

Conversations in Science Series

2008-2009

A partnership between The Wisconsin Initiative for Science Literacy at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, Madison Metropolitan School District, and Edgewood's Sonderegger Science Center

Thursday, March 12, 2009

**LOCATION: Sonderegger Science Center (Parking Info attached)
1000 Edgewood College Drive Madison, Wisconsin**

Professor Tracey Weigel

Chief, Thoracic Surgery, UW Hospitals

“Minimally Invasive Thoracic Oncology Surgery at UW: Technically More Difficult, but Easier for the Patient”

The Conversations in Science series brings together UW-Madison science researchers and Dane County science teachers. Designed to stimulate discussion between scientists and science educators at all levels, these conversations connect high-, middle-, and elementary school classrooms with the University's cutting-edge research. Questions and ideas are freely exchanged between expert and an audience of K-12 educators.

ABOUT THE CONVERSATION

Advances in video and robotic technology have revolutionized surgery since the first laparoscopic cholecystectomy was performed in the mid 1980's. Patients and referring physicians now prefer, and even demand, minimally invasive surgeries, regardless of their proven benefit or even safety. In the field of thoracic oncology, where overall survival for lung and esophageal carcinoma remains a dismal 8-15%, the patients who go for definitive surgical resection are the only ones who have a significant chance for cure. These new minimally invasive surgical techniques are technically more challenging for surgeons and frequently require years of training, thus there has been slow incorporation and acceptance, with only 15% of lobectomies and <5% of esophagectomies for cancer being done thoracoscopically or laparoscopically, despite the potential to significantly decrease patient perioperative morbidity. Only in the past 5 years have we finally proven that their impact on long term outcomes, i.e. survival for patients with lung and esophageal cancer is equal or superior to conventional open surgeries.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Professor Tracey Weigel came to UW-Madison from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) in 2001 to be chief of thoracic surgery. She has developed and co-directs the multidisciplinary lung and esophageal cancer programs at UW Carbone Cancer Center. Dr. Wiegel is board certified in general surgery and thoracic surgery and has completed a surgical oncology fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. She has helped develop the minimally invasive esophagectomy operation while on staff at University of Pittsburgh prior to joining MSKCC to establish a minimally invasive thoracic surgery program there. She is a member of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), American Association of Thoracic Surgeons (AATS) and American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP). In January 2009 she was awarded the Geriatric Patient Care Award by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons at the annual STS meeting in San Fran for her work on establishing a preoperative "Thoracic OncoGeriatric Assessment (TOGA) to enable physicians to better predict which geriatric patients are safe candidates for major thoracic procedures. Her current practice focuses on minimally invasive and complex thoracic oncology, primarily lung, esophageal, thymic and pleural carcinomas.