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Interview with Rita Brooks about the past, present, and future of US sleep medicine

Could you introduce yourself and tell us a bit about your professional and academic background?

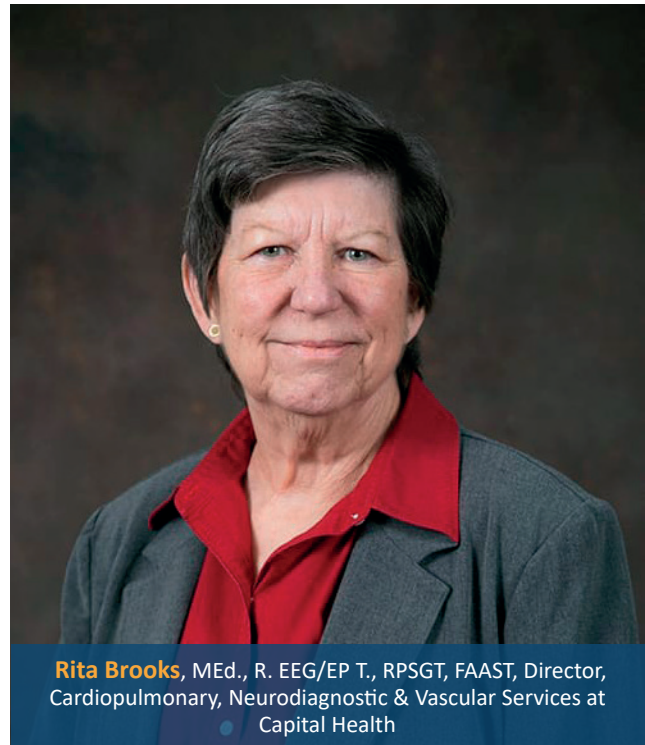
I am the Administrative Director of the Sleep Center, Neurophysiology, Cardiology, Pulmonary Function Lab, Vascular Laboratory, LTM Epilepsy Unit, Audiology, Cardiopulmonary and Vascular Rehabilitation Services, and Interventional Pulmonary Services at Capital Health in Trenton, NJ. I started my career at Capital Health as an EEG technologist trainee, became a manager, and then an administrative director, serving in this role since 1998. I have 42 years of experience in Neurodiagnostic and 34 years of experience in sleep technology.

I have been very fortunate to have had support from Capital Health leadership over many years to continue my education and grow in my professional career, earning an AS in Neurophysiology, BSBA in Healthcare Administration, and a Master's in Education. Over the years I developed many of the services that I am currently responsible for including the Sleep Center, Audiology, the LTM Epilepsy Unit, Pulmonary and Vascular Rehab, and the Interventional Pulmonary program.

I am very proud to say that Capital Health has also supported all of my professional endeavors in the world of sleep medicine, including working at the state level to enact legislation for sleep technologists in New Jersey, assist with legislation efforts in other states, and serve as a leader at the state and national level. I have been involved in supporting and representing sleep technologists since 2003, serving on the American Association of Sleep Technologists (AAST) Board of Directors from 2007 until 2020. I have also been professionally involved with the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) since 2009, serving on several committees, most notably as a Scoring Manual Committee Member and then Editorial Board Member from 2009 through 2017, and presenting at national meetings. I am currently working with the Scoring Manual Committee to edit the next edition of the scoring manual being published early next year.

How important is the American Association of Sleep Technologists (AAST) for standardizing and improving US sleep exams and diagnoses?

The AAST sets the standards for the education of sleep technologists, providing technical guidelines based on AASM standards and guidelines, developing learning materials suitable for sleep technologists from entry-level to expert level, and publishing the *Fundamentals of Sleep Technology* textbook and workbook. The AAST has many members who also volunteered with the Board of Polysomnographic Technology (BRPT) developing and supporting technologist



Rita Brooks, MED., R. EEG/EP T., RPSGT, FAAST, Director, Cardiopulmonary, Neurodiagnostic & Vascular Services at Capital Health

credentialing examinations. These examinations are based on many of the resources AAST has developed, in particular the *Fundamentals of Sleep Technology* textbook, now in its 3rd edition.

To what extent have you worked/developed with the Association of Sleep Technologists (AAST) as a member and president?

As a member of AAST starting in 1989 (when it was known as APT), I relied on the organization for my education for many years, attending all national and many regional meetings as we were learning sleep technology and building our sleep centers. I used much of the material developed by the AAST to educate myself and my team and to assist technologists we were training to prepare for the RPSGT credential. As a member of the board of directors, one of the first things I was involved in was assisting to develop technologist training materials, including study guides, flashcards, and practice exams for those preparing for the credentialing exam.

I served as Board Liaison for the Governmental Affairs Committee and the Educational Products Committee before my two terms as AAST President from 2013 to 2015 and 2017 to 2019. During my tenure on the AAST Board of Directors I also collaborated with Dr. Richard Rosenberg and Cynthia Mattice to publish the AAST's *A Technologist's Guide to Performing Sleep Studies* and with Cynthia Mattice and

Dr. Teofilo Lee-Chiong as a co-editor of the *Fundamentals of Sleep Technology*, 2nd edition in 2012, the *Fundamentals of Sleep Technology Workbook* in 2015 and the *Fundamentals of Sleep Technology*, 3rd edition in 2019 along with contributing to several chapters in these publications and contributing to several other textbooks. We at the AAST are extremely proud of these excellent publications, with many chapters contributed by our esteemed members, that serve as the backbone of learning for sleep technologists and as reference works for the development of credentialing examinations. AAST continues to develop learning tools for technologists at all levels, including advanced training in pediatrics and PAP titration and specifically for those seeking the Certified Clinical Sleep Health (CCSH) credential offered by the BRPT.

What was your contribution to the development of "The AASM Manual for the Scoring of Sleep and Associated Events" and on which topics did you focus the most?

I served on the AASM Scoring Manual committee as a Scoring Manual Committee Member and then Editorial Board Member from 2009 through 2017, contributing to versions 2.0, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 of that publication. During my tenure on the AASM Scoring Manual Board, my contributions to the scoring manual updates included adding the technical and patient calibration rules and the Home Sleep Apnea Testing (HSAT) section of the scoring manual. I am currently working with the Scoring Manual Committee to edit the next edition of the scoring manual being published early next year.

In your opinion what are the biggest challenges for professionals who work as sleep technicians in the US?

In 2021 the AAST conducted a workforce assessment to better understand current and anticipated market conditions in the field of sleep technology and to guide educational planning for sleep technologists in the US. Education is one of the biggest challenges for those in the field and AAST is well-positioned to address the educational gaps that were identified. As a result, educational programs and tools focused on pediatric polysomnography and the expanded Certified Clinical Sleep Health (CCSH) role were developed to support growth in these areas. Higher level technical education related to PAP titration and virtual patient monitoring was also developed, to meet the need to develop the clinical role of the sleep technologist. As technology has advanced, there is also more focus on home sleep apnea testing (HSAT) for certain patient populations. AAST is also developing education to improve the use of this technology in appropriate circumstances and support the role of technologists in educating and managing patients being tested at home and recording and analyzing these studies.

Has your experience shown that it is advantageous for the patient, doctor, and sleep technician to perform home PSG/HST exams?

"Sleep labs need to widen their horizons and focus on a variety of sleep disorders, not just sleep apnea. I am fortunate to work with physicians who see many patients with movement disorders, insomnia, neurological disorders such as REM behavior disorder, seizure disorders, parasomnias, and pediatric patients."

Following guidelines established by the AASM, we at Capital Health have used home sleep apnea testing (HSAT) for more than ten years to test those patients that meet criteria that suggest moderate to severe sleep apnea. In this selected population, HSAT is an excellent tool that allows faster turn-around time for diagnosis and treatment of these patients.

In your opinion what is the future of sleep medicine in the USA?

Sleep medicine continues to grow and develop in many ways. I believe that HSAT and likely even full PSG in the home will expand our ability to diagnose patients with sleep disorders. New technologies such as Inspire and collaboration with physicians providing this solution for sleep apnea patients are expanding the need for in-lab testing and titration. Many sleep centers are partnering with dental practices to offer oral appliance therapies. There is also an expansion of testing in pediatric patients as well as an influx of patients with many sleep disorders beyond OSA.

In your opinion how should sleep labs adapt in the future to survive?

Sleep labs need to widen their horizons and focus on a variety of sleep disorders, not just sleep apnea. I am fortunate to work with physicians who see many patients with movement disorders, insomnia, neurological disorders such as REM behavior disorder, seizure disorders, parasomnias, and pediatric patients. We do MSLT and MWT testing during the day and work closely with patients struggling with PAP treatment to improve their adherence to therapy and their health. Sleep labs need to be health-focused, not OSA-focused. We do full seizure and parasomnia monitoring as well as accept pediatric patients aged one year and older.

Since what year have you been working with Neurovirtual?

