

[Print](#) | [Be the first to comment!](#)

10 Spine Surgeons Focusing on Spinal Cord Injury

Written by [Laura Miller](#) | September 14, 2011

Social sharing

Here are 10 spine surgeons who have a clinical and research interest in spinal cord injury.

Dirk H. Alander, MD (Saint Louis University). Dr. Alander is chief of spine surgery as well as an associate professor of spinal deformity and reconstruction at Saint Louis University. He is a member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, North American Spine Society and American Spinal Injury Association. During his career, Dr. Alander has published several articles in professional journals, such as *Spine* and the *Journal of Spinal Disorders & Techniques*. In addition to his clinical interests, Dr. Alander has worked on clinical trials for spine devices and is trained in the X-Stop, Charite artificial disc and Kyphon Inflatable Bone Tamp Technology. Dr. Alander earned his medical degree at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Rockford and completed his residency at in the Grand Rapids (Mich.) Orthopaedic Surgery Program at the former Blodgett Memorial Medical Center. His additional training includes a fellowship in spine surgery and spinal cord rehabilitation at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield.

David F. Apple Jr., MD (Shepherd Center, Atlanta). Dr. Apple is the medical director emeritus of the Spinal Cord Program at Shepherd Center, with a focus on spinal cord research. During his career, Dr. Apple has written several articles on appropriate care for spinal cord injury patients and has held academic appointments at Emory University and Georgia State University in Atlanta. He also served as a team physician for the Atlanta Hawks basketball team and as chief medical officer of the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games. Dr. Apple has received the American Spinal Injury Association Lifetime Achievement Award and the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. He has also served as president of the American Spinal Injury Association and founded the Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Association. In addition to his professional leadership, Dr. Apple has been the principal investigator on several grants associated with spinal cord injury research. Dr. Apple earned his medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia. His additional training includes residencies at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta and University Hospital, Inc., in Cincinnati, as well as fellowships at the University of Louisville (Ky.) Hospital and Lac/Rancho Amigos National Medical Center in Downey, Calif.

Randall M. Chestnut, MD (Harborview Medical Center, Seattle). Dr. Chestnut is a neurosurgeon with a professional interest in traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, as well as sports-related brain and spine injuries. His research interests include early mobilization from acute spinal cord injuries and targeted therapy for managing traumatic brain injury. He recently received funding from the National Institute of Health for outcome studies in brain and trauma care systems in Latin America. Dr. Chestnut has also been a leader in developing the evidence-based practice guidelines for traumatic brain injury and spine surgery. Dr. Chestnut earned his medical degree from the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle and completed his residency and fellowship at the University of California in San Diego.

Barth A. Green, MD (University of Miami Miller School of Medicine). Dr. Green is the co-founder and chairman of the department of neurological surgery at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. He has a professional interest in complex spinal cord injuries and disorders. During his career, he helped found the first state-wide care system for patients with spinal cord injury and co-founded The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, a comprehensive spinal cord injury and paralysis research center. In addition to his clinical practice, Dr. Green has focused on research into spinal cord injury and paralysis. He earned his medical degree at Indiana University in Bloomington, where he worked with paraplegics in the spinal cord research laboratory. His additional training includes a residency in neurological surgery at Northwestern University in Chicago.

Michael H. Haak, MD (Northwestern University, Chicago). Dr. Haak is the president-elect and director of the American Spinal Injury Association. He is also an orthopedic spine surgeon at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine with a special interest in spinal reconstruction, spinal cord injury and cervical and lumbar disc degeneration. During his career, he has also served as a Board of Specialty Societies representative to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Dr. Haak earned his medical degree from Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and completed his residency at Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam in Houston. His additional training includes a fellowship in spine surgery at Northwestern.

James S. Harrop, MD (Jefferson University Hospitals, Philadelphia). Dr. Harrop is a co-associate director of Acute Care at the Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley and associate professor of neurosurgery at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. He spends time working on clinical trials for spinal cord injury patients and is the principle investigator on several studies for SCI patients, including stem cell therapies. In addition to his clinical work, Dr. Harrop has published and presented his work on spinal cord injury research in several professional venues. He serves on the executive board of the Congress of Neurosurgeons and is a member of North American Spine Society, Cervical Spine Society and American Association of Neurological Surgeons. Dr. Harrop earned his medical degree at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, where he also completed his residency. His additional training includes a

fellowship at Cleveland Clinic.

