

# VESS

## Vascular & Endovascular Surgery Society

### NEWSLETTER

Volume 15 • Issue 3 • Summer 2023



## President's Corner by Mark F. Conrad MD

### Greetings from the President's desk!



I hope this letter finds you in good health enjoying summer with family and friends. We just returned from another great VAM in National Harbor, MD. The summer meeting of the VESS at the VAM offered an opportunity for our two societies to collaborate and provide an additional platform for investigators to present their work. Indeed, our members presented 22 high quality abstracts in a rapid-fire format that sparked spirited discussion from the standing room only audience. In addition to the plenary session, we sponsored a lunch that afforded the residents, fellows and junior faculty who attended a chance to meet with the VESS leadership in a relaxed, informal setting. The deadline for abstract submission to the 2024 Annual Winter meeting is fast approaching so be sure to put the finishing touches on your current projects. This year, we will continue with the fellow, resident and student programs and we have also added a tract for young surgeons in early practice. All of these programs come with travel support and interest is high, so encourage your trainees and young faculty to apply early. Enjoy the rest of the summer and I look forward to seeing everyone in Sun Valley.

48th Annual Meeting **Vascular & Endovascular Surgery Society 2024**



SUN VALLEY RESORT, SUN VALLEY, ID | JANUARY 18-21, 2024

*Call For  
Abstracts*

**DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 6, 2023**

The Vascular and Endovascular Surgery Society is now accepting abstracts for their 48th Annual Meeting. Abstracts must be submitted online and submission must be completed by **Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. (EDT)**. Submission Guidelines can be found under the meetings tab at: [www.vesurgery.org](http://www.vesurgery.org).

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM VESS 2023 SPRING PROGRAM

The VESS 2023 Spring Program included **22 outstanding presentations** covering diverse topics including open and endovascular complex aortic therapy, carotid disease, trauma, radiation safety, surgical education, dialysis access, peripheral arterial disease, and healthcare disparities. In addition, for the first time, the spring program included video presentations of interesting surgical cases. The majority of the program was dedicated to rapid fire presentations, that allowed for rapid and efficient delivery of new information. The VESS program was well attended and was enriched with the audience participation and the comments of several invited discussants. At the conclusion of the meeting, the program committee selected the winner of the VESS Spring Meeting Award for best abstract. The winner was ... for the abstract titled *Evaluation of Plavix Resistance and its Role in Predicting Stent Thrombosis in Transcarotid Artery Revascularization* by **Dr. Kathryn Dilosa** at UC Davis.



Jordan Stern, Dave Kauvar, Kathryn Dilosa, Mimmie Kwong, Faisal Aziz and VESS Spring Program Chair, Yazan Duwayri presenting the Best Spring Paper Award

## VESS VASCULAR SURGERY INTEREST GROUP

### From Think Tank to Podium

It has been a busy year with the student-led VESS Vascular Surgery Interest Group (VSIG). What initially started as an impromptu meeting in the hotel lobby at VAM 22 has grown into a robust program in just one year. The students have been busy and their work has translated into highly impactful and successful events held throughout the year.

The goal of the VESS VSIG has been clear from the start: build a space for students interested in vascular surgery to network with each other, spread the word about vascular surgery as a specialty, and provide resources for students to stay interested and engaged, especially if they come from an institution without a home vascular surgery program.

To address these goals, the students self-assigned themselves to several projects within the VSIG:

- **DISCOVER:** a webinar/content series intended for students not yet committed to vascular surgery
- **SPECIALIZE:** a webinar/content series intended for students who know that they want be vascular surgeons
- **TECHNOLOGY TEAM:** to help with email list-serves, web content, video editing
- **PEER MENTORSHIP TEAM:** to connect MS3s and MS4s to serve as mentors to MS1s and MS2s
- **RESEARCH TEAM:** to connect students without opportunities for research to other programs and mentors

## The VESS VSIG has a lot to be proud of:

The group kicked off the academic year in August with an event sharing the goals of VESS VSIG group and recruiting more students who may be interested.

In November, the **DISCOVER** group held their first event entitled “*Discover Vascular Surgery*” featuring **Drs. Gabriela Velazquez** (Wake Forest), **Todd Berland** (NYU), and **Ravi Rajani** (Emory) where they shared the path to becoming and the day in the life of a vascular surgeon.

In January, as the summer research applications were due for MS1s and 2s, the VESS VSIG hosted a **Research and Mentorship in Vascular Surgery** event featuring **Drs. Jason Lee** (Stanford), **Bernadette Aulivola** (Loyola), and **Matt Smeds** (SLU) with two MS4s **Prashant Saini** and **Brian Leoce** where the panel discussed ins and outs of finding a mentor, finding a project, and setting goals for a summer research project.

