeting of fellow's choice and additional scientific meetings as curriculum allows.
- Attendance at the annual Bridging The Gap meeting, which each year includes an internationally known keynote speaker and faculty from well-known spine programs throughout the United States.
- Professional Development Dinner Meetings with Emeritus Faculty, Dr. Behrooz Akbarnia, held 3x year to provide mentorship and professional development to fellows.

EVALUATION:

No less than 2 complete written evaluations of program by fellows and of fellows by faculty with periodic meetings with Director to discuss progress and areas of improvement.

SELECTION & CREDENTIALING:

- San Diego Spine Fellowship Program participates in the SF Match which requires strict adherence to application, interviewing, and rank submission.
- Fellows who match with SDSF program will be offered a full-time position in writing and fellows/program both agree to accept Match results.
- Once the matched fellow accepts the program via written agreement, the future fellow is provided a comprehensive set of requirements to prepare him/her for credentialing necessary to work as a clinical fellow in the program. The future applicant agrees to follow these requirements on the timeline provided to become credentialed in time for initiation of training on August 1st of that year.

ACCREDITATION:

Of note, most U.S. based spine fellowship training programs are not accredited at this time.