

VESS

NEWSLETTER

Vascular & Endovascular Surgery Society

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VESS SPRING MEETING RECAP

Another successful VESS Spring Meeting was held on June 12, 2019 at the National Resort & Convention Center in National Harbor, MD.

Our Spring meeting was held in conjunction with the Society for Vascular Surgery VAM2019. The timeline of sessions was coordinated to minimize topic overlap with SVS Postgraduate courses running concurrently and attendance was great; 125 - 150 attendees throughout the day. We hope you all were able to participate.

We congratulate the VESS Spring Program Committee led by **Dr. Matthew Smeds** (Chair), and including **Drs. Nikhil Kansal, Michael Curi, Shang Loh, Matthew Wooster, Yazan Duwayri & Shipra Arya**. They worked with the SVS/ VESS Joint Program Committee to select a spectacular line-up of papers for our session.

A total of 615 abstracts were submitted to VAM, of that, 428 (up from 381 last year) selected VESS as an option for presentation. Twenty-nine (29) abstracts were selected for the VESS Spring Program, and included nine presentations on aortic disease, four presentations on peripheral arterial disease, four presentations on cerebrovascular disease, three papers on vascular surgery education/training, two presentations on venous disease topics, two presentations on vascular complications, two papers on dialysis access/thoracic outlet, one presentation on vascular lab/imaging, one paper on practice management, and one paper on vascular trauma. In addition to the abstracts presented, for the first time ever, two videos were selected for presentation. This included a case of renal vein entrapment syndrome and the use of regenerative peripheral nerve interfaces for mitigation of post-amputation neuromas.

Once again, VESS Candidate Members were featured as invited discussants for each paper. Manuscripts were provided prior to meeting to allow time for review. The Candidate members gave concise overviews of the

presented material in context with the literature and then framed the discussion with thoughtful and insightful questions for the authors. This long-standing VESS tradition of inviting young residents and fellows to be primary discussants during a national meeting is a unique opportunity that many have not experienced before.

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2019 VASCULAR ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 12-15

NATIONAL HARBOR, MD
at the GAYLORD NATIONAL RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER

OUTSIDE WASHINGTON, DC

SVS Society for Vascular Surgery

VESS SPRING MEETING RECAP (Continued)

A new aspect of the meeting this year was the ability to use “text to screen” questioning; technology that has been available for the VAM presentations in the past but never utilized by the VESS sessions until now! Additionally, portions of the sessions were “live tweeted” for audiences who were not able to make it to National Harbor.

There were nearly 50 institutions represented as author, co-author, or discussant for these presentations with participants from across the United States and several international locations. All projects will be considered for potential publication in the Journal of Vascular Surgery.



The Women & Diversity/ Young Vascular Surgeons' Reception, Thursday, June 13th



Co-sponsored by the SVS & VESS, this reception was a networking opportunity for the leaders of VESS to meet and welcome attendees and introduce them to VESS and highlight the benefits of membership. Here are some photos from the evenings' event.



VESS Mentorship Program Facilitates Career Development for Young Surgeons

The **VESS Mentorship Program** is in its infancy, but members have already benefitted considerably. Organized by the Women and Diversity Committee, the Mentorship Program has been running since 2016. There were five mentees enrolled in the program in its inaugural year with 16 total mentees thus far. Previously, there has been an Annual Call for Applications to the program. However, with an understanding that the need for a mentor could arise at any time, VESS has decided to allow young surgeons the ability to **Apply for the Program AT ANY TIME**. An electronic version of the application can be found on the VESS website at the [Find a Mentor](#) link under the [Resources Tab](#).

The goal of the program is to promote career and leadership development for early career vascular surgeons. To be eligible for the program, the young surgeon must be an active or candidate member with no more than 10 years of practice experience. The recommendation is to have a regular phone meeting at least every other month to discuss goals, objectives, and progress. VESS will also provide each paired mentor/mentee with \$100 to be used towards an in-person meeting such as dinner at a national or regional meeting both are attending.



