

FAST-MAG Times

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Hospitals Sign On With FAST-MAG *Little Company of Mary First to Approve*

As of July 31, 2004, the FAST-MAG Clinical Trial has been approved by Institutional Review Boards (committees which protect human subjects) at 27 of the 70 Los Angeles County hospitals expected to participate in the study. Additional approvals are being obtained at a rate of 1-5 per month.

The first hospital to grant approval for this landmark study was Little Company of Mary Hospital, Torrance. Piloting FAST-MAG through this process were Dr. Kent Shoji and Dr. Fred Carr, co-medical directors of the Emergency Department, who see FAST-MAG as a promising addition to stroke research. "This is potentially very clinically significant," says Shoji.

Little Company of Mary's Emergency Department sees some 5,000 patients a month and will have many opportunities to participate in the study. "In the first weeks following the approval to partici-



Little Company of Mary Hospital, Torrance

pate, we had at least five patients with stroke," says Shoji.

Hospital CEO Mark Costa says that FAST-MAG participation is a natural outgrowth of the hospital's involvement in the community and the prehospital system. "Collaboration between health-care providers is essential for optimal

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Paramedic Training Rolls Through LA County *1500 and Counting . . .*

In fire stations and training centers throughout Los Angeles County, paramedics are learning the details of the FAST-MAG research study.

In early May, training and certification of more than 3,000 LA County paramedics from numerous provider agencies

began and, at press time, approximately 1,500 paramedics from 19 provider agencies have been certified in the Los Angeles Prehospital Stroke

"Left facial droop, weak grip on the left, no arm drift: mLAPSS positive."

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Hospitals Sign On

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patient care,” he says. “Our commitment to the Emergency Medical System is strong and this research gives us another way to hopefully improve care to those in our community.”

While patients are the acknowledged targets of the study, Prehospital Care Coordinator Laurie Lee-Brown, RN, MICN, believes ED staff and paramedics will also benefit. “Knowing that we will be working for progress and offering cutting edge technology to patients in our community is very gratifying,” she says.

Dr. Carr concurs that patients will

not be the only beneficiaries. “I think it gives staff members hope when they see patients getting better from new treatments and therapies,” he says.

Lee-Brown hopes the word will spread quickly. “Time is such an important factor,” she says. “We hope the public will respond and get on board with early intervention when they have stroke symptoms.”

Shoji anticipates a smooth rollout of the study. “There will be a bit of a learning curve, of course,” he says, “but the downside is minimal and the upside is great, and everybody who works in healthcare ultimately wants to help patients.”

Paramedic Training

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Screen (LAPSS) and in FAST-MAG procedures.

“We have received very positive comments (from the paramedics),” says Jodi Nevandro, RN, MSN, who is EMS educator for the Santa Monica Fire Department.

Favorite Training Comment:
“MAGnificent!”

Course evaluation comments such as “Good for the people of LA,” “Ready, willing, and able,” and our personal favorite: “MAGnificent!”, show that paramedics are responding with enthusiasm and their usual willingness to help the patients who depend on them.

“It has been extremely rewarding to present the FAST-MAG study to the paramedics and receive their support and enthusiasm,” says Dolores Tatgenhorst, RN, MSN,

one of the paramedic education coordinators for FAST-MAG.

The two-hour course begins with certification of paramedics in the LAPSS, an American Heart Association-approved stroke assessment tool. Following LAPSS certification, paramedics are introduced to FAST-MAG procedures, which include assessment of the patient using a modified version of the LAPSS (mLAPSS), the consent process, and study drug administration.

The completion of paramedic training is adding the final link to the FAST-MAG research chain. “The FAST-MAG nurses enjoyed this collaboration with the paramedics, and it really feels like the researchers, nurses, and paramedics are now partners in this exciting trial,” says Tatgenhorst.

FAST-MAG in the News!

From coast to coast, word of the FAST-MAG study is spreading in print and on the airwaves! Over the past several months, news articles highlighting the study have appeared in publications such as the Los Angeles Times, the San Luis Obispo Tribune, the Provo (Utah) Daily Herald, and the Daily Hampshire (Massachusetts) Gazette. A press release, issued in September 2003, was picked up by television stations in central Pennsylvania (WTAJ-TV), Pensacola, Florida (WEAR-TV), and, by our own KCAL 9, here in Los Angeles.

