Vascular Surgeons: Plan and Prepare for Your Next Job

BY FRANK J. VEITH, MD

You are a well-trained vascular surgeon. You are competent and hard working. You provide good patient care for the appropriate indications. You are moving up the ladder of success in your institution or practice group. You are progressing academically. You believe your future is bright, and that you have firm job security in your present position. Don’t be so sure. Institutional and academic politics can intrude. Vascular surgery is a subordinate specialty in most places. Thus, the institutional or departmental decisions that threaten your job security are significant.

See Prepare - page 2

SPECIAL ISSUE
Career Transitions For Vascular Surgeons

BY DAWN COLEMAN, MD, AND MALACHI SHEAHAN III, MD
CHAIRS, SVS WELLNESS TASK FORCE

Vascular surgeons enjoy working with our hands. For most of us, the chance to creatively reconstruct vascular pathology was the motive for entering this field. Too often, though, our reimbursement is tied only to our ability to operate, and operate profusely. Anyone with a business degree can tell you this is a precarious financial model. But it doesn’t need to be this way. A good vascular surgeon has important skills that extend far beyond technical ability. We are teachers, innovators, and leaders. We have talents that are valuable to industry, health-care systems, medical schools, and the government. There are many pathways to put these skills to use, either while still in practice or after. We asked several national leaders to express their thoughts on the issue of career transitions for vascular surgeons. The responses have been compiled in this special issue of Vascular Specialist as a project of the SVS Wellness Task Force.
Give to the SVS Foundation on ‘Giving Tuesday’
SVS Foundation Award Applications Due in January
Your SVS: Wellness Program Launches
Your SVS: Renew Membership by End of Year
New Program Will Teach Surgeons To Lead
Leadership: Dealing With Change
It's a Pivotal Time; Please Donate to PAC
SVS: W.L. Gore & Associates Block Grant Will Support Vascular Quality
Education: Submit Research Abstracts for VRIC, VAM
Paclitaxel-Alternative Balloon for PAD Gets FDA Nod

By Christopher Palmer

The Food and Drug Administration has granted the Breakthrough Device Designation to the Virtue sirolimus-eluting balloon (SEB) for below-the-knee peripheral arterial disease, according to a statement from Orchestra BioMed. This designation indicates that the Virtue SEB could provide a "more effective treatment option... for a life-threatening or irreversibly debilitating disease," according to an FDA statement, which added that below-the-knee atherosclerosis presents a high rate of amputation and poor survival outcomes but has been treated with other options, including amputation, bypass surgery, and angioplasty. See Balloon page 8

Cardiovascular Cost of Smoking May Last Up To 25 Years

By Bianca Nogradi

Quitting smoking significantly reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, but past smokers are still at elevated cardiovascular risk, compared with nonsmokers, for up to 25 years after smoking cessation, research in JAMA suggests. A retrospective analysis of data from 8,770 individuals in the Framingham Heart Study compared the incidence of myocardial infarction, stroke, heart failure, or cardiovascular death in ever-smokers with that of never smokers. Only 40% of the total cohort had never smoked. Of the 4,115 current smokers at baseline, 38.6% quit during the course of the study and did not relapse but 51.4% continued to smoke until they developed cardiovascular disease or dropped out of the study. Current smokers had a significant 4.68-fold higher incidence of cardiovascular disease, compared with those who quit smoking. See Smoking page 8
Headlines
SVS Offering Interventions and Support for Member Wellness and Peer Community
EDUCATION: Submit Research to VRIC and VAM
YOUR SVS: Renew SVS Membership by End of Year
NEW MEMBER: So Many Reasons to Join SVS
Letter From the SVS Foundation Chair
The Evolution of Quality Improvement in Vascular Surgery
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Vascular Societies Respond to FDA Paclitaxel Warning

BY THE PRESIDENTS OF SVS, SCVS, VESS, AND THEIR COLLEAGUES

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for protecting the public's health by ensuring the safety and efficacy of America's drugs and medical devices. This includes the initial evaluation and market approval of new products developed to address human disease and, on occasion, the reevaluation of previously approved products about which new concerns have arisen. Such are the circumstances that led to the recent FDA reappraisal of paclitaxel. 

