

More patients will suffer stroke, dementia, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy: neurologists

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As the population ages, neurologists will be challenged by a growing population of patients with stroke, dementia, Parkinson's disease and epilepsy.

The expected increase in these and other age-related neurologic disorders is one of the trends that Loyola University Health System neurologists Dr. José Biller and Dr. Michael J. Schneck describe in a January 2011 article in the journal *Frontiers in Neurology*.

In the past, treatment options were limited for patients with neurological disorders. "Colloquially, the neurologist would 'diagnose and adios,' " Biller and Schneck wrote in the article, titled "The Future of Neurology."

But now neurologists are seeing an "explosive growth in potential medical therapies," including new drugs, stem-cell technology, gene therapies and treatments that suppress the immune system, Biller and Schneck wrote.

New tests and treatments have led to an "explosion of opportunity, with both increased demand for neurologists and an increased number of people interested in the field."

Traditionally, neurologists relied on their clinical skills and experience to diagnose neurological disorders. But now [neurologists](#) are increasingly relying on new diagnostic tests.

Diagnostic testing "has superseded the neurologic history and physical examination, which were never as accurate as we cared to admit," Biller and Schneck wrote. "We respectfully suggest that the future of neurology will be critically dependent on harmonizing the tensions between clinical skills and an over-reliance on testing paradigms."

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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