Welcome. This web cast is designed to describe some of the details of the epilepsy surgery patient management conferences that are held at the Cleveland Clinic. The epilepsy surgery patient management conference is a weekly conference that represents the culmination of all the testing and evaluations that patients have had in preparation for epilepsy surgery.

This is a setting in which your epilepsy physician has the opportunity to discuss in detail with other staff members in the epilepsy center, your case as it relates to the treatment of your epilepsy and in particular whether epilepsy surgery is an option for you in controlling your seizures.

The role of epilepsy surgery in the treatment of epilepsy is reserved for patients in whom their seizures have not responded to medical management with anticonvulsant medication. This state is often referred to in the medical world as medically refractory partial or focal epilepsy. The later part of that term also indicates one other important criteria that is considered prior to making a decision as to whether a patient is a good candidate for epilepsy surgery and that is to ensure the patients seizures are arising from a focal region of brain (or in another words if the seizures are arising from one specific part of the brain or not). One way of assessing this is to determine whether the findings from all the testing that has been under taken all point to one area in the brain in which is the focus of where the epilepsy is arising. We call this concordance of test results.
Once a target in the brain has been identified as the region from which the seizures are arising, the next important question to ask is whether there would be any predictable adverse effects that may arise from epilepsy surgery in the targeted region.

The patients in whom epilepsy surgery is being considered undergo a number of tests. The epilepsy surgery patient conference allows for the opportunity for these tests to be presented to a group of physicians and professional from the epilepsy center so that a group discussion can be made in order to best guide the patient in his or her decisions whether to proceed with an epilepsy surgical option.

The decision for epilepsy surgery is an important one for our patients and their physicians. The goal of patient management conference is for a detail review of the data that has been obtained as a part of the investigations for epilepsy surgery and then obtain a group discussion as to the diagnosis of the patient’s epilepsy, the surgical options, other medical or alternative options, and discuss the risk, benefits and alternatives. Also discussed would be any further testing that would be required to complete the epilepsy surgical evaluation.

The staff members that are typically present at epilepsy patient management conference includes:

1. The primary epileptologist caring for the patient who leads the discussion
   a. This staff doctor discusses the history and details of treatment that the patient has undergone
   b. He or she then reviews prior and current EEG findings, video-EEG findings with the rest of the group
c. He or she will also discuss the patients own goals for why they are considering epilepsy surgery

2. Neuroradiologist, who reviews
   a. the MRI findings in order to discuss any structural lesion that can be seen on imaging studies
   b. they may also review any findings that have been obtained using functional MRI (typically this is done to identify regions and sides of the brain in which language is dominant)

3. Nuclear medicine staff, who reviews
   a. PET scan that assess which regions of brain are not functioning properly based on how glucose is metabolized; regions of brain that do not function well may also indicate regions of brain involved in the epilepsy
   b. ictal SPECT results may be discussed in some patients who have undergone this testing; this test is done in the epilepsy monitoring unit and used to highlight regions of brain that are active in the first few moments of a seizure; this test is not ordered in all patients and are used selectively based on the individuals clinical scenario

4. Neuropsychologists, who review the tests of memory commonly known as the neuropsychological test battery
   a. These tests are used to assess what the patients baseline memory scores are and whether they would be at risk for any further memory decline following epilepsy surgery

5. Our Psychiatry colleagues will discuss:
   a. Any current mood disorder that the patient has and whether there are any risks for worsening of this disorder following surgery
   b. They will also mention any concerns as to whether there are clear understandings from the patient stand point as to the reasonable goals as to what epilepsy surgery can achieve

Also the opinions of social workers and bioethicists who attend these conferences are sought out in clarifying any psychosocial or concerns regarding the ability of our patients to understand the information that is being given to them.

The reason why patient management conference is important is that it is a chance for your physician to freshly review all details of your epilepsy surgical evaluation. He or she has the benefit of discussions that involves many of the staff members in the epilepsy center, including the epilepsy surgeons, so that many points of view can be obtained.
It is the objective of your epilepsy physician to not only reflect these points of views but also to help guide you, as the patient, as to the best course of action. The patient management experience is the culmination of all the efforts your physicians have put into ensuring the success of your epilepsy surgical experience. It is also to help your physician educate and inform you as to all the options available to you including epilepsy surgery and to go over the potential risk each of these options can incur.

The active discussion that is held during these conference serves not only to ensure that our patients receive world class care but also serves as a way to assess objectively our strategies of treatment and help guide the center in providing the best possible treatments and to look for new innovative therapies for our patients in whom treatment options seem limited. This platform is also a great opportunity to educate our young physicians who spend anywhere from 1 to 3 years achieving a specialized training in epilepsy care. In this way we hope to train future physicians through this collaborative effort among the staff at the Cleveland Clinic Epilepsy Center.

The epilepsy surgery patient management conference is an integral part of the epilepsy surgical evaluation. It ensures that the testing that is done is taken in context with all the other parts of your evaluation. It also provides for your physician other expert opinions as to the treatment strategies that are available for you as one of our patients.