

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Re: JLS 2005;364–367 Gastric Electrical Stimulation: A Novel Treatment for Gastroparesis

Dear Editors:

I found *JLS*, Volume 9, Number 3 to be very informative. The fact that there were two articles [Gastric Electrical Stimulation: A Novel Treatment for Gastroparesis by de Csepel J, Shapsis A, Jordan C; and Laparoscopy Shortens Length of Stay in Patients With Gastric Electrical Stimulators by Al-Juburi A, Granger S, Barnes J, Voeller G, Beech D, Amiri H, Abell TL] on electrical stimulation for gastroparesis in a laparoscopic journal was unique to be sure. Drs de Csepel, Shapsis, and Jordan imply that they are the first to describe a laparoscopic method for placement of the gastric pacemaker. One only has to look at the article by Al-Juburi et al in the same issue to know that this is not the case. In addition, Drs de Csepel, Shapsis, and Jordan state on page 366 that this device was developed by Medtronic, Inc. This is only partly true. I feel it is very important to set the historical record straight on how this device was developed since many people over the years have taken credit that was not deserved.

The idea of the gastric stimulator came from Drs Thomas L. Abell (GI) and Babajide O. Familoni (engineer) in the early 1990s at the University of Tennessee, Memphis. Previous attempts to stimulate the stomach had failed. These men had the idea of suprathreshold levels of stimulation and found that it indeed worked. I became involved at this time since they needed a surgeon to place the device in canines. We developed the technique (open and laparoscopic) in the animal in the early 90s, gradually took it to the clinical arena, and had many successful placements in the mid and late 90s. Dr. Abell and my laparoscopic fellow (Dr. Stephanie Granger) moved to Arkansas; and Granger and Barnes, while at the University further refined the laparoscopic placement of the device. Abell, Familoni, and Voeller had the ideas and techniques while Medtronic made a cardiac pacemaker that was modified for our use. Without the perseverance and hard work of Abell and Familoni, I don't think this device would be helping patients today and they should get most all of the credit.

Guy R. Voeller, MD, FACS

University of Tennessee, Memphis

Professor of Surgery

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 6-9, 2006, Boston, Massachusetts, USA. **15th International Congress and Endo Expo 2006**, presented by the Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons. LOCATION: The Westin Copley Place. DIRECTORS: Raymond J. Lanzafame, MD, MBA, Harrieth M. Hasson, MD; GENERAL CHAIR: Paul Alan Wetter, MD; SCIENTIFIC CHAIRS: Raymond J. Lanzafame, MD, MBA, Carl J. Levinson, MD. This conference gathers general surgeons, gynecologists, urologists, and other specialists from around the globe to share their common experiences and knowledge in minimally invasive surgical techniques. Distinguished faculty will lecture in eight Master's Classes and three Multidisciplinary Plenary Sessions about current hot topics. The conference will also feature two live telesurgeries and hundreds of scientific presentations.

February 21-24, 2007, Orlando Florida, USA. **EuroAmerican MultiSpecialty Summit III Laparoscopy and Minimally Invasive Surgery** presented by the Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons. LOCATION: Disney's Contemporary Resort. This event brings together delegations of leading laparoscopists from Europe and the Americas for a meaningful educational & cultural exchange between surgeons of different surgical specialties that practice minimally invasive surgery.

September 5-8, 2007, San Francisco, California, USA. **16th International Congress and Endo Expo 2007**, presented by the Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons. LOCATION: Hyatt Regency San Francisco. DIRECTORS: Harrieth M. Hasson, MD, William E. Kelley, Jr. MD; GENERAL CHAIR: Paul Alan Wetter, MD; SCIENTIFIC CHAIRS: Raymond J. Lanzafame, MD, MBA, Carl J. Levinson, MD.

February 2008, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. **AsianAmerican MultiSpecialty Summit III Laparoscopy and Minimally Invasive Surgery** presented by the Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons. LOCATION: Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa.

September 17-20, 2008, Chicago, Illinois, USA. **17th International Congress and Endo Expo 2008**, presented by the Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons. LOCATION: Hyatt Regency McCormick Place.

For more information go to www.sls.org or contact the Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons, 7330 SW 62nd Place, Suite 410, Miami, FL 33143-4825, USA. Tel: 305.665.9959, Toll Free: 800.446.2659, Fax: 305.667.4123 E-mail: Conferences@sls.org.

SLS CALENDAR CLASSIFIED Calendar of Events Listings are available at the rate of \$165 USD per listing (maximum 150 words per listing). To add your event, please send the text and check in US funds made payable to: Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons, Attn: JLS Calendar Listings, 7330 SW 62nd Place, Suite 410, Miami, FL 33143-4825, USA. For more information on advertising rates, contact SLS: Tel: 305.665.9959, Toll Free: 800.446.2659, Fax: 305.667.4123 E-mail: Publications@SLS.org