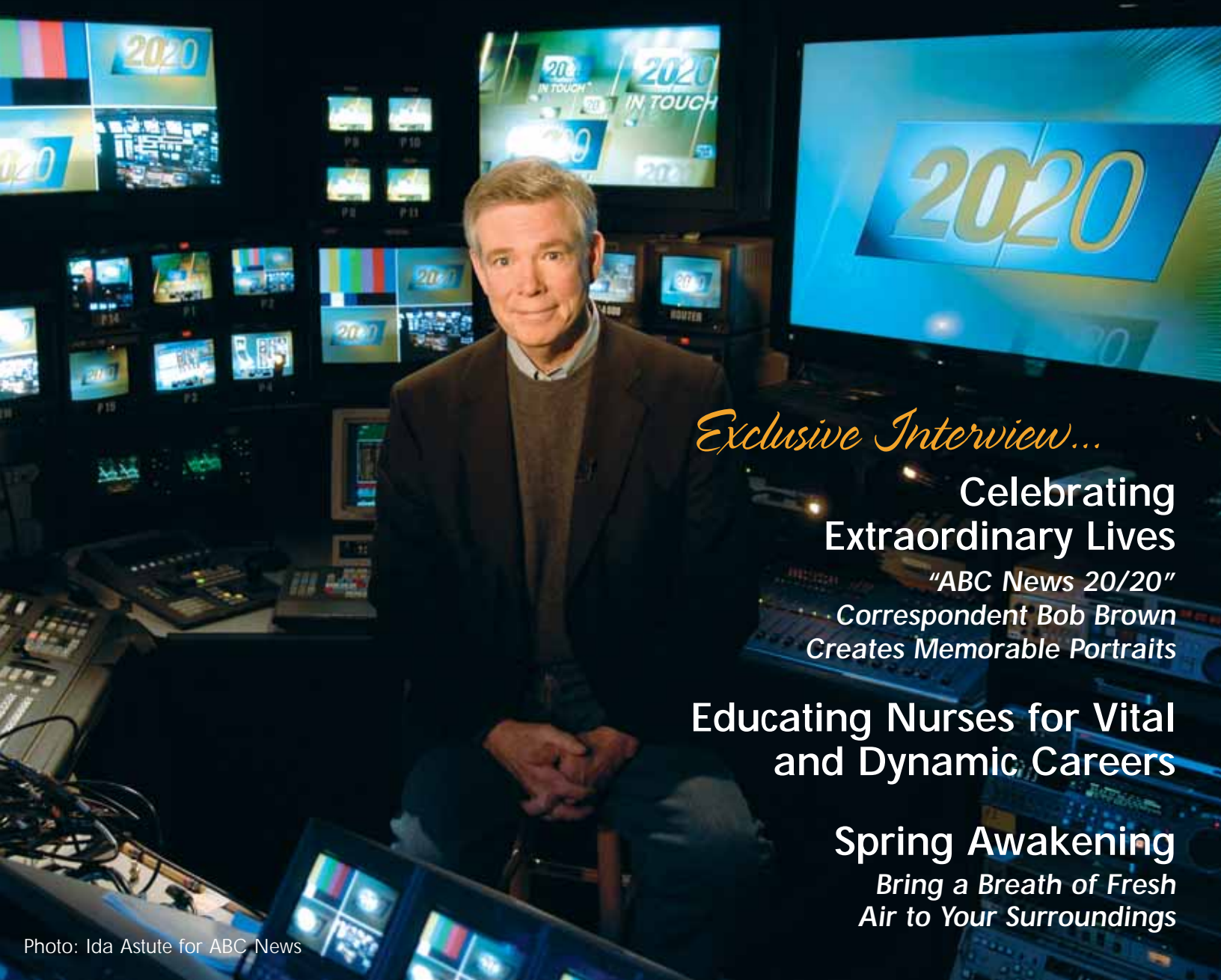


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Spring 2008



Exclusive Interview...

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Spring Awakening

*Bring a Breath of Fresh
Air to Your Surroundings*

Easing the Grip of Incontinence

Innovative, Minimal Surgeries at Trinitas Target Prolapse and Both Forms of Female Urinary Incontinence by Rena Kotik-Sandberg

INNOVATIVE SURGERIES RELIEVE PAIN

Fifty-eight year old Robyn Blake (*name has been changed*) of Bayonne experienced the unfortunate, nagging symptoms of urinary incontinence for more than five years. "It's not easy to always have to worry about where the bathroom is," she says. An astounding 33 million Americans suffer from overactive bladder, a condition in which persistent, powerful urges to urinate cause the bladder to empty involuntarily.

Fortunately, a revolutionary procedure called InterStim® Therapy is offered at Trinitas Hospital for those who have been unsuccessful with behavioral or pharmacological therapies and wish to treat nonobstructive urinary retention and the symptoms of overactive bladder. This effective system controls urinary problems by sending mild electrical pulses to the sacral nerve, located near the tailbone. The electrical stimulation greatly reduces or eliminates certain bladder control symptoms including urinary urge incontinence and urgency frequency.

Robyn was overcome with liberation three days after undergoing a test-implant procedure performed by Labib E. Riachi, MD, a specialist in advanced pelvic surgery and female urinary incontinence at Trinitas Hospital. "Today is the first day I didn't have to wear an undergarment!" Robyn exclaims. "For me, this is such a big deal."

And what a big deal it is. After a number of medications failed to improve her condition, Robyn is now able to sleep through the night without having

to urinate. "That hasn't happened in a long, long time," she reported.

