

The PVSS

An update of the history and future of the Peripheral Vascular Surgery Society.

BY LEWIS B. SCHWARTZ, MD, AND ROBERT G. SCRIBNER, MD

The Peripheral Vascular Surgery Society (PVSS) is an international professional society dedicated to the art and science of the understanding and treatment of vascular disease. Its active membership is composed exclusively of young vascular surgeons with 12 years of experience in the field. This article presents the history, mission, and current activities of the PVSS.

HISTORY OF THE PVSS

While a visiting professor of surgery at New York University in the winter of 1975, Ben Eiseman, MD, recognized that a generation of young vascular surgeons was being trained and would soon be responsible for the majority of peripheral vascular surgical care throughout the US. He suggested the founding of an organization of young graduates of fellowship programs in peripheral vascular surgery. With this concept in mind, an open letter to the program directors was published in *Surgery* explaining the objectives of the proposed organization and soliciting comments and applicants.

The first meeting of this Peripheral Vascular Surgery Club was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American College of Surgeons on October 10, 1976, at the historic Blackstone Hotel, in Chicago, Illinois. Nineteen founding members of the club were present. The stated purpose of the club was to convene young, fellowship-trained peripheral vascular surgeons to exchange ideas and experiences. The club agreed that a prerequisite for membership must include 12 consecutive months of specific training in peripheral vascular surgery, a unique condition that still exists in the PVSS today. The meetings were designed so peers could openly discuss vascular research, clinical vascular surgery, and methods of vascular surgical training in an open atmosphere without fear of retribution or rebuke.

Fueled by word of mouth at the vascular meetings (SVS/ISCVS) in June, 1977, news of this fledgling organization spread quickly. Forty-eight membership applications were

received by the second meeting, and the first scientific session was held in Dallas on October 16, 1977. Although the papers were excellent and the discussion was lively and stimulating, a reading of the program announcement suggested a shaky beginning to this new organization. The title "First Annual Meeting of the Peripheral Vascular Society Club" exposed the group's ambiguous identity.

By the summer of 1978, the rapid growth of the Peripheral Vascular Surgery Club necessitated further administrative structure; an executive council was formed and Larry Hollier, MD, volunteered to develop a constitution and bylaws. In 1979, future meetings were scheduled to coincide with the annual vascular meetings as opposed to the American College of Surgeons. The restriction of 10 members per year was lifted in 1981, leading to more rapid growth and inclusion. For the first time, the membership began to speak on topics related to the development of peripheral vascular surgery as a subspecialty. The ambition of the society to remain primarily managed by young vascular surgeons was preserved in 1982 by instituting the bylaw stating that senior members have full voting privileges, but may not hold office or serve on any committee except the executive. The category of honorary membership was established and John Bergan, MD, Ben Eiseman, MD, and E.J. Wylie, MD, (posthumously) were inducted.

With spirits buoyed, the membership took a bold step and voted to change the name of the organization to the Peripheral Vascular Surgery Society. With the word *society* firmly ensconced in its name, and with overwhelming

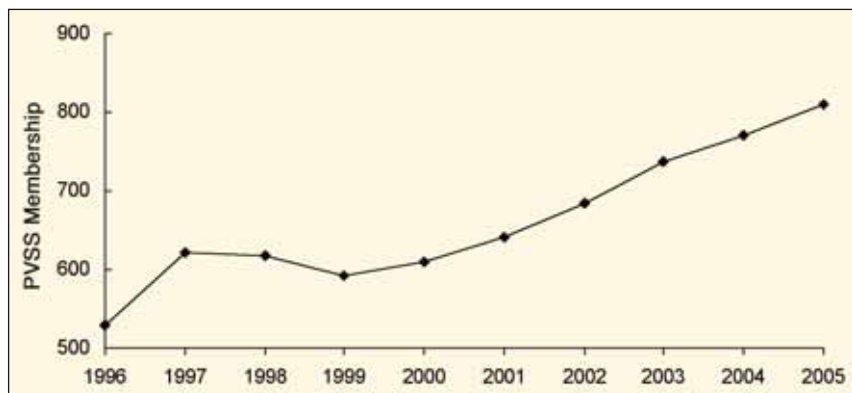


Figure 1. Membership in the Peripheral Vascular Surgery Society during the last decade.

approval of the policy to remove the membership ceiling, the PVSS was poised to become a leading national professional society. Since that time, the structure, objectives, and conduct of the society have remained largely unaltered, leading to exponential growth paralleling the development and maturation of the specialty. Growing to more than 500 members in the subsequent decade, the PVSS now boasts more than 800 members (Figure 1), each having undergone specific residency training in vascular surgery.