Recent mentors have included members of VESS with experience and seniority to assist the young surgeon. This list includes division chiefs, department chairs, and even a dean. There have been mentors from both coasts, the Midwest, the Southwest, and the Southeast so most of the country is covered. The Women and Diversity Committee does make effort to match young surgeons with mentors somewhat geographically but, based on the applications, finding mentors that can assist with specific goals takes some priority. After all, vascular surgery is a small community.

We recently surveyed former mentees for their feedback on the program.

- **Gregory Magee** from the University of Southern California was paired with **Ben Starnes** at the University of Washington. Besides receiving leadership and career advice, these two have even collaborated on several research projects. Dr. Magee recommends the program to those who are eligible and states, "It's a great opportunity to get to know leaders in the Society and get excellent advice for career advancement."
- **Jean Marie Ruddy** from the Medical University of South Carolina was paired with **Wei Zhou** from the University of Arizona 2 years after finishing her fellowship. Dr. Ruddy stated that she received advice from Dr. Zhou about grant funding and received a letter of support for her VA career development award. About her relationship, Dr. Ruddy also states, "This mentor relationship and mentor program helped me recognize the value of VESS as it focuses on early career surgeons; therefore, I prioritized attending VESS meetings and applied to participate in committees." She is currently on the Program Committee for the Winter meeting as well as the Women and Diversity Committee. She was also the recipient of the 2017 Early Career Faculty Award.
- Another successful match comes to us from Johns Hopkins. After finishing her fellowship in 2018, **Caitlin Hicks** was paired with **Shipra Arya** from Stanford. One of the goals of the Mentorship Program is to help expand current networks within the specialty for the young surgeon. Dr. Hicks has used this relationship to network at VESS, VAM, and the AHA meetings. She also enthusiastically says, "Dr. Arya provided great advice about grant writing and my research initiatives, and inspired me to bite the bullet and submit a K23 application this year!" Mentoring really helps get careers moving.

The Mentorship Program is only one year in length, but the relationship clearly can last beyond that. The Women and Diversity Committee monitors the first year relationship to ensure it is thriving. It has been this kind of success that has led to continued support of the program.

VESS GRANTS AND AWARDS

The VESS is pleased to offer the following opportunities to its' members to help further their careers.



W. L. Gore Travel Award – 2020

Application Deadline: Wednesday, September 11, 2019

The primary purpose of the VESS/W.L. Gore Travel Award (\$5,000) is to provide the recipient with the opportunity to visit one or more vascular surgery centers of excellence. The visit is intended to stimulate academic inspiration and to foster the development of fraternal fellowship in vascular surgery. Achievement of these objectives will enhance the vascular surgery career of a VESS member recipient. This award is not intended to support specific research interests but rather to assist the award recipient in a unique opportunity for travel and professional exchange.



Medtronic Vascular Resident Research Award – 2020

Application Deadline: Wednesday, October 9, 2019

One \$12,500 grant for basic/translational science, educational, clinical or health outcomes research will be awarded during the VESS Annual Meeting in 2020. The VESS/Medtronic Resident Research Award is specifically designed to help residents in training initiate projects during protected academic development time that will lead to future academic potential toward extramural funding for basic or clinical research.



VESS Early Career Faculty Research Award - 2020

Application Deadline: Wednesday, November 6, 2019

One \$22,500 grant for basic/translational science, educational, clinical or health outcomes research will be awarded during the VESS Annual Meeting. The VESS Early Career Faculty Research Award is specifically designed to help new vascular surgical investigators initiate projects that will lead to extramural funding for basic or clinical research.

Eligibility and Guidelines for all awards can be found on the VESS Website under the Grants/Awards tab.

www.vesurgery.org

VESS @ SOCIAL MEDIA



Interact with Society Leadership and other members through Social Media!

Follow us at **@VESurgery** for updates on society activities, VESS articles of the week, case of the week, and highlighted members. If you have information you think should be posted by VESS, send potential content to the Society by tagging **@VESurgery** on your post or tweet or email potential content to vess@administrare.com for review by the Communications Committee.



Also, check out the **LIVE Twitter Feed** on the vesurgery.com home page. 



CANDIDATE MEMBER RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN Win a Free Registration to the 2020 VESS Annual Meeting!

Win a Free
Registration to
the 2020
VESS Annual
Meeting!