Glenn R. Rechtine, MD (University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, N.Y.). Dr. Rechtine has a professional interest in caring for patients with spinal disorders, such as herniated discs and spinal trauma. He is a past president and member of the board of directors of the American Spinal Injury Association as well as a member of the executive committee of the Cervical Spine Research Society. His leadership also includes spending time as a reviewer for several journals, such as *Spine* and the *Journal of Orthopaedic Trauma*. He was also named reviewer of the year for *The Spine Journal* in 2006. Previously, Dr. Rechtine served as the director of spine surgery and director of orthopedic research at the University of Florida in Gainesville. Dr. Rechtine earned his medical degree at the University of South Florida College of Medicine in Tampa and completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at Naval Hospital of Portsmouth Virginia. His additional training includes a fellowship in spine surgery at University Hospitals of Cleveland.

Alexander R. Vaccaro, MD, PhD (Rothman Institute, Philadelphia). Dr. Vaccaro is a spine surgeon at Rothman Institute, co-associate director for Acute Care at Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley and co-director of reconstruction spine services at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. He also serves as a co-director of the spine fellowship at Thomas Jefferson University. Dr. Vaccaro's current research involves the timing of surgery after traumatic spinal cord injury, regeneration of the degenerated intervertebral disc and the use of alternative bone graft substitute during spinal fusion. In addition to his research, he has also been involved in the development of spinal implants for traumatic degenerative disorders of the spine. During his career, he has authored several professional publications and served as president of the American Spinal Injury Association. Dr. Vaccaro earned his medical degree at Georgetown University School of Medicine in Washington, D.C., and completed a residency in orthopedic surgery at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. His additional training includes a fellowship in spine surgery at the University of California in San Diego.

Wise Young, PhD, MD (NYU Langone Medical Center, New York City). Dr. Young is a surgeon at NYU Langone Medical Center, the director of the W. M. Keck Center for Collaborative Neurosciences and a professor at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. He was a member of a team that discovered and established high-dose methylprednisolone as the first effective therapy for spinal cord injuries, which paved the way for further research and development. He also developed the first standardized rat spinal cord model that is used for testing therapies, formed a National Institute of Health-funded consortium for testing the therapies and helped establish clinical outcome measures in spinal cord injury research. In addition to his clinical work, Dr. Young founded and served as editor in chief of the *Journal of Neurotrauma* and organized the National and International Neurotrauma Societies. Dr. Young earned his doctorate at the University of Iowa in Iowa City and completed his medical degree at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif. His additional training includes an internship at Bellevue (Neb.) Medical Center. He previously served as the director of neurosurgery research at New York University.

Jack Zigler, MD (Texas Back Institute, Plano). Dr. Zigler is a spine surgeon at Texas Back Institute and past president of the American Spinal Cord Injury Association. He has also served on the board of directors of ASIA and as president of the Federation of Spine Associations. During his career, he has held several leadership positions within American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and North American Spine Society. In addition to his work with professional societies, Dr. Zigler has also served as editorial board member of the *Journal of Spinal Disorders & Techniques* as well as associate editor of *Spine Arthroplasty Society Journal*. He has participated in spine- and spinal cord injury-related conferences around the country. Dr. Zigler earned his medical degree at SUNY Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, N.Y., and completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City. His additional training includes a fellowship in spine surgery at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

If you would like to recommend a spine surgeon leader for consideration on one of our short weekly lists, please contact Laura at laura@beckersasc.com.

Related Articles on Spine Surgeons:

[10 Spine and Neurosurgeon Leaders at Non-Profit Hospitals](#)

[10 Spine and Neurosurgeons Working With Stem Cells](#)

[10 Female Spine Surgeons to Know](#)

Tagged under [spine surgeon](#) [orthopedics](#) [spine surgery](#) [neurosurgery](#) [spine center](#) [neurosurgeon](#) [spinal cord injury](#)

0 Comments and 0 Reactions

Like

Add New Comment

[Login](#)