Urogynecologist Dr. Riachi performs this minimally-invasive surgery in two stages. "The procedure first requires a test implant," he explains. This test allows the patient to examine the efficacy of the system as well as determine the viability of the therapy. "A soft wire is placed near the tailbone and is attached to a small, portable device," he continues. Stimulation is applied to the sacral nerve and the device is carefully tuned to a voltage specific to the patient's needs.

The patient then returns home with this temporary system, ultimately deciding whether she is a candidate for the permanent implant. If the patient experiences a significant decrease in problematic symptoms and is satisfied with the test results, she returns in approximately one week for the second procedure, also performed on an outpatient basis.

Sixty-nine year old Claudia Knapp of Roselle Park was the first patient at Trinitas Hospital to undergo the InterStim procedure after suffering with urinary urge incontinence – among other urinary complications – for a number of years. After conventional

therapies failed to alleviate the problem, she was referred to Dr. Riachi who performed her test-implant surgery. She quickly experienced positive change.

"Within a day or two I noticed significant improvement," Claudia reported. The second procedure involves the permanent placement of the InterStim neurostimulator. Dr. Riachi describes this neurostimulator as a "pacemaker of the bladder." It is attached to a lead and typically implanted in the buttock area under the skin. Patients generally do not experience much pain and can return to work the next day.

Clinical studies show that InterStim Therapy patients experience improved quality of life in terms of physical functioning, physical health status and mental health. "I can now get to the bathroom without having any accidents," says Robyn. "If I stay like this, I will be very happy."

Through such procedures, Dr. Riachi hopes to break the taboo against talking about urinary incontinence and offer hope to those who suffer from this common condition. "We are now starting to open the gates to let women know that when everything else fails, we have another solution." ▲▲

InterStim Therapy is completely reversible. For those who wish to discontinue treatment, they may do so without any permanent damage to the nerves. InterStim is not intended for patients with symptoms of stress incontinence; nor is it designated for those with mechanical obstructions such as benign prostatic hypertrophy, urethral strictures or cancer. For more information on InterStim Therapy at Trinitas Hospital, please call (908) 282-2000.

97-YEAR-OLD PATIENT OPTS FOR SURGERY

Trinitas Hospital helps to treat stress incontinence and improve her quality of life

Just three weeks before her 97th birthday, Antonette discovered that it's never too late to take steps to improve one's quality of life. And in so doing, the Elizabeth resident became the oldest person in the United States to receive minimally invasive surgery for the treatment of urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse.

Antonette's condition resulted in her being admitted to the hospital week after week. "I felt so terrible," said Labib E. Riachi, MD, a urogynecologist at Trinitas Hospital. "Why should she suffer when treatment is available?"

Dr. Riachi performed the TVM (Total Vaginal Mesh Plasty) surgery, which requires total reconstruction of the vagina, as well as the minimally-invasive Gynecare TVT-Obturator procedure that treats female incontinence under regional anesthesia. She was sent home 36 hours later.

"It was heartwarming to see her face after the surgery," said Dr. Riachi. At 97 years of age, Antonette has begun a new phase in her life. "She says she feels like a new woman," said Antonette's daughter-in-law and primary caretaker. She continued, "Dr. Riachi explained everything very well; he was concerned and understanding. We are very pleased with [Antonette's] outcome. I would recommend this surgery to anyone." As far as Antonette's outlook on her future, she seems quite positive. "I'm glad to be home," Antonette reported.

This new, cutting-edge TVT-O procedure performed at Trinitas Hospital offers hope to women who suffer from urinary stress incontinence. An overwhelming 13 million women in the United States live with urinary incontinence — a condition that results in an inability to hold urine. Generally associated with aging, incontinence can be a problem for women of all ages, especially those who have experienced childbirth.



Photo courtesy of The Star-Ledger

Dr. Riachi, who has studied with pioneering physicians in France and Belgium, has become one of the first in the nation to successfully perform the TVT-O procedure that treats female incontinence. Performed primarily under local anesthesia, TVT-O is placed in a passage away from the urethra and bladder to reduce the possibility of injury to these organs. Mesh is placed without tension underneath the urethra, which creates a supportive sling. Over time, the body's tissue grows into the mesh and makes it permanently secure. Dr. Riachi can often complete the surgery in ten minutes. "I have a very efficient team," he said, adding, "Most patients find themselves returning to normal activities within two days."

Dr. Riachi notes that urinary inconti-

nence can be devastating socially. "Many women feel that it is socially unacceptable and we want to make them aware that treatment is available."

The success rate of the TVT surgery is at an impressive 90 percent, with the risk of rejection from foreign bodies at a mere one percent. The TVM procedure's success rate is approximately 80 percent over five years, while the risk of rejection is at 4.7 percent. ▲▲

At Trinitas, a teaching hospital for pelvic surgery, Dr. Riachi and his team have performed more than 720 TVT procedures and more than 250 TVM procedures. For more information about minimally invasive surgery for female urinary incontinence and prolapse at Trinitas Hospital, call **908-282-2000**.

"Freedom from Incontinence"

An Informative Seminar for Women about TVT-O minimally invasive surgery

Speaker: **Labib E. Riachi, MD**

Internationally renowned specialist in treating problems associated with stress incontinence

Friday, June 6, 2008 – 11:30 AM

Charlie Brown's Steakhouse; 2376 North Avenue, Scotch Plains, New Jersey
For information, call (908) 282-2000