

Vascular Society - Presidential Update

Vascular Society Council met as it traditionally does in the second week in September. Normally this would be held in London, but with the current COVID 19 crisis, this was another virtual meeting. Our last face to face meeting was pre-CV19 in Cardiff.

Restoration of services

This was a major topic for discussion within VS Council. Many of the difficult implications for patients and staff were discussed. As I have alluded to in previous newsletters, whilst closing down services was extremely challenging, trying to reopen them is proving to be even more so. The Vascular Society recently undertook two surveys of the membership to try and understand what the particular blockages there are to re-opening.

Elective operating capacity

A recurring message is that currently there is only a limited restoration of elective vascular lists. The most recent survey, undertaken at the beginning of September, showed that only 32% of units have a full restoration of elective lists. The September survey did however show there were now no vascular units operating solely through NCPOD lists. However, there remains a marked reduction in capacity to deal with elective workload, and in particular patients awaiting elective abdominal aortic aneurysm surgery have been affected. There have been ongoing discussions with the devolved nation NAAASP surgical directors, GIRFT, and the CRG on the topic.

The vascular team

Vascular patients require an integrated multidisciplinary team (including nurses, interventional radiologists, vascular technologists, vascular anaesthetists, and surgeons) to deliver optimal care to vascular patients. Restoration of the vascular teams remains an important component to the restoration of services.

Trainees

The VS believe it is crucial that vascular trainees need to remain working within vascular surgery, if at all possible, in order to continue their training. The FY1 and FY2 surgical staff are also required to support both the elective and urgent surgical patients. Should the CV19 crisis deteriorate significantly again, it may be necessary to redeploy staff but the implications on patient care, safety and throughput need to be understood by medical leaders, if staffing levels need to be significantly reduced again.

GIRFT, the CRG and NHS England

The Vascular Society have been in close and regular discussions with the CRG and Vascular GIRFT. A further joint document, with Vascular GIRFT, on restoration of vascular surgery is due to be published very shortly. NHS England have thanked the Vascular Society for its ongoing collaboration with the CRG and Vascular GIRFT in helping plan the restoration of services. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the anonymous surveys that have been a crucial part of the planning process.

Circulation Foundation

The Circulation Foundation launched 'The Body Walk'
(<https://www.circulationfoundation.org.uk>)

'The Body Walk is a national campaign to raise awareness of vascular disease and for imperative funding. We are hoping everyone can get involved to collectively walk the 60,000 miles of the Arterial Tree! Walk, run, cycle, swim ... it is up to you!'

Donors to the CF are encouraged to consider using Gift Aid since that will further increase the value of their donation by 25%.

New Curriculum

The new curriculum has been steered through its convoluted path with collaborative support from the BSIR. I feel that the hard work and perseverance Keith Jones, Mark McCarthy and their teams needs to be recognised. At one point this process appeared to be a particularly challenging. With great skill and diplomacy, it is great to see the progress the team has made.

Election to Council

I would like to encourage individuals to consider standing for election to council. It is important that those sitting on council represent our membership and would be keen to draw applications from as broad a range of applicants as possible. The closing date is later this week, and I would encourage you to consider putting your applications in. The submission deadline is Friday 25th September 2020.

Annual Scientific Meeting

The ASM is now taking registrations and it would be good to see members signing up for what will certainly be the first virtual Vascular Society ASM.

https://www.vascularsociety.org.uk/asm/register_your_place.aspx

The program is a very interesting, dynamic and diverse program with something for everyone.

Wellbeing

Finally, I hope that people have managed to take a little bit of time off in the last month or so. I was lucky enough to get 8 days in the Highlands walking and cycling.

It has been a very tough first half of 2020 and it looks as though there may be more difficult times ahead. I am very proud of the Vascular Society and our extended vascular family's ongoing positive and collaborative response to the CV19 crisis. Keep up the great work, and look out for your friends and colleagues as well as yourselves.

I hope to catch up with many of you, virtually, at the ASM.



September 23rd 2020