On behalf of the VESS we are asking for your help in recruiting the next generation of vascular surgeons and VESS leaders. We find that by getting the residents & fellows involved early in their careers helps to create a clear path to their futures. All we are asking is for you to spread the word and potentially sponsor those in your department that may not already be familiar with the Society or those who are familiar but have not yet joined. We have a very simple, online enrollment that only requires one letter (or email) of support from a current VESS member. And even better, there is no membership fee for Candidate Members. As an incentive for your help, we plan to hold a raffle at the end of the year for a free registration to the 2020 annual meeting. Your name will be added to the list for each new member you recruit. The more recruits, the better your odds at winning. Should you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact our administrative office. We appreciate your help and commitment to keeping this Society the premiere vascular Society for the young vascular surgeon.

Spotlight on VESS Grant Awardees

Each year, the VESS awards a Travel Grant, an Early Career Faculty Research Grant and a Resident Research Grant. Here, we catch up with previous awardees to find out how they used their funds and what impact the award had on their career. We hope this inspires members to apply for VESS grants and continue the tradition of high achievement that the VESS is proud to support. For more information on how to apply, visit <http://vesurgery.org/grants-awards>.



Vivian Gahtan, MD

Professor & Chair,
Department of Surgery
Loyola University Medical Center
Maywood, IL.



How did you use the funds from your VESS Faculty Research Award?

I received the VESS Faculty Research Award in 1997 when I was three years out of training and at my first academic position at Allegheny University of the Health Sciences. The Research Award enabled me to gain some institutional resources. A PhD at my institution provided me with assigned laboratory space, a hood, an incubator and the use of his technician to maintain cells in culture when I was unavailable. At that time, there weren't shared labs and we had to have assigned space. The funds were used for the supplies for the proposed experiments. At the time this was a \$2000 award.

How did the Research Award influence your career?

The VESS Faculty Research Award was the first extramural grant that I was awarded. I had tried for an American Heart Award which was not funded. It was also the first grant that was on a vascular biology topic which was what I really wanted to study. I had two prior intramural grants, but the topics were not related to my development of an independent research program. Getting outside confirmation gave me credibility and it allowed me a small amount of independence in my research. The PhD who gave me lab space also taught me skills that I didn't have yet and helped me write grants. The Research Award as an extramural grant motivated him to take me under his wing. I switched institutions after I received the Research Award and the PhD helped assure that the money was spent on the supplies for the project and shipped those lab supplies to me at my new institution, Yale. When I was looking at jobs, having the grant showed other institutions that I had been funded and gave me credibility.

The VESS Research Award served as a foundation for me to build on. It was a confidence booster and it helped me to gain professional recognition by my peers. I was able to use the data that I generated from the work associated with the VESS Research Award as preliminary data for my next extramural grant, a mentored merit award, which was on the subject of thrombospondin-1 on vascular smooth muscle cell migration. I also had some intramural grant support. Here I received critical mentorship and was strongly encouraged to stay in this new niche to have a separate and independent program. I received the VA mentored Merit Award in 1999 and the same year also secured the American Surgical Association Fellowship and an American Heart Association Heritage Affiliate Grant-in-Aid. My focus at that time was the role of Thrombospondin-1 in vascular smooth muscle migration and intimal hyperplasia. At the end of 2003, I moved to SUNY Upstate Medical University. Here I also received some institutional support from both the University and the VA. I have subsequently had institutional grants, foundation grants, VA Merit Funding, DoD Funding and NIH R01 Funding. Also, I developed a collaborative relationship and now have a PhD partner which I believe is critical for a physician who is also busy with other responsibilities. The lab is currently studying the role of thrombospondin-1, -2, and -5 on intimal hyperplasia with in vitro and in vivo work. We are also interested in pleiotropic effects of statins on arterial disease.

What advice would you give to young surgeons who are starting out and applying for grants?