In March, the **DISCOVER** group held a Women in Vascular Surgery event featuring **Drs. Linda Harris** (University of Buffalo), **Chelsea Dorsey** (University of Chicago), **Young Erben** (Mayo Clinic Jacksonville), **Yang Yang** (PGY4, Medstar), and **Christy Marcaccio** (PGY4, BIDMC). The panel shared their experiences and journeys to becoming vascular surgeons and the empowerment of women within our specialty.

Also in March, the **SPECIALIZE** group held an event entitled “*Navigating VSLO and Vascular Surgery Rotations*” featuring program director **Dr. Elina Quiroga** (University of Washington), **Dr. Daniela Medina** (PGY1, LSU) and two MS4s who had done several away rotations, **Chaitu Dandu** and **Ali Hakimi** to share with rising MS4s about how to apply for and be successful on away rotations.

And finally in April, the **SPECIALIZE** group partnered with the Yale VESIG to co-host the Vascular Surgery Match Panel with seven freshly matched students in Vascular Surgery.

The webinar series were very successful with **50-200 students** joining per webinar from across the country. The VESS VSIG collected pre and post surveys from the attendees to help understand perceptions of vascular surgery in the general public and to help tailor their future events. The VESS VSIG group was able to put their findings together into a successful oral presentation at the VESS Spring Meeting where MS3 **Moira Mcgevna** presented the findings of the group in a talk entitled “*Gender Differences in Understanding and Perceptions of Vascular Surgery Among Medical Students.*”

As the VESS VSIG met again at VAM 23 for drinks and food, some meeting each other for the first time in person (rather than on Zoom), it was amazing to reflect on how far the VESS VSIG has come in just one year. But don't be impressed yet. The students have made it clear- with plans to improve existing projects and launch new ones, the VESS VSIG is just getting started.



# VESS SPOTLIGHT ON AWARD WINNERS

Each year, the VESS awards a Travel Grant, an Early Career Investigator Award 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>.



**Sam C. Tyagi, MD, FACS**  
Assistant Professor of Surgery and Radiology  
Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery  
Department of Surgery, University of Kentucky



## *The Effect of Phosphodiesterase Inhibitors on BAPN-Induced Aortic Dissection*

**1. How did you use the funding from the 2021 Early Career Faculty Award?** The funding from the award was used for the purchase of mice, the housing for the mice, surgical implant pumps, specialized medicated food, and other lab supplies.

**2. How did the 2021 Early Career Faculty Award help you in your professional development? What professional achievements came from this Award?** This funding launched the first of many experiments of phosphodiesterase inhibitors and the effects in aneurysm and dissection mouse models. In addition to the presentation at VESS, with data generated with support from VESS funding was presented at the American Heart Association ATVB meeting, and manuscript is in development. I would also add that this award was favorably looked upon by my department to bolster their support for me as a surgeon scientist.

**3. What advice would you have for young vascular surgeons who are starting out and applying for grants?** My advice would be to identify a good mentor, and make sure you have the surrounding environment and partners that will support your goals. I would reach out to the prior grant and award winner for their advice as well.

**4. Looking back, how did the VESS 2021 Early Career Faculty Award influence your career?**

Basic science is tough. Although vascular surgery is a humbling field, basic science can be a whole other level! The award gave me encouragement as well as recognition at following meetings and among my colleagues. It also bolstered my research profile within my division and department made it easier for my partners and department leadership to get behind supporting the development of this research.

**5. What do you see as the most valuable thing the VESS has to offer the young surgeon?**

It is a great and approachable meeting for a trainee or young surgeon. Members make great connections with colleagues and their families. There are many opportunities to participate in committees and as a young member, this can be an invaluable experience.

## VESS 2023 GRANTS AND AWARDS

### ● VESS TRAVEL AWARD

**Application Deadline: Friday, September 8, 2023**

The primary purpose of the VESS 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.

### ● VESS / MEDTRONIC VASCULAR RESIDENT RESEARCH AWARD

**Application Deadline: Friday, October 6, 2023**



One **\$12,500** grant for basic/translational science, educational, clinical or health outcomes research will be awarded during the VESS Annual Meeting in 2023. 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 INVESTIGATOR AWARD

**Application Deadline: Friday, November 3, 2023**



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 Investigator Award is specifically designed to help new vascular surgical investigators initiate projects that will lead to extramural funding for basic or clinical research.