See Paclitaxel...page 8

AHA Highlights Limitations of Perfusion Testing for Critical Limb Ischemia

BY MARK S. LESNEY

A new assessment statement from the American Heart Association reviewed the strengths and limitations of current imaging techniques for critical limb ischemia (CLI), the severest form of peripheral arterial disease (PAD).

The main techniques discussed were the ankle-brachial index (ABI), toe-brachial index (TBI), toe systolic pressure, transcutaneous oximetry (TcPO2), and skin perfusion pressure (SPP). The literature review also identified what the authors saw as opportunities for technology improvement.

"No single vascular test has been identified as the most important predictor of wound healing or major amputation for the threatened limb," wrote Sanjay Misra, MD, of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and colleagues, on behalf of the American Heart Association Council on Peripheral Vascular Disease, the Council on...See Perfusion...page 19

2019 September Specialist

Headlines
Trainees, Apply for Advocacy Scholarship and Learn How Government Impacts Practices
Washington Update: Advocacy, Policy News
VQI Makes Major Changes to Hemodialysis Access Registry
Your SVS: Meet SVS Officers; Important Information for Members
'Surgery Is Only Part of Our Story' - Branding Initiative Takes Shape
Surgeons, Are you Under-Insured For Disability Insurance?
Members, Please Sign Up To Be Mentors
CMS Issues Proposed Rules for QPP, Fee Schedule and HOPPS for 2020
The Arc of Leadership
Malnutrition Affects Frail Elderly PAD Patients

BY MARK S. LESNEY
MD EDGE NEWS
REPORTING FROM THE 2019 VASCULAR ANNUAL MEETING.

NATIONAL HARBOR, MD. — Frailty increasingly has been seen as a factor in procedural outcomes, including vascular surgery. Nutritional status has also become an issue of concern. Laura Drudi, MD, of McGill University, Montreal, reported on a study that she and her colleagues performed to determine the association between preprocedural nutritional status and all-cause mortality in frail patients being treated for peripheral arterial disease (PAD) at the 2019 Vascular Annual Meeting.

Dr. Drudi detailed their post hoc analysis of the FRAILED (Frailty Assessment in Lower Extremity arterial Disease) prospective cohort, which

See Malnutrition  page 7

Lifestyle Factors Were Significantly Associated With Symptomatic PAD

BY MARK S. LESNEY
MD EDGE NEWS
REPORTING FROM THE 2019 VASCULAR ANNUAL MEETING.

NATIONAL HARBOR, MD. — A large database analysis found that smoking- and physical activity-related lifestyle factors were significantly associated with symptomatic peripheral arterial disease. Elseie Ross, MD, of Stanford (Calif.) University, reported on the study that she and her colleagues performed to evaluate which lifestyle factors were most associated with the disease.

Dr. Ross presented her data in the Vascular & Endovascular Surgery Society portion of the 2019 Vascular Annual Meeting. She and her colleagues assessed data derived from the UK Biobank study, a longitudinal cohort study of over 500,000 individuals aged 40-69 years from 21 centers in the United Kingdom.

"We age-matched PAD patients to a random sample of non-PAD patients using a 2:1 matching ratio," said Dr. Ross. "We then performed machine learning.

See Lifestyle  page 7
2019 August Specialist

Headlines:
VAM ’19: Meeting a Success; Please Share Feedback for Future
See 2019 VAM Sessions At Your Own Pace
Meet the New SVS President, Kim Hodgson, MD
Your SVS: Apply for Membership by Sept. 1
Education: Know Your Coding, Keep the Money You Earned; Learn at Sept. Workshop
SVS Foundation Assists With Screening Veterans
“Vascular Spectacular” Gala Was Spectacular Indeed!
FDA Panel: Continue Paclitaxel-Eluting PAD Device Use With Care

BY MARK S. LESNEY
MEDEX NEWS
REPORTING FROM AN FDA PANEL MEETING

GAITHERSBURG, MD. — There was sufficient evidence of a late mortality signal seen at 2-5 years post procedure for paclitaxel-eluting stents and coated balloons used for peripheral artery disease (PAD) to warrant a label change for the devices, the Food and Drug Administration’s Circulatory System Devices Panel unanimously agreed after 2 days of deliberation.

