

for a dedicated vascular surgery specialty.

BY PAULINE T. MAYER

**T**he International Society for Vascular Surgery (ISVS) was formed in 2003 as an international organization committed to the recognition and promotion of vascular surgery, a defined specialty separate and distinct from general and cardiothoracic surgery. This political need exists to varying degrees in different parts of the world and arises from the continuing trend for vascular procedures to be performed by practitioners who commit small parts of their practice to noncardiac vascular disease patients, and by disputes about what constitutes adequate criteria for training and credentialing in vascular surgery.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the ISVS are (1) to enhance and promote the recognition of vascular surgery as an independent and distinct specialty throughout the world, (2) to provide recognition of commitment to vascular surgery and scholarly or educational achievement in that specialty, (3) to encourage the dissemination of knowledge regarding vascular disease and vascular surgery to the public and the profession, (4) to develop international standards of practice and training in vascular surgery, and (5) to encourage international exchange for training in vascular surgery.

### ISVS GOVERNANCE

The ISVS officers include a distinguished group of vascular surgery leaders. They are Peter R. F. Bell, MD, President, Royal Infirmary Leicester, UK; Robert W. Hobson, II, MD, Vice President, University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey; Giorgio Biasi, MD, Treasurer, University of Milan/Biocca; and Frank J. Veith, MD, Cleveland Clinic Foundation. Committees are represented by a distinguished group of vascular surgeons throughout the globe. Councilors representing a global region (including South Asia, Western Europe, North

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America, and Central and South America) are the voice of the membership and attend all council meetings.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership is granted to vascular surgeons who are well trained in several disciplines of treatment and are committed to vascular surgery (whose professional activities practice, research, and teaching are devoted primarily to the management of vascular disease), as well as to other specialists largely committed to the practice of non-cardiac and vascular disease who are well-informed about all types of therapy.

Nonphysician membership is offered to vascular technologists, registered nurses, physician assistants, radiographers, ultrasonographers, and selected individuals employed by corporations involved in the vascular disease field.

Corporate members and other groups who support the mission and activities of the ISVS are welcome. Honorary membership will be awarded to individuals who have made special contributions or achievements in the vascular disease field.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

The ISVS promotes its mission and objectives online through the dissemination of electronic materials to the membership, the public, and government agencies ([www.isvs.com](http://www.isvs.com)).

such as cardiologists and interventional radiologists are now treating patients who previously had their operations done by vascular surgeons. Many of these treatments are often performed without evidence of their benefit, and those using them tend to convey the impression that vascular surgery is an old-fashioned treatment and that operations are no longer required.

The ISVS was formed to combat this trend and has been charged to explain to the global community that vascular surgeons are, in fact, the most appropriate specialists to treat patients with vascular disease. Only the vascular surgeon can offer a comprehensive range of therapies that include open surgery, endovascular therapy, and medical treatment. In addition, when other specialists get into trouble, it is the vascular surgeon who rescues them. Doctors who only offer endovascular treatment will undoubtedly push their treatment without offering evidence that it is better or worse than existing therapies. Vascular surgeons can offer patients all forms of treatment and enable them to select the one that is best for the patient rather than the one that is best for the doctor. This will, of course, mean adequate training in all of these areas.

We can only achieve this goal by becoming a worldwide specialty, which will allow us to arrange our own training and establish standards that will ensure that all vascular surgeons are able to provide the comprehensive range of treatment mentioned above. This will mean adequate training in open surgery, endovascular surgery, and medical therapy, and will lead to a number of curricular changes to allow us to do this. Vascular surgeons must be in a position to provide a full range of treatment and only then can we publicize our comparative advantage. The ISVS was formed to try to accomplish these objectives.

To every vascular surgeon reading this article, I am asking you to join today. Membership in numbers will provide this collegial society with an opportunity to move vascular surgery forward. Our objective is your objective. E-mail your questions to [isvs@isvs.org](mailto:isvs@isvs.org). Thank you.

### Newsletter

Newsletters are published and distributed to the membership several times a year.

### Journal

*Vascular*, published six times per year, is included in the membership. *Vascular* solicits and publishes opinion pieces and other nonscientific articles dealing with issues important to the specialty and practicing vascu-

lar surgeons. Featuring controversial topics, scientific and nonscientific, we solicit editorial commentaries from our board as well as articles that express opposing views that allow our readers to make informed decisions about their own positions. Finally, *Vascular* publishes invited reviews and updates when the editorial board believes them to be justified and of value. In that way, readers can remain current in the state of the art and science of vascular surgery and related issues. ■