# VESS 2024 WINTER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

**Thursday, January 18, 2024**

**Special Programming – Now accepting applications online.**

## • VESS VASCULAR FELLOWS PROGRAM

The Vascular Fellows Program aims to educate graduating fellows with content pertinent to starting a career as a vascular surgeon. Topics that were addressed over the past few years have included negotiating contracts, billing and coding, social media and how to be successful in an academic versus private practice setting. Participants also have the opportunity to present an interesting case and participate in the ever popular “**Vascular Jeopardy**” with questions commonly asked on the vascular boards. Each fellow accepted into the program will receive a **\$1,000** travel stipend to help with the cost of attending the meeting.

## • VESS GENERAL SURGERY RESIDENT PROGRAM

The General Surgery Residents Vascular Interest Program, will provide network opportunities to all general surgery resident applicants that have an interest in pursuing a Vascular Surgery Fellowship. The program will include topics regarding the fellowship application process, types of programs, mentoring opportunities, research advancement and the unique VESS networking environment that will allow interaction with fellows, residents, and vascular surgery faculty from around the country. It will also provide a hands-on opportunity to understand broad vascular pathology and industry technology. Each resident accepted into the program will receive a **\$1,000** travel stipend to help with the cost of attending the meeting.

## • VESS NEXT GENERATION STUDENT MENTOR PROGRAM

The Next Generation Student Mentor Program aims to provide medical students with a career interest in vascular surgery, a forum to see what we are all about, as well as opportunities for student to hone their vascular surgery open and endovascular skills with simulation! There will be dedicated programming aimed at their needs, overlap programming with the Residents & Fellows’ Programs so that they can engage with current trainees, and ample time for them to meet VESS members who might offer them mentorship. Each medical student accepted into the program will receive a **\$1,500** travel stipend to help with the cost of attending the meeting.

## • NEW - VESS EARLY CAREER FACULTY PROGRAM

The objective of the Early Career Faculty Program is to provide those in their first 1 to 5 years in practice, an interactive program to discuss the challenges and opportunities specific to early years in practice. This program will include topics such as establishing a career, pursuing your career interests, dealing with conflicts with your partners and understanding your practice and personal finances. Participants will also have the opportunity to present a challenging case in an interactive forum with feedback from fellow participants as well as moderators. Each faculty member accepted into the program will receive a **\$500** travel stipend to help with the cost of attending the meeting.



**NEW!**

## • VASCULAR TECHNOLOGY FORUM

The 2024 Vascular Technology Forum will showcase some of the best and newest devices that industry has to offer. 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.

## My First VAM Experience



**Chiamaka Uzoma**

Ross University School of Medicine, MS-4  
Member of the VES&S Newsletter Subcommittee

The Vascular Annual Meeting (VAM) diversity travel scholarship allowed me to attend my first vascular meeting and meet some of my mentors in person for the first time. It was a great learning experience and an excellent networking opportunity. As a fourth-year medical student, having events tailored to students was significant. During one of the student sessions, I found it especially helpful to have program directors from vascular residency programs give valuable insight into what they look for from residency applicants and provide tips on how to be a successful applicant. The session also highlighted the importance of mentorship during different stages of our career: during medical school, residency, and as attending physicians in practice. It illuminated possibilities available for practice after residency, including academia, community hospital, and office-based labs.

The conference provided the opportunity to learn through research study presentations and industry exhibitions about existing and new developments in managing vascular disease using open and endovascular techniques. I learned about the journey through the BEST- CLTI trial, the benefits of establishing an office-based lab or OBL, endovascular procedures such as fenestrated and branched endograft used in abdominal aortic aneurysm repairs, and aspiration devices like Penumbra used in clot removal.

The international educational and plenary sessions provided the opportunity to learn about clinical trials and outcomes of research studies of various vascular diseases by vascular surgeons outside the United States. It was a heartwarming experience at the Society of Black Vascular Surgeons dinner. I was encouraged by the growing population of black vascular surgeons present and was happy to learn about their achievements. It was great to see the current president of the Society for Vascular Surgery reiterate the organization's support. I enjoyed the outdoor SVS Connect at the VAM event; it allowed for a relaxed community-building environment with program directors, residents, and other medical students.

The event highlighted vascular surgery as a growing field comprising a community of approximately 4,000 vascular surgeons serving a population of over 334,000,000 in the United States. One can anticipate an increase in vascular disease given the aging population and the prevalence of diabetes, high cholesterol, physical inactivity, and high blood pressure. These conditions will likely increase the demand for vascular surgeons trained to care for these patients, a robust research community composed of vascular surgeons and trainees in partnership with industry to improve existing and develop new endovascular techniques to manage the vascular disease.

I am thankful for my mentors, who were gracious and instrumental to my experience at the VAM by providing guidance on what sessions to attend and introducing me to colleagues and program directors. I am grateful for the new professional connections and the information sessions tailored to help medical students navigate the residency application process. I look forward to attending the next vascular annual meeting in 2024.