We have been working with Neurovirtual since 2014 when we replaced 14 beds and numerous reader stations in our two accredited sleep centers with this system.

Could you comment on your experience with the Neurovirtual?

Since our initial demo of Neurovirtual equipment, we have worked with the same core team from the company. During our initial setup and implementation of the new system, key employees were onsite and provided excellent support for staff and physicians, as well as operationalizing custom reports to meet our extensive reporting requirements. The team has been responsive throughout our experience with them.

Could you comment about how has it been your experience with Neurovirtual's BWIII PSG Plus equipment, which is used in Capital Health?

The primary reason we decided to go with Neurovirtual's system when we upgraded was the quality of the EEG signals. My original background is in EEG and although most sleep systems provide an adequate EEG recording, the quality of the EEG on this system was excellent and useful as we frequently test patients with neurological issues and pediatric patients with possible seizures, using a full EEG montage.

How has Capital Health's experience been with Neurovirtual's technical support?

Technical support has been good, getting increasingly better over the years. As with all systems, there have been glitches, and times when we thought we had lost a study, but the technical team has been able to recover data for us and we have been happy with the system's data management process. Working through several score sets (night tech, scoring tech, physician)

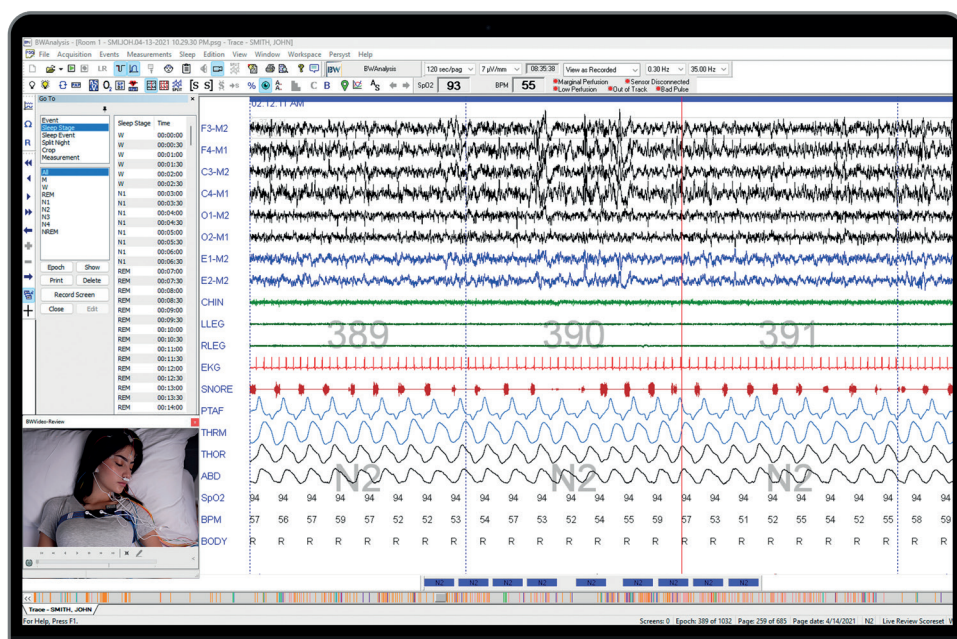
“We recommend Neurovirtual to those who are looking for a stable system with excellent EEG (suitable for clinical EEG recordings) and the flexibility to utilize numerous recording montages and custom reporting of specialized data.”

when processing our studies has been straightforward and easier to manage than in some other systems we have used, so we like the data management features of the system.

We recently worked through an essential Windows upgrade and a Neurovirtual software upgrade with hands-on assistance from the technical team. They are also working with us to incorporate additional parameters now required for reporting into our numerous report templates.

Would you recommend Neurovirtual to other technicians and doctors?

We have been happy with the system as well as the support we have received from Neurovirtual and have discussed its merits and our experiences with the system and the company with others who have inquired. We recommend Neurovirtual to those who are looking for a stable system with excellent EEG (suitable for clinical EEG recordings) and the flexibility to utilize numerous recording montages and custom reporting of specialized data. We are considering this system as a replacement for our current clinical EEG system.



The Chilean Society of Sleep Medicine organizes two simultaneous courses for health professionals



Valeria Valencia (Sales Engineer), Dra. Evelyn Benavides (President of the Chilean Society of Sleep Medicine), and Dubraska Quevedo (Sales Executive Argentina).