It is important to gain the home institution support for the proposed research program. Philosophically the vascular group has to be supportive and buy in that the research work is part of their mission as a team. Writing grants is a learned skill. Some institutions/departments have support to provide feedback and criticism to write grants. A mentor or mentorship team is very helpful for a new person trying to get started. Books are also available with examples of how to write different components of a grant. There are also grant writing workshops that help with grantsmanship. Some courses include direct support in mentoring an investigator through writing their grant. They don't provide the ideas, but do assist with the presentation. I used this service recently in re-writing the current funded Ro1 application. It is also important that the grants are put together well in advance of the deadline for submission so that select individuals can review the grant and provide feedback.

Departmental and institutional grants, when available, are a great way to get started. Then surgical society and foundation grants are also important initially because your competition pool is smaller and statistically your chance of application success is higher. You're also only competing against other surgeons versus something like an American Heart Association grant where you're competing against a whole variety of specialists, some of whom have large amounts of dedicated research time. There are also grants that are only available within the first 3-5 years after completing training. These application pools are relatively small as well. Those elements of early success help you to gain not only a sense of personal security, but also lead to the people around you gaining more respect and sense of value for what you're doing and subsequently feeling more obligated to be supportive.

“The VESS Research Award served as a foundation for me to build on.”

You also received the VESS Travel Award. How did you use those funds?

I received the VESS Travel Award at a completely different time in my life (2005). I was the new division chief in Syracuse. There was no prior division of vascular surgery and I really was starting from the ground up. I had also applied to the American College of Surgeons for a travel award and I was lucky I got funded by the VESS. I visited different places to learn about different aspects of developing a clinical program.

I visited Albany to learn more about the business side of their practice. **Sean Roddy** shared some of his billing sheets. He explained about coding and how they organize the money side of things. I also wanted to develop a venous program in Syracuse. I shadowed **Alan Dietzik** for a couple of days in his venous work. I also spent time with **Cynthia Shortell** who was chief at Duke. I saw how their division was set up and she facilitated an arrangement for me to go into a private practitioner's office for four days in a dedicated venous practice. Each of the locations gave me a different perspective on practice.

Looking back, how did the VESS Travel Award influence your career?

The Travel Award enabled me to develop personal relationships with Alan Dietzik who I did not really know prior and the opportunity to know Cynthia Shortell and the Albany group much better than before the award. I directly translated some of their billing and coding practices into our practice at Syracuse. I was able to interact with my colleague who does venous work who I would not have interacted with otherwise. The relationships that I built and the things that I learned from my visits continue to help me in my career today.

The Travel Award also gave me credibility with my peers. The chair of my department was excited that I got this award. He was already supportive of me but he became more supportive after I got the Travel Award as it showed outside recognition by my peers.

VASCULAR SURGERY BOARD UPDATE

WHO is the Vascular Surgery Board?

The Vascular Surgery Board (VSB) is a component board of the American Board of Surgery (ABS), consisting of a diverse group of members representing all the regional and national vascular societies. Members of the VSB have been voted in by their peers and are dedicated to representing YOU in their role on the VSB. Who's who in the VSB, you ask? After 10 years of service to the VSB and the American Board of Surgery, **Dr. Vivian Gahtan** will complete her term as chair this June, handing over leadership to **Dr. Ash Mansour**, who will serve as VSB Chair for the upcoming 3 years. **Dr. Bruce Perler** is the VSB's Associate Executive Director. The VSB is the only ABS component board with its own associate executive director. The VSB also consists of the following society representatives:

- **APDVS**- Dr. Malachi Sheahan
- **SVS**- *Rotating off this June:* Dr. Erica Mitchell, Dr. Dan Clair, Dr. Ron Dalman
Beginning this June: Dr. Rabih Chaer, Dr. Andrew Schanzer, Dr. Jason Lee
- **SCVS**- Dr. Gib Upchurch
- **VESS**- Dr. Bernadette Aulivola
- **MVSS**- Dr. Kellie Brown
- **NESVS**- Dr. C. Keith Ozaki
- **SAVS**- Dr. Tom Huber
- **WVS**- Dr. Vincent Rowe
- **EVS**- Dr. Marc Mitchell



*by Bernadette Aulivola, MD,
VESS Representative to the VSB*

WHAT has the VSB been up to? Well, we've had a busy year. Our Certifying Exam (CE) committee performed a major overhaul of this exam with an emphasis on improved imaging. We held the CE for the first time in years in Philadelphia, close to the ABS main office this past May. Over the past year, we have also established some policy changes that allow the VSB to elect its own chair from amongst its members. Another important policy change is that, while the VSB chair serves as a director of the ABS, he or she is no longer required to be certified in general surgery. Previously, it was a requirement for the chair of the VSB to be certified in both vascular surgery and general surgery.

