

Insights for 2004

2003 was indeed a year to remember for the physicians, companies, and health care practitioners involved with endovascular therapy. Many important new devices were approved by the FDA last year, and industries continued to work with physician inventors and investigators to release novel designs and improve upon previous successes, providing us with more patient-specific options for treating a greater number of vascular diseases. Based on the efforts we're seeing toward a more interactive relationship between agencies like the FDA and CMS and device manufacturers and investigators, I expect this trend to continue in 2004, with patients being the ultimate beneficiaries of an overall higher standard of care.

Also, this year we are expecting the long-awaited FDA approval of a carotid stenting system. This event will have significant clinical as well as political impact, and rest assured, *Endovascular Today* stands poised to keep you updated regarding this epoch-making moment. In addition, we will update you regarding other new technologies and treatments, providing you with case reviews, trial results, and timely coverage of the latest developments, all presented by the experts. In response to the broadening field of endovascular therapy, we've stepped up our commitment to covering the hottest topics being discussed in today's top practices, starting with this exciting issue.

For the feature section, we've asked several pioneers in the field to compose articles based on presentations they gave during the "Masters & Legends" symposium at the recent New Cardiovascular Horizons multidisciplinary conference in New Orleans. We felt that this first issue of 2004 would be a great opportunity to have experts share their unique perspectives on a variety of subjects.

Last year saw the first drug-eluting stent enter the US market, the CYPHER (Cordis Corporation, a Johnson & Johnson company, Miami, FL), which gained approval in April. In November, an FDA panel recommended approval for the TAXUS drug-eluting stent (Boston Scientific Corporation, Natick, MA), indicating that the device will likely be in the hands of US physicians early this year. The

future for this technology looks bright, but there is much we need to know about the evolution of the stent, its applications, and how the body reacts to each. Julio Palmaz, MD, the inventor of the stent, gives a brilliant presentation on this topic that should not be missed by anyone who works with these devices. Gary M. Ansel, MD, and Krishna Rocha-Singh, MD, tackle one of the most challenging stenting applications, treating the SFA, as they provide an overview of the experiences thus far, available technologies, and the results from a number of SFA trials. Also, John Abele, co-founder of Boston Scientific, discusses the impact minimally invasive technologies such as the stent have had on patient care.

Although the so-called "turf wars" between endovascular specialists are still being waged, it's clear that the lines separating vascular surgery, interventional radiology, and interventional cardiology are beginning to blur in many centers across the country. This phenomenon has much to do with advancements in technology development, but it is also the direct result of the efforts of innovative, open-minded leaders in the field—physicians who continue to put patient care ahead of personal gain. For this issue of *Endovascular Today*, Craig M. Walker, MD, along with David E. Allie, MD, has chronicled the experiences of their center in their efforts toward achieving the optimal cardiologist/surgeon relationship.

Finally, endovascular repair of AAAs has secured a position as a viable option to open procedures, and we may in fact be witnessing the evolution of a new gold standard in treating AAAs. My fellow Chief Medical Editor, Barry T. Katzen, MD, has prepared a presentation on what we currently know about the various approved endografts and soon-to-be-approved devices.

We at *Endovascular Today* wish you a happy and prosperous 2004, and we look forward to following your achievements in the coming year. ■



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Takao Ohki'.

Takao Ohki, MD, PhD
Chief Medical Editor