The amount of knowledge that can be shared over an entire day is immeasurable. Therefore, the IX Course of Sleep Medicine and the II Course of Sleep Medicine for Primary Health Care were both a success. The two pieces of training were coordinated by the Chilean Society of Sleep

Medicine (SOCHIMES) and offered on September 30th in Las Condes, Metropolitan Region of Santiago, Chile.

Neurovirtual, in addition to being one of the exponents of this great event, also helped to spread the Chilean Society's initiative to promote Sleep Medicine among health professionals. In the time between the modules, participants had the opportunity to take a look at BWIII PSG PLUS, BWIII PSG, and HST COMPASS equipment, three amazing solutions designed to diagnose sleep disorders. The Chilean Society of Sleep Medicine's (SOCHIMES) president, Dr. Evelyn Benavides, was one of the renowned doctors received by the Neurovirtual team in its space.

According to the representatives of the American brand, Valeria Valencia and Dubraska Quevedo, despite being an event with a small audience, it was a great opportunity to share with professionals in the field of sleep medicine from all over Chile. Several of them were interested in home solutions, thanks to their convenience and ease of installation.

One more step towards humanized and shared medicine!

Neurovirtual stands out as one of the most influential brands at the Argentine Congress of Neurology

Neurovirtual was at the 59th Argentine Congress of Neurology, reinforcing its presence and marketing position in Latin America. On this occasion, the brand stood out as one of the main sponsors of neurological diagnostic equipment. The event took place November 15th to 18th, 2022, at the Sheraton Mar del Plata hotel, in Argentina.

More than 2,000 visitors, including industry doctors, visited Neurovirtual's stand during the 4 days. The company's team had the opportunity to expand the brand's database, in addition to showing the devices that help in the diagnosis of Neurology such as BWIII EEG PLUS and BWMini EEG, including supplies. Regarding the congress programming, the EEG video course for the diagnosis of epilepsy stands out, an activity with an interactive system taught by Dr. Brenda Gigante and Dr. Facundo Latini.

Important doctors in the field of neurology visited the stand to learn about the company's products, such as Dr. Roberto Arbelaiz, Dr. Arturo Garay, Dr. Stella Valiensi, and Dr. Maria Belén Viaggio. Other customers also came to learn about Neurovirtual news. The president of the Argentine Congress of Neurology, Dr. Marcelo Rugiero, the



Dr. Roberto de Arbelaiz (Neurologist at Hospital Alemán) and Dubraska Quevedo (Sales Executive Argentina).

vice president, Lucas Romano, and Dr. Mariela Bettini are responsible for the meeting, which included an organizing committee and a scientific committee made up of recognized medical experts on the subject. [Click here to learn about Neurovirtual products and new equipment.](#)



Neurovirtual hosts dinner with renowned sleep physicians in Brazil, promoting the brand's presence in South America and throughout the world

Sleep medicine has gained even more prominence with the Sleep Congress held from November 30th and December 3rd in Goiânia. Neurovirtual hosted a dinner where the company's global positioning was presented to guests. Neurovirtual stands out as a leading company in the development of equipment used in sleep medicine and neurology, with the main objective of humanizing diagnosis.

Currently considered one of the five in the sector of EEG and PSG diagnostic equipment, Neurovirtual is recognized by prominent international universities through the development of research that has proven the quality of its products.

The "Neurovirtual of the World to Brazil" dinner, held at Grá Bistro on December 2nd, received over 60 guests, including renowned specialists and speakers. The CEO and President of Neurovirtual, Ed Faria, reminded attendees that the company has been in Brazil for decades and is consolidating its position in the country every year. Worldwide, Neurovirtual is exponentially expanding its business in countries such as the United States, Germany, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Peru, and with offices to be opened in Spain and Canada, as well as having a distribution network in more than 50 countries.

According to the president of Neurovirtual, this event was an opportunity to show that the brand is an important player in the market and has a competitive position in the area of sleep medicine in Brazil and other countries. "This is the first time we have organized a large-scale dinner in Brazil, although we have held similar meetings in other Latin American countries. We had the opportunity to bring in important client testimonials, as well as share presentations of some scientific studies published by important universities around the world," emphasized Faria, while also confirming the fact that Neurovirtual's strategy is 100% focused on the client.

The doctors present at the dinner were able to hear testimonials from clients of renowned institutions such as Dr. Diego Garcia-Borreguero (Sleep Institute – Spain), Dr. Thomas Penzel (Charité University of Berlin – Germany), Rita Brooks (Capital Health System – USA), and Danielle Livelsberger (Ohio State University – USA).



