



SAN DIEGO SPINE FOUNDATION

APRIL 2025 UPDATE



FROM THE DESK OF DR. MUNDIS

This is a uniquely exciting year for us here at SDSF as we embark on our inaugural year with four fellows. We've witnessed a magical transition in the culture of our team this year.

What's different?

Our fellowship program is now one full year and the team's interconnectedness isn't interrupted. We can see that our fellows are more engaged and there's a secret sauce that comes with internal collegiality. When our fellows go out into the world to improve and save patients' lives, they will maintain that connection to continue learning and growing together throughout their careers.



Our work simply wouldn't be possible without your support. Whether you join us at events throughout the year, give back to the program that set the stage for your career, or simply have a passion for furthering spine medicine, every dollar donated makes a tremendous impact in the impactful work our fellows, and team, can accomplish. **Thank you.**

Gregory Mundis, Jr., MD
President, San Diego Spine Foundation
Director, San Diego Spine Fellowship Program

WHAT'S NEW

Grants **SDSF Research Grant Opportunity**

The 2025 SDSF Research Grant is now open! [Submit your application form](#) on or before June 2, 2025 to be considered. The link can be found below.

Education **Spine: Base to Summit Conference**

In January, SDSF was well-represented by Dr. Mundis (program director), Drs. Eastlack, Malone and Stephan (invited faculty) to this sold-out conference in Vail, Colorado demonstrating that our team are thought-leaders in the field of spine surgery.



Fellowship **Establishing Our Program**

This year, we had 117 applicants to our program, conducted 22 interviews and a total of four qualified fellows will be selected for 2026-27. Most prestigious residencies around the country are desiring to interview with us. Thank you for your philanthropic support that makes this possible!

SAVE THE DATE

AUGUST 1-2, 2025
PARK HYATT AVIARA RESORT
CARLSBAD, CA

BRIDGING THE GAP

LEARN. PLAY. GIVE.

Mark your calendars for the 4th Annual Bridging The Gap on August 1-2, 2025. [Click here to learn more about the event.](#)

If you have interest in attending or supporting this year's event as a sponsor or exhibitor, please contact cgill@broad-water.com



RECENT RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Osseointegrative Pelvic Fixation (OPF) May Experience Less Failure than Traditional Fixation (TF) at One-Year Follow Up


Long construct fusion is a common practice where multiple vertebrae are fused together to treat spinal disorders like, adult scoliosis, spondylolisthesis, or sagittal imbalance. Despite its clinical success, there are shortcomings in bone healing, mechanical failure and instrumentation loosening.

OPF bolts are a new technique as a possible solution to these issues. This study compared OPF to TF in 134 patients one-year post-op. The result is that failure occurred less often and there were fewer reoperations needed in the OPF group compared to the TF group.

Muscle Gene Expression and Cellular Morphology in Individuals with Adult Spinal Deformity Who Develop Proximal Junctional Failure

This study investigates how back muscles and their genes might affect the risk of developing complications after large spinal fusion surgery. We analyzed muscle biopsies from spinal fusion patients to see if specific genes related to muscle growth, fat metabolism, and inflammation were linked to certain complications.

Patients who required a revision surgery had lower levels of certain muscle growth genes and signs of altered fat metabolism. These findings suggest that muscle health and genetics may be a predictor for patients with higher risk for complications. More research with larger groups is needed.



PEARCE B. HALDEAN
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO - MD CANDIDATE



GAUTHAM PRABHAKAR, MD
FELLOW, SAN DIEGO SPINE
FOUNDATION




Pre-contoured Rods in Deformity Surgery: Is the Juice Worth the Squeeze?

Technology use in spine surgery is growing and now includes customizable, surgeon-specific pre-contoured rods, versus the current standard practice to bend rods during surgery. Our study took on the task of comparing these practices and found that the pre-contoured rods:

- decrease operative time
- reduce surgeon mental and physical fatigue
- yield less issues with the rods' integrity for years to come

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS:

BUDGET UTILIZATION

	EDUCATION 65%	This covers 2024-25 salaries, benefits and programmatic support for four spine fellows including lectureship and expanded career opportunities.
	OPERATIONS & ADMIN 18%	Supporting the infrastructure that makes our programming and research grant opportunities possible.
	RESEARCH 17%	Supporting research projects, grant opportunities and conferences where key findings are presented

Source: San Diego Spine Foundation 2024 Annual Report



MAKE YOUR 2025 GIFT TODAY
Contact us at farmer.kiersten@sandiegospinefoundation.org to learn about other ways to give back.