



VRIC 2019 a Big Success; Scientists Look Forward to 2020 in Chicago

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With a record number of attendees, abstracts submitted, and abstracts presented, not to mention outstanding research presentations and high enthusiasm throughout, the 2019 SVS Vascular Research Initiatives Conference (VRIC) has been dubbed a big success.

VRIC, with the theme “Hard Science: Calcification and Vascular Solutions,” was held May 13 in Boston.

“This year, we challenged ourselves to meet three goals while maintaining the quality of the work presented: increase the number of abstracts submitted, increase attendance, and increase visibility,” said Luke Brewster, MD, PhD, chair of the SVS Research and Education Committee.

“Thanks to the hard work of the R&E Committee, our SVS support and the SVS leadership (Drs. Edith Tzeng, Michel Makaroun and Clem Darling), we accomplished them all, and we are looking forward to next year.”

Four abstract sessions highlighted advancements in vascular remodeling, thrombosis, and discovery science for venous disease; vascular regeneration, stem cells and wound healing; aortopathies and novel vascular devices; and atherosclerosis, arterial injury and diabetes. Translational presentations included mechanistic insights on vessel remodeling insights; wound healing mechanistic insights on AAA and cutting-edge theragnostics for PAD.

Drs. Karen Woo and Mohamed Zayed (MD, PhD), 2017 recipients of the SVS Foundation Mentored Clinical Scientist Research Career Development Award, presented “amazing talks” detailing their progress on their K awards, said Dr. Brewster. Dr. Woo is examining causes of disparity in dialysis access, and Dr. Zayed has discovered a unique mechanism in lipid metabolism that is disrupted in diabetic PAD patients.

SVS member Dr. Frank LoGerfo, mentor to many vascular surgeon-scientists, was honored for his dedication to mentoring so many on translational and impactful research in the field of vascular diseases. He also shared pearls for the audience on how to maintain a presence as a vascular surgeon while directing a successful research laboratory.

Cecilia Giachelli, PhD, of the University of Washington’s Department of Bioengineering gave the Alexander W. Clowes Distinguished Lecture on “New Concepts in Regulation and Bioengineered Therapies for Vascular and Valvular Calcification.” And the Translational Panel, said Dr. Brewster, “provided key insights into recent scientific inroads as they relate to developing solutions for vascular calcification.”

Finally, this year, all poster presenters were able to discuss their work as “Quick-Shot” presentations organized by Dr.

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Zayed during the cocktail reception. Winners were recognized at the session. “This addition was a big hit, and we are grateful to Dr. Zayed for initiating this inaugural event,” said Dr. Brewster. The entire day resonated with a high level of interest and energy. “The enthusiasm for the presentations, the abstracts, the discussions, everything, was palpable,” Dr. Brewster added.

The day also brought home to attendees that, in terms of research and researchers, the SVS has a pipeline that’s as robust as it’s ever been, he said. “I think the future is exceptionally bright. The amount and breadth of talent certainly makes our committee look good, but in reality, it is the dedication and hard work of so many surgeon-scientists, coupled with support from SVS leadership, that makes VRIC so special year in and year out.”

Planning already is underway for VRIC 2020, set for May 4, 2020, in Chicago. “The location is a big attraction, not only because Chicago (like Boston) has so many excellent research institutions but also because of Chicago’s proximity to Medical College of Wisconsin and the Universities of Wisconsin, Indiana, Southern Illinois and Iowa,” Dr. Brewster said. “It is likely we can build on the ‘local’ attendance in much the same way as we did in Boston, thanks to the program directors, motivated trainees and vascular researchers from the local area.”

Why should SVS members attend VRIC? Dr. Brewster said, “All surgeons (and cardiovascular specialists) will find the conference valuable because the work presented is intended to be link clinical insights and solutions with translational discoveries that provide the pipeline for next generation therapies for vascular patients in the years to come.”

Then he offered a two-part answer to two different groups:

For surgeons and surgeon-scientists, “VRIC is a great place to meet up with friends and hear, learn and contribute to the direction of next-generation therapeutics for vascular disease,” he said.

For the cradle-to-grave investigators, “VRIC is a great place to enlighten the relevant community on their work and develop collaborations and future collaborative goals that can change the health of vascular patients for the better.”

View more VRIC photos at [vsweb.org/VRIC19Photos](https://vsweb.org/VRIC19Photos).

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