

Reconstruction for adult brain injury resulting in spasticity Mayo Clinic (from page 2)

gradually result in varying degrees of spasticity. The muscle is overly active and sensitive, resulting in fixed deformity. These patients range from living independently—sometimes self-sufficiently using just one hand—while others are completely dependent on others.

Though physiatry can help temporarily with botulinum toxin injections or stretching, these modalities often stop working eventually as muscles adapt, Dr. Rhee says. Botulinum toxin's additional limitation — its noxious potential — limits treatment time. UER surgery, however, provides patients much longer term effects and eligibility is broad.

According to his publication in the Journal of Hand Surgery in 2018, Dr. Rhee also assesses patients' cognitive and communication abilities to determine if they can follow instructions and rehabilitate postoperatively.

Individualizing surgical goals When performing UER, Dr. Rhee individualizes the surgical procedures based on the underlying pathology in every involved muscle spanning a joint. Primarily, he treats spastic muscles with nerveor muscle-based procedures.

Beyond these overarching management principles, Dr. Rhee considers UER an individualized surgery tailored to each patient's wants and needs. Patients' surgical goals vary, such as achieving:

Better function in upper extrem-

ity regions with functional loss. Improved overall quality of life. Partial or complete independence. "The reconstruction surgery can make patients who previously had significant spasticity quite functional," Dr. Rhee says. "For instance, surgery might give them a good helper hand where before it was inanimate."

An example of Dr. Rhee's patients with specific goals is a man who traveled with family to Mayo Clinic following a virtual appointment. This patient's arm was so bent that his family could not wash his elbow crease, causing hygienic and pain issues that UER addressed.

Why send patients to Mayo Clinic, what to expect

Physicians can expect a patient-centered, multidisciplinary approach when referring patients to Mayo Clinic in Minnesota for spasticity-related UER, says Dr. Rhee. They also can feel confident sending patients to a medical center promoting innovation in this field, such as intraoperative techniques and prospective clinical trials.

For patients who live far from Mayo Clinic, Dr. Rhee conducts a previsit video chat. This allows Dr. Rhee to see the deformity and speak to the patient and loved ones to determine if an inperson visit seems appropriate.

"We don't want patients to come to Mayo Clinic from a distance and tell them they're not surgical candidates," says Dr. Rhee.

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