That signal was brought to light in See FDA page 8

CRAWFORD CRITICAL ISSUES FORUM
‘Good Outcomes Not Good Enough’

BY MARK S. LESNEY
MEDEX NEWS
REPORTING FROM THE VASCULAR ANNUAL MEETING

NATIONAL HARBOR, MD. — A tradition at the Vascular Annual Meeting, the E. Stanley Crawford Critical Issues Forum is organized by the incoming SVS President and devotes itself to discussing particular challenges currently facing the society. This year’s Forum focused on how to use evidence-based medicine to improve outcomes, reduce costs, and ensure appropriate utilization of resources.

Session moderator and organizer Kim J. Hodgson, MD, new SVS President and chair of the division of vascular surgery at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, outlined the problem in his introductory presentation “Why Good Outcomes Are No Longer Good Enough.” He pointed out how there are several driving forces influencing the inappropriate use of medical procedures, resulting in diminished quality of outcomes and increased costs of health care: These comprise incorrect evaluation, incorrect treatment and planning, and improper
Headlines:
VRIC 2019 a Big Success; Scientists Look Forward to 2020 in Chicago
Education: Learn To Get the Reimbursement You're Due at SVS Coding Course to Be Held Sept. 20-21
Innovation Medal: Honoring 'Pioneer of Venous Surgery'
Compassion's other name: Dr. William Pearce
SVS Foundation-Sponsored Screening Uncovers 2 Aneurysms: Will Help Screen Vets in July
Leadership: Spotlight on Michael Conte, MD
See what you missed at VAM 2019!

Read Vascular Connections, the official newspaper of the Vascular Annual Meeting.

Wednesday/Thursday
Friday

Saturday
For PAD Impact, Ask Patients, Not Devices

BY MARK S. LESNEY MDDGE NEWS FROM THE JOURNAL OF VASCULAR SURGERY

The ankle-brachial index (ABI) is a poor indicator of patient-centered and clinician-based evaluations of functional status in patients with intermittent claudication, according to the results of PORTRAIT, a prospective observational study of patients with newly diagnosed or an exacerbation of non-limb-threatening peripheral arterial disease (PAD). PORTRAIT studied 1,251 patients with intermittent claudication enrolled at 16 sites. Researchers studied the correlation of ABI values and Rutherford symptom classification with PAD-specific health status as measured by the Peripheral Artery Questionnaire (PAQ).

See PAD page 8

Renal Denervation Reduced BP in Sham-Controlled Studies

BY ANDREW D. BOWSER MDDGE NEWS FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF CARDIOLOGY

The latest meta-analysis suggests that renal sympathetic denervation significantly reduced blood pressure in randomized, sham-controlled trials, although previous investigations of the procedure have had conflicting results. Renal sympathetic denervation (RSD) was associated with statistically significant reductions in blood pressure assessed by 24-hour ambulatory, daytime ambulatory, and office measurements in the analysis of six trials including a total of 977 participants. However, the benefit was particularly pronounced in more recent randomized trials that had few patients with isolated systolic hypertension, had highly experienced operators, used more complete techniques of radiofrequency ablation, used novel approaches such as endovascular renal denervation, and used efficacy endpoints such as clinical outcomes, according to invest...
Headlines:
NEW to VAM: Plenary Sessions Include Updates on Guidelines & Reporting Standards
Everyone Can Participate in Gala Silent Auction
Leadership for Women - And for Men
Wellness Task Force to Update Its Work
Your Input Wanted on Branding Initiative
Excellence in Community Service Awards
Bias Found Against Female Surgeons

BY RICHARD MARK KIRNER
M O D E G E N EWS
REPORTING FROM SAGES 2019

Baltimore - Most male surgeons welcome and support their female colleagues in the workplace, but a survey of male surgeons reports that bias against women in surgery persists, and may be even more acute among younger surgeons, according to a presentation at the annual meeting of the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons.

"Is there a bias against women in surgery?" asked Michalina Jadick, who presented the results on behalf of AdventHealth Hospital Tampa.

