

MEDICAL MARVELS

The 24 people who

For this skilled surgical team, work is a challenging matter of daily life and death



ROBYN RILEY

Health Reporter

JEFFREY Rosenfeld will listen to classical music. Simon Harvey may grab a quick coffee.

Elizabeth Grimmer will probably look forward to a long, hot bath, while Margaret Zacharin will know the hard work still lies ahead.

These Victorians are part of a team of 24 that will help save British boy Sebastian Selo on Tuesday week.

In a five-hour operation, neurosurgeon Professor Rosenfeld and epilepsy specialist Dr Harvey will head the team from the Royal Children's Hospital — a team determined to give Sebastian back a life.

But when you ask Professor Rosenfeld or Dr Harvey for the idiosyncrasies of their pre-operation routines, both say they do nothing special.

"It is all in a day's work," said Dr Harvey, 39. "I really do not do anything unusual to relax or prepare because this is what I do, what I am trained to do."

His role in the operation to remove a rare tumour from Sebastian's brain is to help the surgeon work out how much of the tumour needs to be taken. He will be in theatre for about an hour and a half.

"I might grab a coffee afterwards," he said. "But I do not need any stimulation to maintain my level of concentration during the operation."

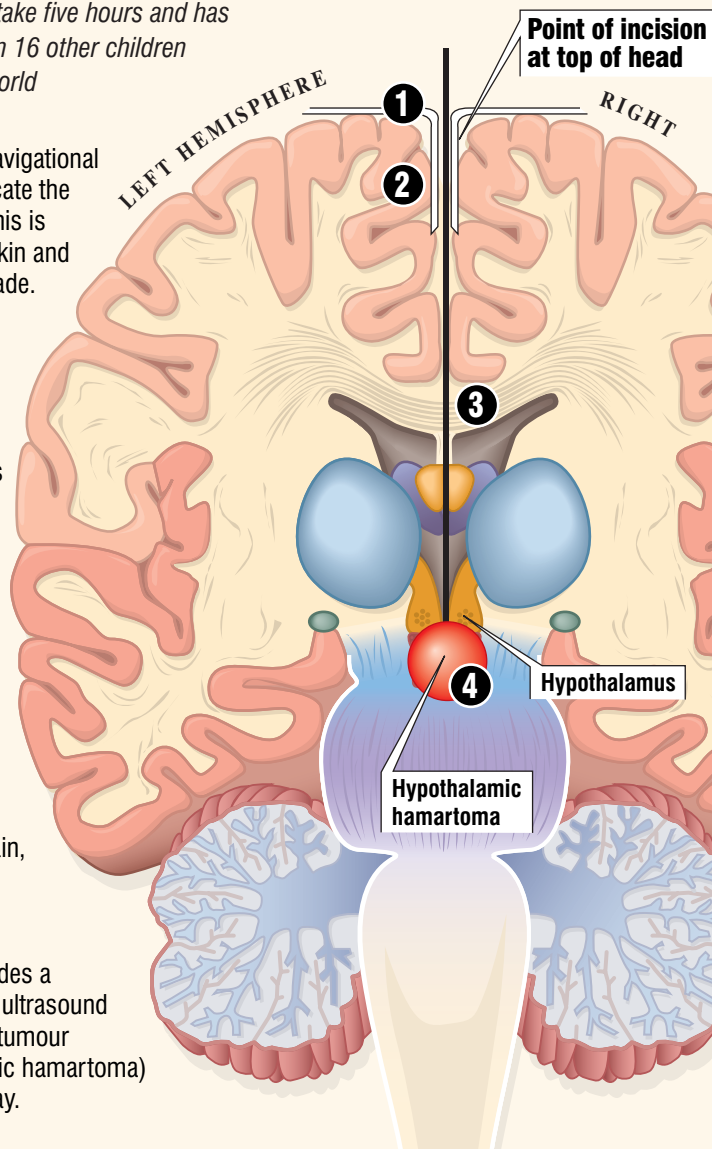
You can be sure there will be no heavy rock or any music, for that matter, when Professor Rosenfeld operates. He cannot stand music playing in the background when he is working.

