

MRgFUS Story on KGO-TV

On Thursday, December 8, KGO TV ran a story on Magnetic Resonance-guided Focused Ultrasound (MRgFUS) as a treatment for essential tremor. This story can also be found on the KGO TV website.

Essential tremor is a chronic neurological condition that presents in patients as an involuntary shaking in a part of the body. It occurs most often in the hands and arms, but may also affect the head, voice and legs. The KGO story follows a patient from the MRgFUS clinical trial and how this patient was successfully treated non-invasively with MRgFUS. The story features Dr. Veronica Santini and Dr. Pejman Ghanouni.

What is essential tremor?

Essential tremor is a chronic neurological condition that presents in patients as an involuntary shaking in a part of the body. It occurs most often in the hands and arms, but may also affect the head, voice and legs. The tremor is often associated with purposeful movement, such as writing, buttoning clothes or holding a glass, or when the patient is maintaining a fixed position against gravity, such as when the arms are stretched out straight. The tremor is usually absent or minimal with rest and disappears during sleep.

How do I know if I have essential tremor?

If you have involuntary shaking in a part of your body, there is a possibility that you may have essential tremor. However, it is important to seek the consultation of a neurologist to correctly diagnose the essential tremor and ensure that it is correctly treated.

What are the treatment options for essential tremor?

A patient with essential tremor will have undergone a complete neurological exam to first diagnose the essential tremor and secondly to determine the best course of treatment. Some patients have successful improvement of their essential tremor on medication

alone. Other patients may need a procedure—such as MRgFUS or surgery—to correct the essential tremor. Your neurologist and neurosurgeon will determine the best course of treatment for you.

What is MRgFUS?

MRgFUS stands for Magnetic Resonance Guided Focused Ultrasound. Some patients with essential tremor may be suitable for MRgFUS. During a single procedure, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) precisely targets high intensity focused ultrasound waves through the intact skull to the ventral intermediate nucleus of the thalamus, an area of the brain that is thought to be responsible for causing tremors. MRgFUS treatment results in an immediate and durable reduction of tremor. This procedure is currently only being done to relieve tremor from one side of the body, typically in the dominant hand.

Am I a candidate for MRgFUS?

An evaluation with a neurologist and neurosurgeon is needed to correctly diagnose your tremor and determine the appropriate course of treatment.

Will insurance cover this treatment?

As insurance coverage varies by plan, please check with your insurance for details about whether they will cover this treatment.