"Yes, there is, and understanding this problem is imperative when learning how to fix it."

A freshman at Boston University

See Bias page 15

Patient Complications Affect Surgeons Adversely

BY MARK S. LESNEY
M O D E G E N EWS
FROM JAMA SURGERY

Psychological consequences of patient complications seem to be an important occupational health issue for surgeons, according to the results of an extensive literature review published in JAMA Surgery. Sanjari Sarvasea, PhD, of North Shore Hospital, Auckland, New Zealand, and colleagues assessed studies from MEDLINE, Embase, PubMed, Web of Science, and Google Scholar that examined the consequences of complications, adverse events, or error for surgeons published up to the search date of May 1, 2018. Studies pertaining to burnout alone, studies not conducted on surgeons or surgical trainees, and review articles with no original data were excluded. This final review of consisted of nine studies (10,762 unique participants) that explored the occurrence of patient complications and their affect on surgeons' psychological well-being and their professional and personal lives.

See Complications page 15

Check out the Preview Issue of Vascular Connections for highlights of the June 2019 VAM in National Harbor.

See page 9

2019 May Specialist
Headlines:
Quality: New Global Guideline on CLTI Finalized, will be Published Soon in JVS
SVS Creates New Section for Outpatient Care
SVS Foundation Participating in AAA, PAD Screening
Leadership: Spotlight on Linda Harris, MD
FDA Ups Ante on Paclitaxel For PAD

BY MARK S. LESNEY
MOEBIE NEWS

“Alternative treatment options should generally be used for most patients,” rather than paclitaxel-coated balloons and stents for peripheral arterial disease (PAD), pending an ongoing safety review, according to the Food and Drug Administration.

The FDA conducted a preliminary analysis of long-term follow-up data (up to 3 years in some studies) of the pivotal premarket randomized trials for paclitaxel-coated products indicated for peripheral arterial disease. In a Letter to Healthcare providers issued March 13, the See FDA page 14

FDA NEWS

What Makes Women Leave Surgical Training?

BY SARA FREEMAN
MOEBIE NEWS
FROM A LAUNCH EVENT HELD BY THE LANCET

LONDON – Being unable to take leave and experiencing poor mental health are just two of the reasons uncovered that may help explain why some women choose not to complete their surgical training, despite having wanted to be a surgeon for many years, a study of women in surgical training has found. The results were presented at a press briefing and published in a special edition of the Lancet.

These factors are in addition to some previously identified, such as the long working hours, fatigue and sleep deprivation, unpredictable lifestyle and its effects on maintaining personal relationships, and the ability to both start and maintain a family life. Then there are the more serious issues of sexism and discrimination, bullying, and sexual harassment and assault that women face in a still male-dominated field that have been noted in prior studies.

See Women page 14

Starting a Training Program is Easier

Requirements for starting a vascular surgery training program have been lightened. Having a general surgery residency at your institution is no longer a requirement for starting either a vascular fellowship or integrated residency. Faculty requirements are being reviewed as well. The SVS has set up a task force to encourage and assist with the formation of new vas-

COLUMN Continued on page 7
2019 April Specialist

Headlines:
Vascular Research: VRIC Brings Cutting-Edge Science to Boston's Back Bay
VAM: Working Together Enhances Education
Explore National Harbor and Washington, D.C.
SVN Adds Simulation Session to 37th Annual Conference
Looking Ahead to 'Going Once, Going Twice'
'Ask the Experts' Expanded to 7 Sessions at VAM
EDUCATION: SVS Coding Course Moves to Rosemont for 2019
Join the Party; Get Connected
Antibiotic Cause of Aortopathy Explored

BY MARK S. LESNEY
MEDGEM NEWS
FROM THE JOURNAL OF THORACIC AND CARDIOVASCULAR SURGERY

A new study finds that patients taking fluoroquinolone antibiotics may be at higher risk of aortopathy in part because of human aortic myofibroblast-mediated extracellular matrix (ECM) dysregulation.