We have been focusing significant effort on establishing the new Continuous Certification (CC) Program and assessment process. New diplomates are automatically enrolled in the program upon initial certification. Current diplomates should enroll in the CC Program upon certificate expiration in order to maintain board certification. However, diplomates may choose to enter the CC Program early if they would like. While the first Continuous Certification Assessment does not need to be completed until a diplomate's current certificate expires, all other program requirements (CME, operative log, professional references, etc.) must be maintained on an ongoing basis. It is recommended that diplomates log in to the ABS portal to check their status periodically to update their profile and to see when materials are due.

WHY change to the Continuous Certification Program? I'd like to turn the question back to you: Why NOT transition to a certification process that actually promotes and facilitates staying continuously up to date in the field using high impact publications from a wide variety of sources that are relevant to vascular surgeons?

WHEN will the Continuous Certification Program begin? The first administration of the Continuous Certification Assessment for vascular surgery diplomates will be this fall. The assessment will be available for eight weeks, between Sept. 6 and Nov. 4, 2019. Once you launch the assessment, you will have up to two weeks to complete it. The last day to begin the assessment to ensure that you have the full two weeks is Monday, Oct. 21, 2019. Registration for the 2019 assessment will open on Aug. 1, 2019. Diplomates will receive notification when registration is available for this 40-question, open-book assessment, which is based on recent publications. The exam may be completed on any computer (or even your phone or iPad!) and may be started and stopped as many times as you'd like, but must be completed within the two-week window.

The ABS will provide a list of topics used in the development of the assessment to transparently allow you to hone in on the areas that you should be aware of for the assessment. The references will reflect that the assessment primarily focuses on important evidence-based recent updates to vascular surgical practice. These reference materials will be available on the ABS website in summer 2019.

WHERE can you stay up to date on changes and developments relative to the Vascular Surgery Board? Follow us on Twitter at @vsb_abs. The communications committee of the VSB is dedicated to keeping diplomates informed and involved. Watch for updates in the Vascular Specialist or at the regional and national society meetings, or feel free to approach your representatives on the VSB with questions! Finally, please make sure that your contact information, especially your email address, is up to date to ensure that you do not miss any communications.

“Teamwork Builds Trust, and Trust Builds Speed”

General Russell Honoré, the “Ragin’ Cajun”, is best known as the military commander who spearheaded the relief effort for Hurricane Katrina after the local agencies failed to rise to the challenge. He also originated this quote which I believe speaks to the position of VESS within a coalition of societies to address the great concern of patient safety with paclitaxel technologies. During a 2-day FDA open public forum to explore the mortality risk with PTX technologies brought to light by Katsanos (JAHA, 2018), multiple speakers from industry, physicians who led relevant clinical trials, and interested parties spoke to the FDA-convened panel of physicians, surgeons, statisticians, and patient representatives. The presentations are viewable from the FDA website (<https://www.fda.gov/media/127784/download>), with our coalition speaking at 4:31 on June 19.

The sessions were very informative, and general agreement exists for the following:

1. After further patient level analysis from some of the RCTs included in the Katsanos meta-analysis, a mortality signal remains with a HR of 1.3-1.4, lower than the published HR of 1.93.
2. This mortality signal rises at year 2 after treatment and persists to year 5 in the metaanalysis. The available observational data from Medicare beneficiaries and VQI have not seen a similar effect, but their follow up is not yet to the same 5 year window (will be in next 1-2 years).
3. There is no plausible mechanism for an increase in mortality issued by PTX devices, especially considering the 30 year approval and safety profile demonstrated for PTX as an anti-neoplastic agent.
4. There are substantial numbers of missing patients in both control and treatment groups and ascertainment bias is a significant confounder.
5. PTX devices should remain available to patients but practitioners should discuss the relative benefits.
6. Prospective registry data will be key to gather important safety information.
7. Future clinical trials will likely require a period of safety monitoring, past the routine 1 year primary efficacy endpoints.

