



Specialty at a Glance

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A Career of Innovation

Vascular surgery offers versatility and stimulation to medical professionals. These health care professionals master the intricacies of vascular surgery as well as state-of-the-art endovascular techniques. In addition, vascular surgeons build long-term relationships with patients and their families as a primary physician for all vascular needs: medical and diagnostic, endovascular and traditional surgery.

Intricate and demanding, vascular surgery is not “one-size-fits-all” surgery. Each patient presents an individual vascular problem requiring a unique solution. Vascular surgeons train to respond with various modalities:

- Open surgical procedures
- Endovascular procedures
- Even medical therapies

Minimally invasive, percutaneous procedures are advancing rapidly and have revolutionized the ease at which outcomes are obtained for patients as well as offering the opportunity to continuously hone vascular surgery skills. The interventions may be limb or life saving. Vascular surgeons are charged with treating the complete patient.

As one vascular surgeon notes, "There is no medical counterpart to vascular surgeons."

Now more than ever, the choice to become a vascular surgeon fulfills an acutely growing need created by the aging population in the United States and beyond. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, from 2000 to 2030, there will be a near doubling of individuals aged 65 years and older, from approximately 35 million to an estimated 71 million; the number of persons age 80 years and more will more than double in the same time period – from 9.3 to 19.5 million. Talented, dedicated, skilled vascular surgeons will be needed to meet this urgent need.

1. No authors listed. Public health and aging : trends in aging -- United States and worldwide. MMWR 2003;52:101-6.

Your Family, Patients, Career

Balance is a word heard all through college and medical school. There is a great deal to be gained by creating that balance in life. Colleagues will state that vascular surgery is one of the few medical specialties that allow for balance in life.

“My work week is busy, but there is no question that the most important part of my life is my family. And I rarely miss my kids’ soccer games, basketball games or tennis matches. It’s a wonderful opportunity, particularly for women who want to have children, raise a family.” Bruce A. Perler, MD
Chief, Division of Vascular Surgery
The Johns Hopkins Hospital

Personal relationships and family are paramount in the lives of vascular surgeons. One female vascular surgeon at a major medical center found her career flexible enough to arrange her schedule to work part-time to accommodate the need to care for her newborn.

In the 21st Century, a career in vascular surgery allows for focus on family and home life as well as patients and their lives.

Research Opportunities - Infinite, Diverse, and Exciting

Whether research is an initial interest or among the interests pursued during a career, vascular surgery provides many and varied opportunities. Just as vascular surgery combines the best of both the surgical and primary care worlds, so too does the research into this fascinating specialty.

New devices and techniques, including imaging, are about to experience an explosion of development. Vascular surgeons will help determine where scarce health care dollars can do the most good for the greatest number of patients. Vascular surgery research has and will continue to revolutionize medicine today.

Vascular research runs the gamut from basic science cellular research, engineering/graft and stent development, diagnostic advances to clinical and medical management of vascular diseases. Research is not only done by full-time academic surgeons but also by private practitioners excited by the potential changes in the field.

“You can do clinical research, you can do basic science, you can look at outcomes to see how your patients do. All of this is very important in order to make the care of your patient better in the future.” Julie A. Freischlag, MD
Chair, Department of Surgery
The Johns Hopkins Hospital