

Dystonia Medical Research Foundation

One East Wacker Drive, Suite 2430
Chicago, Illinois 60601-1905
800-377-DYST (3978)
www.dystonia-foundation.org



Leo Verhagen, MD, PhD Rush University Medical Center

Leo Verhagen, MD, PhD is a board-certified neurologist, an Associate Professor at Rush Medical College, and the Medical Director of the Neurosurgery Program for Movement Disorders at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

Dr. Verhagen specializes in the medical and surgical management of patients with Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders including dystonia. He also specializes in performing a special surgical procedure called deep brain stimulation (DBS). DBS involves inserting electrodes in the brain that are wired to a battery pack implanted in the chest or abdomen. Electrical pulses from the electrode enter the brain and, for some dystonia patients, helps alleviate symptoms. For select patients, DBS dramatically improves symptoms allowing individuals who were dependent on wheelchairs to walk and run.

At Rush, Dr. Verhagen has been involved in 30 DBS procedures for dystonia patients, 9 of which were performed on children.

In August 2007, Dr. Verhagen participated at the 4th Children & Family Dystonia Symposium hosted by the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation (DMRF). At the conference, Dr. Verhagen spoke with both parents and children about dystonia and available treatments.

Dr. Verhagen earned his medical and doctorate degrees from the University of Leiden in the Netherlands in 1983. After coming to the United States in 1985 to work in the Division of Artificial Organs at the University of Utah, he decided to pursue his interest in the Neurosciences and accepted a fellowship in the Division of Restorative Neurology and Human Neurobiology at Baylor College of Medicine in Texas. Subsequently, he did a Neurology residency at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia.

Upon completion in 1992, he accepted a fellowship at the National Institutes of Health in the Experimental Therapeutics Branch of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. After completion of this fellowship in 1994, he stayed at the NIH for another five years, first as Visiting Associate, later as Visiting Scientist. The Branch's main focus was on pharmacological studies of motor response complications in Parkinson's disease.

In 1999 he joined the Movement Disorder Section of the Department of Neurological Sciences at Rush University Medical Center, one of the largest movement disorders centers in the USA, to work with his colleagues on better treatments for dystonia, Parkinson's disease, and other movement disorders through clinical research.