“...we must seek to provide the best vascular surgery OR endovascular surgery for the “right patient at the right time”.



This coalition seeks to speak as one voice to support the rigor and science to quickly allay or confirm the risk to our patients with the PTX technologies that have clinical value. This is the spirit of collaboration - build the team, build trust, and then build speed to confirm the truths of our collective experience with patient care. Also, it’s in our name, the “Vascular and Endovascular Surgery”, so we must seek to provide the best vascular surgery OR endovascular surgery for the “right patient at the right time”. Our patients would want it that way.

*Submitted by James Black, MD,
VESS President*



**SAVE
THE DATES**

Be sure to mark your calendars for the
VESS 44 th Annual Winter Meeting
January 30 – February 2, 2020
Steamboat Grand Hotel • Steamboat Springs, CO

NEW FOR 2020:

Schedule Change - Scientific Sessions will now start on Thursday Afternoon following the Technology Forum – Plan your travel accordingly to allow for arrival at the hotel as early as possible on Thursday, January 30th. Session I will be followed by the Welcome Reception.

Video Case Presentations - You are encouraged to submit a 4-6 minute video with audio commentary demonstrating unique case presentations, novel procedures, or technical variations of interest to the audience. Any video submission accepted will be entered in the first annual Case Presentation Contest. **We look forward to seeing your directorial debuts!**



The VESS is now accepting abstracts for their 44th Annual Meeting. Abstracts must be submitted online and submission must be completed by Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 11:59 p.m. (EDT). Submission Guidelines can be found under the meetings tab at: www.vesurgery.org.

We look forward to seeing everyone at next years' meeting!

Visit the VESS website www.vesurgery.org for more information on registration, hotel accommodations and more.



VESS ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

VESS VASCULAR FELLOWS COURSE

The objective of the Fellows program is to educate graduating fellows on content pertinent to starting a career as a vascular surgeon.

Topics that are addressed are broad and over the past few years have included negotiating contracts, billing and coding, social media and branding, how to be successful in an academic versus private practice, and recognizing/coping with burnout. Participants also have the opportunity to present interesting cases while hearing review from our moderators and participate in **Vascular Jeopardy** with questions commonly asked on the vascular boards. The course is interactive with opportunities to engage the speakers as well as other participants. This part of the winter meeting program is always met with positive reviews and continues to be a favorite among aspiring as well as active vascular surgeons.

VESS NEXT GENERATION STUDENT MENTOR PROGRAM

With the success and popularity of the Next Generation Student Mentor Program the VESS has decided to increase the # of Students accepted into this course from 20 to 30. Travel funding will also increase by offering attendees 2 nights' hotel (double occupancy required) along with a \$1,000 stipend for travel.

The program will once again focus on providing medical students with a career interest in vascular surgery, a forum to see what we are all about. There will be dedicated programming aimed at their needs, overlap programming with the Fellows' Program so that they can engage current trainees, and ample time for them to meet VESS members who might offer them mentorship. A request for applications will be going out to medical schools, but if you know any bright medical students at your home institution, **make sure they apply.**

VASCULAR TECHNOLOGY FORUM

The 2020 Vascular Technology Forum will showcase some of the best and newest devices that industry has to offer!

In addition to some of the current workhorse technology in the aortic and peripheral spaces, this year's Forum plans to highlight new advances in percutaneous mechanical thrombectomy, embolization techniques, and intra-arterial lithotripsy, among others. The goal of this program is for industry to provide insights into current technology, and a look at what treating physicians may see as it relates to up-and-coming developments in the pipeline. Expert physicians will share their experiences with these devices, and provide some 'tips and tricks'. There will also be an opportunity for intensive, hands-on experiences in a small group format that provides a more granular experience for the participating physician.

Vascular and Endovascular Surgery Society
100 Cummings Ctr., Suite 124A
Beverly, MA 01915



SAVE THE DATES

VESS 44th Annual Winter Meeting

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Visit the VESS website www.vesurgery.org for more information on registration, hotel accommodations and more.