Dra. Magda Lahorgue Nunes (Pediatric Neurologist), Dr. Geraldo Rizzo (Specialist in Neurology, Neurophysiology and Sleep Medicine - Director of Sonolab), and Dra. Stella Marcia Tavares (Clinical Neurophysiologist, Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein).



Ed Faria (CEO & President Neurovirtual) and Dra. Magda Lahorgue Nunes (Pediatric Neurologist).



Ed Faria (CEO & President Neurovirtual).



19th Brazilian Sleep Congress presents Neurovirtual's exhibition of polysomnography equipment



Alex Oliveira (Commercial Manager Neurovirtual Brazil) and Ed Faria (CEO & President Neurovirtual).

Neurovirtual displays the following equipment: Polysomnography – BWIII PSG Plus, BWMini PSG, BWMini HST, Compass HST, and the BWIII PSG. Neurovirtual's clinical director, Sandro Senra, and sales manager, Alex Oliveira, accompanied Neurovirtual's CEO, Ed Faria, in demonstrating their latest products at their company stand. Some Neurovirtual associate doctors who visited the space were Dr. Geraldo Rizzo, Dr. Nonato, and neurologist Ester London.

The congress had 7 international and 162 national speakers, 9 pre-congress courses, 3 simultaneous plenary sessions, 3 conferences, 7 symposiums, poster presentations, and a meeting of Academic Sleep Leagues. These topics stand out from the event's agenda: Polysomnography in children: Sleep Stagnation and Associated Events, by Dr. Gustavo A Moreira; Sleep Exams and Diagnoses: How to

The importance of sleep for health and quality of life should always be taken into account, especially when considering the rush of day to day. Neurovirtual values these principles and always seeks to be present at the main conferences in the world of sleep medicine. Presenting the strides being made by Neurovirtual in the area of sleep, always thinking of client and patient. In 2022 it was no different. Neurovirtual participated in the 19th Brazilian Sleep Congress held from November 30 to December 3, 2022, at the Convention Center in Brazil.

Neurovirtual's president, Ed Faria, was at the event and highlighted the importance of the brand being present among so many renowned doctors and speakers. "Since 2017 we have participated in this congress. We are a company focused on and specializing in sleep medicine and neurology. And being in spaces like this allows for discussions and scientific collaborations on PSG and the diagnoses of sleep disorders. With so much shared knowledge, we can improve our team and services, always thinking about client and patient." The president of the Brazilian Sleep Congress, Giuliana Macedo Mendes, reinforced the sentiment of president Ed Faria, stating "The great message of this Congress is patients with Sleep Disorders must be cared for in an individual, personalized, and practical way".

Interpret Polysomnography, by Dr. George do Lago Pinheiro; and Interpretation of the Polysomnography report, Dr. Stella Marcia Azevedo Tavares.



Sandro Senra (Clinical Specialist), Dr. Ester London (Neurologist) and Alex Oliveira (Commercial Manager Neurovirtual Brazil).

Neurovirtual participates, on average, in 20 to 30 congresses and conferences in different countries around the globe. Taking our goal to humanize the diagnostic, we pride ourselves on being part of this community and being able to give our contribution to clinicians and patients.

Below you will find the list of events for 2023 where Neurovirtual will be presenting its solutions to make neurology and sleep diagnostics more human! We hope to see you there!

The **BWIII EEG Plus ICU Brain Monitor** is an all-in-one cart based system which can perform routine EEG, LTM, and ICU Monitoring for increased mobility demands.



USA

SLEEP 2023

Indianapolis, IN
June 3-7, 2023

BRAZIL

XIV Paulista Congress of Neurology

Santos, SP
May 31 - June 3, 2023

XXIX Congress of Clinical Neurophysiology

Manaus, AM
October 11-14, 2023

World Sleep Society

Rio de Janeiro, RJ
October 21-25, 2023

COLOMBIA

15th Colombian Congress of Pediatric Neurology

Barranquilla
June 9-12, 2023

MEXICO

32nd Annual Congress of the Mexican Society of Pediatric Neurology

Chihuahua
May 13 - 20, 2023

XLV Annual Meeting of the Mexican Chapter of the International League Against Epilepsy

León
August 8 - 12, 2023

LATAM

XVI Pan-American Congress of Neurology

Lima, Peru
June 8 - 10, 2023

VIII Chilean Congress of Sleep Medicine

Concepción, Chile
August 17 - 18, 2023

60th Argentine Congress of Neurology

Santiago del Estero, Argentina
September 26 - 29, 2023

Latin American Symposium on QEEG and Video EEG

Lima, Peru
September 28 - 30, 2023

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