

# Industry Consolidation's Potential Effects on Meetings and Physician Education

Endovascular Today asked for perspectives from leading conference organizers by posing the question, "To what degree are you concerned about how industry consolidation could affect support for vascular meetings and physician education?"



**Gary M. Ansel, MD**  
Founding Member,  
VIVA Physicians, Inc.

I am very concerned. We have benefited from the fact that there have been a lot of players, especially in the cardiovascular area, who have been very supportive of medical education. These big meetings are expensive ventures. We have to make sure that the meeting is very useful to the doctors, who can take back what they learn to their practices to have better outcomes and be more data driven. As the consolidation goes, I'm concerned about how we do that in a more efficient manner, because the support may not be the same. We have to change with industry. Any change industry undergoes, we are going to feel the effects and have to stay very fluid with that and figure out the paradigm so that we still deliver a very powerful and profound product for the physicians in the United States.



**Barry T. Katzen, MD**  
Founder and Program Director, ISET  
Chief Medical Editor,  
Endovascular Today

Consolidation in this industry is not unlike the consolidation that is going on in other industries of all kinds. But, as the lead program director of ISET, it is actually a big concern.

From my personal perspective, it puts increasing emphasis on the need to ensure that the meeting provides value to both the registrants from an educational

point of view and to the field in general. My feeling is that as long as we continue to attract leading-edge interventionists who are doers and are interested in evolving the field, that it will remain important to industry regardless of how consolidated they are. It creates more challenges, but I don't think it's a doomsday situation.

In the end, it's all about value-based purchasing—that's the current term in health care delivery, and it applies here. As an educational meeting organization, we need to continue to drive the kind of value that is sustainable for all of us, and that's our goal.



**Dierk Scheinert, MD**  
Course Director, LINC

Generally speaking, with respect to the industry landscape, I think it is important that we have a mix of smaller, entrepreneurial companies that can quickly bring new projects to fruition, as well as larger companies with more financial support that can also work to bring new technologies to market. Larger companies are typically better equipped to enable us to conduct key research projects and the large-scale studies that usually go beyond the scope of the smaller companies. So, there is an important role for companies of all sizes.

Consolidation in areas that have significant overlap can be healthy. But, at the same time, it should not—and I am convinced that it will not—prevent innovative progress in the future because it is also in the best interest of our industry partners to enable us to prog-

ress and find better solutions for our patients.

Now, as this applies to meetings such as LINC, we are watching closely to gauge what effects there might be. But, I'm confident that the engagement of major industry players in supporting high-quality meetings will not be reduced. