INTRODUCTION

Craniocervical junction

Douglas L. Brockmeyer, MD,¹ Andrew Jea, MD,² Alan R. Cohen, MD,³ and Arnold H. Menezes, MD⁴

¹Department of Pediatric Neurosurgery, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah; ²Department of Neurosurgery, Texas Children's Hospital, Houston, Texas; ³Pediatric Neurosurgery, Children's Hospital Boston, Massachusetts; and ⁴Department of Neurosurgery, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City, Iowa

Atlas the baleful: he knows the depths of all the seas, and he, no other, guards the tall pillars that keep the sky and earth apart.

— Homer, *"The Odyssey"*

This issue of *Neurosurgical Focus* is devoted to one of the most fascinating topics in neurosurgery: the craniocervical junction (CCJ). Like Atlas, the mythological Titan who held up the celestial spheres, the structures that make up the CCJ are responsible for support and protection of the critical cervicomedullary structures within. As shown by the wide variety of topics presented in this issue, there is a vast assortment of disorders that affect this region, as well as an endless number of anatomical, embryological, and physiological factors that can influence its structure and function.

The issue begins with a review of CCJ anatomy and biomechanics by Lopez et al. We then move on to three articles concerning the radiological evaluation of the region; one each by Roy et al., Joaquim et al., and Batista et al. From there we shift to two motion-related studies, one by

Ravindra et al. and a second by Jost and Dailey. Next are several articles detailing surgical concepts and approaches to the CCJ by Dlouhy et al., Mazur et al., Eicker et al., Joaquim and Patel, Klekamp, Huang et al., and Moscovici et al. To give insight into endoscopic approaches and techniques for the CCJ are articles by Morales-Valero et al., La Corte et al., and Liu et al. Last are two articles using national and pooled data to look at surgical approaches to the CCJ and medico-economic trends concerning hospital usage, the first by Chieng et al. and the second by Kukreja et al.

We, the editors, hope that you, the reader, find this issue of *Neurosurgical Focus* interesting and informative. The 18 articles included were chosen from more than 60 submissions; all the authors are to be congratulated for their effort. But most of all, we hope you may use the knowledge herein like the mythical Atlas, using it to "guard the tall pillars that keep the sky and earth apart," improving the care of your patients and furthering the sacred duty that we all share.

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