

Role of Neurosurgeons in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Neurosurgeons have restricted [operations](#) to [emergency](#) and essential [interventions](#) ¹⁾.

Some are being deployed to new intradepartmental [roles](#), others lateralized to provide [care](#) for [coronavirus](#) patients. The [reassignment](#) of staff is a common, often temporary, response to expanding coverage in a crisis.

The most experienced neurosurgeons are from the most vulnerable age groups, so their wisdom and skills may be best used via [telemedicine](#) encounters, guiding ethical decisions on appropriate [neurosurgical interventions](#), or preserved for neurosurgery-specific cases. Attendings with critical care experience may need to oversee medical ICU care. [Residents](#) adept in [neurocritical care](#) and placing central lines can undergo intensive skills training to bolster competence and confidence in intubation and ventilator management. Residents staffing neurosurgery services can work remotely when possible to place orders, write notes, call consults, and conduct virtual visits with patients, to provide a buffer in case onsite residents become ill and/or require quarantine. Many centers are assigning "contaminated" and "clean" teams to respective wards. Meanwhile, the reduction in neurosurgical patient censuses permits redeployment of remaining faculty, residents, and advanced-practice providers to support [COVID-19](#)-specific care.

In geographic locations currently facing or anticipating the wave of COVID-19 patients, neurosurgeons can begin [task sharing](#) to strengthen workforce systems, while continuing to triage operative cases and invest in contingency plans if the pandemic is prolonged ²⁾.

1)

European Association of Neurosurgical Societies. EANS advice: Triageing non-emergent neurosurgical procedures during the COVID-19 outbreak. Accessed April 6, 2020.

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.eans.org/resource/resmgr/documents/corona/eans_advice2020_corona.pdf

2)

Robertson FC, Lippa L, Broekman MLD. Editorial. Task shifting and task sharing for neurosurgeons amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. J Neurosurg. 2020 Apr 17:1-3. doi: 10.3171/2020.4.JNS201056. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 32302998; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC7164328.

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