A professional clarinetist (he was a member of the Australian Doctors' Orchestra), Professor

THE PROCEDURE

The operation will take five hours and has been performed on 16 other children from around the world

- 1 Surgeon uses navigational equipment to locate the point of entry. This is marked on the skin and an incision is made.
- 2 Special bone-cutting tools are used to cut a 5cm square and the surgeon cuts down to the dura, the lining of the brain.
- 3 A microscope is placed in position and the surgeon enters from the top of the head down through the two halves of the brain, the right and left hemispheres.
- 4 The surgeon guides a probe, called an ultrasound aspirator, to the tumour (the hypothalamic hamartoma) and sucks it away.



sn/Sunday Herald Sun 10/6/2001

Rosenfeld, 48, said listening to music distracted him.

He said the day of Sebastian's operation would start the same as any other.

"I will be up at six as usual, at work by seven and ready for surgery in the afternoon," he said.

Although he will try to get a reasonable night's sleep, if he is on call he may be lucky to grab a few hours.

"(But) I am used to it," he said. "The morning will start with rounds and teaching. Hopefully I will have time for lunch and then I will head to theatre. This is what I

do. I deal with life and death. It is my job."

Professor Rosenfeld describes himself as a calm person who has no difficulty handling stress.

But at the end of the day he likes to relax with his three children aged six, eight and 10.

"I like to read, listen to music and be with my family," he said.

Professor Rosenfeld will be with Sebastian for the entire operation. And for all of that time, he will be on his feet.

"I do try to wear comfortable shoes," he said. "(But) like most

neurosurgeons, I do not look after myself as much as I should."

For nurse Elizabeth Grimmer the operation will be the culmination of six months of work, but not the end of her role.

She has co-ordinated Sebastian's care from the time the family contacted the hospital last December and it will be her responsibility until the day he leaves the hospital, around the middle of next month.

Others have also had a long association. Endocrinologist Dr Margaret Zacharin will start her work all over again when

Sebastian has recovered from surgery. The tumour is located next to the pituitary gland and children often develop hormonal problems. Dr Zacharin will again need to check if the patient will need hormone replacement therapy.

"Then there are other doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists and play therapists," Dr Harvey said.

"We all have a role in helping Sebastian recover. We pull together and hope we can make a difference."

THE TEAM



Part of the team that will care for Sebastian Selo

IN THEATRE

Surgeon: Professor Jeffrey Rosenfeld.

Epilepsy specialist: Dr Simon Harvey.

Neurological registrar: Dr Martin Wood — assists surgeon.

Researcher: Dr Jeremy Freeman — assists Dr Harvey.

Three theatre nurses: One specialist assists surgeons and two will sterilise theatre equipment.

Theatre technician: Makes sure MRI (brain scan) navigation equipment and microscope work.

Anaesthetist: Will put Sebastian to sleep and monitor him throughout operation.

Anaesthetist technician: Assists and monitors equipment.

EEG technologist: Catherine Bailey. Electronically records abnormal electrical activity from hamartoma and brain.

BEFORE AND AFTER OPERATION

Epilepsy nursing specialist: Elizabeth Grimmer. Co-ordinates operation.

Neuropsychologist: Jacquie Wrennall. Works with Sebastian before and after surgery to assess impact of seizures and surgery on his behaviour and thinking.

Endocrinologist: Dr Margaret Zacharin. Checks Sebastian to see if he requires hormone replacement therapy.

Six nurses: Will care for Sebastian 24 hours a day before and after surgery.

Physiotherapist, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist and Play Therapist will also help Sebastian to recover.



FUNNIER THAN STAND-UP.

UKTV's TOP 50 COMEDY COUNTDOWN JUNE 9-11.

UK·TV

FOXTEL
CALL 131 999

BK UKT2638/B