Healthcare publications are also

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As of July 31, 2004, paramedic training is complete for the following Fire Departments:

Alhambra
Arcadia
Beverly Hills
Burbank
Culver City
Compton
Downey
El Segundo
Hermosa Beach
Los Angeles City
Manhattan Beach
Monrovia
Monterey Park
Pasadena
San Gabriel
Santa Monica
South Pasadena
Torrance
West Covina

Meet the FAST-MAG Nurse Coordinators

In recent weeks, paramedic training for the FAST-MAG clinical trial has rolled out at fire stations across LA County. Spearheading this effort are the FAST-MAG nurse coordinators, who, in addition to training paramedics, coordinate all study activities at participating hospitals in LA County. At full strength, this group of experienced and enthusiastic nurses numbers 18, and brings more than 250 combined years of experience from backgrounds that include ER, ICU, flight nursing, and paramedic and nursing education.

After years of caring for stroke patients who had few treatment options, the FAST-MAG nurses longed for the opportunity to make a real difference. As Gigi

Gaughran, RN, MSN, FNP chief nurse coordinator, explains, "I found myself discouraged, and looking for something that would help prevent the devastation I had seen so often in stroke patients." In



FAST-MAG, the nurses found their niche and are challenged to use their collective wealth of experience in new ways. They are excited to be a part of this groundbreaking research study, and to be working with a countywide team of paramedics, nurses, and physicians.

Paramedics may have already met some of the nurse coordinators, who have been going on ride-alongs throughout the county. Many thanks to paramedic crews from Montebello Fire Headquarters/ME 51, Altadena 11, Downey Fire 1 and 61, El Monte

167, Santa Monica 3 and 4, LA City Stations 39, 57, 63, 66, and LA County 8, 11, 14, 36, 40, 50, 173.

The nurses are unanimously enthusiastic about the warm welcome at each station, and the opportunity to

experience "a day in the life" of a paramedic. For these nurses, who are used to working in a more controlled environment, it is an eye-opening experience! Thanks to all the paramedics for their hospitality.

FAST-MAG in the News

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spreading the word, with articles featuring FAST-MAG appearing in *News Briefs*, the newsletter for the Hospital Association of Southern California, the *Journal of Emergency Medical Services (JEMS)*, and on the paramedic.com news website.

Nationwide coverage was cemented with FAST-MAG's inclusion in the *Newsweek* article, "To Save the Stricken Brain" (12/8/03), one of the top 10 health stories of 2003. The

article mentioned FAST-MAG when describing cutting edge treatments being studied for stroke.

Look for interest in FAST-MAG to increase as paramedics and receiving hospitals begin enrolling patients. Patients and health care providers in the county of Los Angeles, and scientific investigators worldwide, are eagerly awaiting word on whether magnesium may prove to be the next breakthrough in care for stroke patients. We'll keep you up-to-date!

FAST FACTOID
Stroke killed 283,000 people in the United States in 2000

UPDATES

Enrollments

Watch this space for Enrollment Updates!

New FAST-MAG Hospitals

This space will tell you what new hospitals are "ready to roll!"

For a complete list of participating hospitals, go to our website at www.fastmag.info

Be the first to enroll!

This space will list all enrolling stations since the last newsletter!

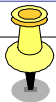
FAST-MAG CLINICAL TRIAL COORDINATING CENTER

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Visit FAST-MAG on the web!
www.fastmag.info



“Because Time is Brain”



FAST-MAG FAQ

Q: What actions of magnesium sulfate might benefit stroke patients?

A: When blood flow to a brain region is disrupted, as in ischemic stroke, a chain of events occurs which causes brain cell death. This chain includes calcium build up in brain cells and release of brain-damaging chemicals.

In laboratory and animal studies, magnesium sulfate has been shown to protect the brain by increasing blood flow to damaged areas, blocking calcium entry into brain cells, and blocking the activity of damaging chemicals.

In animal studies, magnesium was shown to decrease the amount of brain cell death by about 50% when magnesium was given within two hours of stroke onset. In FAST-MAG, paramedics play a crucial role in delivering potentially brain-sparing magnesium to patients in the critical minutes after stroke begins.

What is FAST-MAG?

FAST-MAG (Field Administration of Stroke Therapy - Magnesium) is a clinical research study designed to test whether field administration of IV magnesium sulfate by paramedics improves the outcome of stroke patients when given within two hours of stroke symptom onset.

Patients who meet study criteria, and in whom informed consent to participate is obtained, will receive a bolus of FAST-MAG study drug (magnesium or placebo) in the field, followed by a 24-hour infusion of study drug in the hospital. Patients will be assessed by FAST-MAG key personnel at designated points over the three months following their stroke.

The study will enroll 1298 patients, and will involve up to 70 Los Angeles County hospitals and more than 3,000 paramedics in 27 fire department provider agencies. The study is funded by the National Institutes of Health, and approved by the California Statewide EMS Authority and the Los Angeles County EMS Agency.