MISSION

The objectives of the society are to improve the art and science of vascular surgery through the active sharing of knowledge, and to promote basic and clinical research into the evolving fields of vascular surgery and intervention.

The PVSS members dedicate their professional lives to the prevention, understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of vascular disease. We recognize the central role that vascular medicine and surgery play in many patients' lives, and the constant vigilance required for its management. We are students of all aspects of vascular disease—its pathophysiology, natural history, pharmacotherapy, catheter-based intervention, and surgical remediation. We support active and honest interfaces between medicine, government, and private industry, and routinely dialog with nonmedical disciplines. We support the missions of several other professional societies with similar goals, including the Society for Vascular Surgery, the American College of Surgeons, the American Board of Surgery, and the American Board of Vascular Surgery.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

The PVSS sponsors two annual scientific meetings. The winter meeting, generally held in the western US in late January or early February, includes 3 days of scientific presentations from members, as well as dedicated didactic and interactive sessions from invited innovators from industry and allied health fields. The popularity of the winter meeting has grown substantially, as the rigor and novelty of the scientific program is excellent, and many members routinely incorporate their family vacation plans given its highly desirable time and location for winter sporting. Members presenting abstracts at the winter meeting are encouraged to submit accompanying manuscripts to the *Annals of Vascular Surgery*, with editorial rights retained by the PVSS.

The spring meeting, held in conjunction with the larger vascular meetings in early June, has recently evolved as well. Formerly a "stand-alone" 1-day meeting, the spring meeting is now fully integrated into the venues and program of the Society for Vascular Surgery, enabling the PVSS membership to more conveniently attend the general and scientific sessions of their choosing; this has also enhanced the quality of

the submitted abstracts and discussions. This year is the first that members presenting abstracts at the spring meeting will be encouraged to submit accompanying manuscripts to the *Journal of Vascular Surgery*, as the PVSS has recently agreed to become a sponsoring society of that journal.

Two important standing committees of the PVSS are the Industry Partners Committee and the Scholarship Committee. The Industry Partners Committee, currently led by Ruth L. Bush, MD, was founded in 2001, with the goals of improving and fostering the important interface between industry and medicine. Our industry partners are encouraged to participate in the annual meetings and, at the winter meeting, enjoy a dedicated general session wherein industry platforms and findings are presented. There are currently more than 20 industry partners of the PVSS, and they remain an integral part of our meetings and mission.

The Scholarship Committee, currently led by Tina R. Desai, MD, has a longstanding tradition within the PVSS given its central mission of education. Over the years, the Scholarship Committee has administered a series of education grants and awards that recognize extraordinary commitment and contributions to the field of vascular surgery. These awards have intermittently included the PVSS Education Grant Awards for Clinical and/or Basic Science Research, the William J. Von Liebig Vascular Academic Award, and the W. L. Gore Travel Award. Notable awardees over the years have included Julie A. Freischlag, MD, Enrique Criado, MD, Michael L. Marin, MD, and Alan B. Lumsden, MD.

THE FUTURE

The PVSS has undergone considerable growth and evolution during the past 30 years, while still maintaining its original goal of fostering communication and scientific interchange among vascular surgeons still early in their careers. As article IV(3) of the bylaws still states that, "Active Members of the PVSS will become Senior Members twelve years after completing their vascular surgery training," the PVSS will remain a society composed of and led by young, dedicated vascular surgeons. It is hoped that the PVSS will continue to provide a valuable forum for its members to be heard and understood as instruments of change in the rapidly evolving fields of vascular surgery and intervention. ■

Lewis B. Schwartz, MD, is from the Section of Vascular Surgery, Department of Surgery, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. Dr. Schwartz may be reached at (847) 936-3104; lewis.schwartz@abbott.com.

Robert G. Scribner, MD, is from the Seton Medical Center, Daly City, California. Dr. Scribner may be reached at (650) 755-1132.