

What do neurologists do for entertainment? They will play 'Neurobowl'

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One of the highlights of the annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology is "Neurobowl," a competition modeled after TV quiz shows.

Like a quiz show, Neurobowl awards points for answering questions quickly and accurately, and subtracts points for wrong answers. The tougher the question, the higher the point value.

Panelists are asked to diagnose perplexing neurological conditions, based on symptoms, video clips, X-rays, etc. Every so often, the host will toss out a pop culture question with a medical angle. For example: On the old TV doctor show, who played the title role of Dr. Ben Casey? (Answer: Vince Edwards.)

The big question this year: Will the perennial championship team known as the All-Stars be able to hold off tough challengers to win for the eighth time in 11 years?

"Our team has been winning the Neurobowl for many years, but we are aging, so you never know what may happen," said All-Star Dr. Jose Biller, chairman of the Department of Neurology, Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine in Maywood, Il.

About 3,000 neurologists and neurological professionals are expected to watch the friendly competition. This year's Neurobowl will be held Sunday, April 26 at the 61st AAN Annual Meeting in Seattle. The

academy is an association with more than 21,000 neurologists and [neuroscience](#) professionals.

In the preliminary round, the East Team will face the West Team, with the winner taking on the All-Stars. AANnews, the Academy's newsletter, says Neurobowl competitors are among "the best and brightest in neurology."

Each team has five members. In addition to Biller, the All-Stars include Dr. Anthony Lang of the University of Toronto, Dr. Nancy Newman of Emory University, Dr. Marc Patterson of the Mayo Clinic and Dr. James Russell of the Lahey Clinic near Boston. Each All-Star has a different strength. Lang is strong in movement disorders, Newman in neuro-ophthalmology, Patterson in pediatric neurology, Russell in neuromuscular disease and Biller in stroke. Russell is making his first appearance as an All-Star.

Even for neurologists, some of the questions can be brain teasers. A man has abdominal pain and loses skin on the palms of his hands and soles of his feet. What is the diagnosis? (Answer: arsenic neuropathy.) A 17-year-old girl falls from a horse and develops a headache. (Cerebrospinal fluid hypotension syndrome.) A lung cancer patient suffers progressive weakness and numbness in the legs. (Leptomeningeal carcinomatosis.)

And there's the occasional oddball question -- like the one about the dog with the neuromuscular disease myasthenia gravis.

"You have to have a good sense of humor," Biller said. "It's entertainment."

Source: Loyola University Health System ([news](#) : [web](#))

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