

Spinecare Introduction

Neurosurgeon (M.D.) Education and Training

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A neurosurgeon is a doctor who specializes in the surgical treatment of diseases of the nervous system. The nervous system is comprised of the brain, spinal cord, nerve roots, and the peripheral nerves. The neurosurgeon is experienced and skilled in pharmaceutical and surgical approaches to spinal disorders. The neurosurgeon is specifically trained to treat numerous diseases and disorders such as spinal arthritis that causes pain or neurological compromise, disc herniation, spinal instability with neurological compromise, bleeding within the skull, brain, and spine, blood vessel malformations and aneurysms, tumors of the brain and spinal cord, abnormalities of cerebrospinal fluid flow and birth defects of the brain, spine, and spinal cord

According to the American Association of Neurosurgeons (AANS) to become a board certified neurosurgeon, an individual must have graduated from an accredited medical school and have completed neurosurgical residency training in a program that is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

There are basic requirements for neurosurgical residency and training. Training in neurosurgery is progressive, requiring graduated experience and increasing responsibility. To obtain the status of Neurosurgeon an individual must successfully complete:

- 4 years of college (pre-medical training)
- 4 years of medical school
- 1 year of general surgery
- 5-7 years of neurosurgical residency

According to the American Association of Neurosurgeons (AANS) “when most people hear the word "neurosurgery" they automatically think of brain surgery. However, neurosurgery encompasses far more than the brain. Neurosurgery is the medical specialty concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of the entire nervous system, composed of the brain, spinal cord and spinal column, as well as the nerves that travel through all parts of the body (hands, legs, arms, face).

Neurosurgeons and other spine specialists alike are challenged by the broad spectrum of diseases that afflict the spine, the spinal cord and the spinal nerves. Neurosurgeons are a valuable part to the spinecare team. There are a number of national organizations that help to facilitate integrated spine care with the neurosurgeon. For example, the mission of the American Academy of Spine Physicians (AASP) reflects the growing dedication neurosurgeons to conservative and cooperative spinecare.