“Emerging evidence supports pharmacologic-associated aortopathy in patients receiving fluoroquinolone (FQ) antibiotics,” said first author David C. Guzzardi, PhD, and his colleagues, citing previous research showing that, compared with patients receiving amoxicillin antibiotics, those receiving FQ have a 46% higher risk of aneurysm or dissection within a 2-month period after commencing FQ use.

See Antibiotic... page 6

ATTRACT Trial Shouldn’t Detract From Pharmacomechanical Thrombolysis

BY BRUCE JANCIN
MEDGEM NEWS

CHICAGO – A closer look at the landmark ATTRACT trial of pharmacomechanical catheter-directed thrombolysis for acute deep vein thrombosis (DVT) shows multiple benefits for the intervention versus standard anticoagulation alone in the subset of participants with diastolic DVT, Kush R. Desai, MD, said at a symposium on vascular surgery sponsored by Northwestern University.

ATTRACT, a National Institutes of Health-sponsored, phase III, multicenter, open-label, assessor-blinded study, was the first-ever randomized trial of pharmacomechanical catheter-directed thrombolysis (PCDT) for acute DVT. The results caused a major stir because, despite a sound therapeutic rationale for the procedure, the incidence of chronic postthrombotic syndrome (PTS) at 24 months of follow-up was 47% in the PCDT plus anticoagulation group and 48% in controls on anticoagulation alone (N Engl J Med. 2017 Dec 7;377[23]:2240–52).

Since then, that overall negative trial has been one.

See ATTRACT... page 8

2019 March Specialist

Headlines:
VAM: Gala Response ‘Spectacular’ as Ticket Sales Open
VRIC: Highlighting Research in Vascular Calcification
Education: VAM Registration, Housing Now Open
Welcome to Our New Offices, New Era
Your SVS: 2018 Was a Productive Year; No Slowdown Anticipated in 2019!
Leadership: Spotlight on Frank Pomposelli, MD
VQI Registries add 30-Day Follow-Up Forms
SVSConnect App Now Available
FDA responds to data on increased PAD device mortality risk

BY JEFF CRAVEN
MEDGE NEWS

The Food and Drug Administration has issued a letter alerting health care providers that it is aware of and examining recent data on an increase in long-term mortality rates for patients receiving paclitaxel-coated balloons and paclitaxel-eluting stents for treatment of peripheral artery disease.

"Currently, the FDA believes that the benefits continue to outweigh the risks for approved paclitaxel-coated balloons and paclitaxel-eluting stents when used in accordance with their indications for use," William Masel, MD, MPH, chief medical officer of the Center for Devices and Radiological Health at the FDA, wrote in a letter to See FDA - page 7

Joint guidelines offer recommendations for treating peripheral artery disease

BY MICHELE G. SULLIVAN
MEDGE NEWS
FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF CARDIOLOGY

Newly released criteria aim to advise clinicians about the most appropriate interventions for managing peripheral artery disease.

The report, published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, drew on the expertise of a broad panel of experts, including representatives from the American Heart Association, the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions, the Society of Interventional Radiology, the Society for Vascular Medicine, and the Society for Vascular Surgery.

"Improvements in the diagnosis of peripheral artery disease (PAD) have led to an increasing number of treatment and revascularization methods, especially endovascular interventions," wrote Steven R. Bailey, MD, who headed the multidisciplinary writing committee.

"As new and increasingly sophisticated devices are developed..." See PAD - page 8

2019 February Specialist

Headlines:
Vascular Annual Meeting Program Taking Shape
Young Researcher Dr. Catherine Go Relishes Presenting Her Work
Prepare for a ‘Spectacular’ Evening at VAM Gala
YOUR SVS: New Member Urges Others to Take Advantage of SVS Opportunities
Nominate an SVS Honoree
From Our Journals
2019 January Specialist

Headlines:
Reflections on Women in Surgery
SVS Gala to Support the Foundation
VRIC Program Taking Shape
Rosemont Move Offers Room to Grow Programming Value
Grant Helps Promote Leadership in Women
YOUR SVS: In Memorium and Spotlight
Year 3 QPP Policy Changes Took Effect Jan. 1
LEADERSHIP: Credibility is the Foundation of Leadership
SVSConnect Forum Now Open