## TRAINEE CORNER

## Motivation and the Myth of Self

The new academic year usually feels exciting – new responsibilities! new co-residents! – but it can also be a daunting reminder of how much training remains ahead. In those moments, training can feel more like a grind than an opportunity. We are all intrinsically motivated by hopes of helping patients and being excellent surgeons, teachers, and colleagues... but sometimes, those altruistic motives don't feel immediate enough. In those moments, I often find myself looking to extrinsic motivators instead, like the thought of a truly giant meal after a long case or pride in my step count after running around chasing consults all day. Those short-term rewards can be helpful and even healthy, but they don't provide the same direction and propulsion as more high-minded motivations.

One way I've found to short-circuit this issue is what I call the "myth of self." A "myth of self" is a story you tell yourself about what type of person you are which can then be used to provide extrinsic motivation that aligns with your more altruistic (and esoteric) intrinsic goals. There are a few helpful features of the "myth of self":

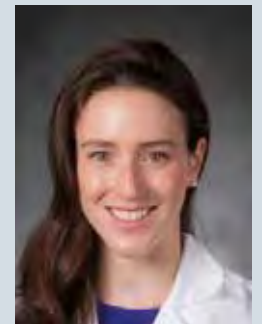
It should be aspirational. You can tell yourself that you're the sort of person who does "X" when you have, in fact, done "Y" many times in the past, because telling yourself that you're an "X" person makes "Y" more difficult and less likely. Think of the senior residents you've wished you could be "when you grew up" and your most slick/smart/steady attendings – take the fundamental qualities of those people and adapt them to your own purposes.

It should induce a growth mindset. One of the things that makes a myth mythic is the journey. You probably remember the three stages of the hero's journey according to Joseph Campbell from middle school: (1) departure, (2) initiation, in which the hero ventures into the unknown and overcomes various obstacles and challenges, and (3) return (in triumph) to a more familiar world. Sounds a bit like training, right? Your myth of self should include not only static characteristics ("I am a person who stays calm under pressure") but also beliefs about how you respond to adversity ("I am a person who takes criticism well because I want to get better").

It should be very personal and portable. Your myth of self will be shaped by your personality, your strengths and weaknesses, and your values. Your myth of self will not work for me (and vice versa) because it needs to feel like a possible version of you in order to be effective. That self will change with you as you encounter new experiences and challenges over time.

Here's how I use my myth of self: I am (like maybe some of you) a flawed human who can be impatient, defensive, and insecure. But I tell myself that I am a person who is steady, generous, and open-minded. When I get out of a late case and have a patient in the ICU who is doing a bit marginally, I could rationalize going home, because that patient is already in the best place for them, so my checking on them won't make a difference. But then I ask myself if I'm a person who doesn't check on patients because I'm tired. When you phrase the wrong option as an ego transgression, it gets a lot harder to choose. Conversely, when you choose the right option, you get a nice little dopamine surge as a reward for affirming your ego.

This may sound like a crazy approach, but it has supported me through six years of training so far, helping me feel the joys of my successes while softening the blows of my failures. I am sure that many of you have similarly wacky hacks, and I would love to hear about them in future installations of the VESS Newsletter.



**E. Hope Weisser**  
PGY-7 Resident, Duke Vascular Surgery

# Vascular Surgery Residency and Fellowship MATCH 2023

Submitted by Danielle Sutzko, Venita Chandra and Sharif Ellozy

## Vascular Surgery Residency Match 2023

The vascular surgery match had another impressive year with only 1 vascular residency position going unfilled. The positions in vascular surgery continue to grow and for the 2023 match there were 93 positions (84 in 2022, 66 in 2019). There was a total of 92 MD seniors (75 matched) and 17 DO seniors (4 matched) who applied leaving an estimated 67 people unmatched. There was an overall decrease in the number of vascular surgery applicants in 2023 (159) compared to last year (168) with the peak of the number of applications occurring in 2021 (181).



Figure 1. NRMP Match results for Vascular Surgery Residency

## Vascular Surgery Fellowship Match 2023

In 2023, the vascular surgery fellowship programs rose to 107 from 94 and were able to offer 136 positions compared to 118 last year. There also continues to be a rise of vascular surgery fellow applicants with 178 applying in 2023 compared to 143 last year. This year was the second year in a row that the vascular surgery fellowship filled 100% of the positions, leaving one of the highest numbers of unmatched fellowship applicants (45) seen in years.



Figure 2. NRMP Match results for Vascular Surgery Fellowships

Vascular and Endovascular Surgery Society  
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**SAVE  
THE  
DATES!!**

**January 18-21, 2024**  
**Sun Valley Resort**  
**Sun Valley, Idaho**

Visit the VESS website for  
full meeting information  
including Registration &  
Hotel Reservations

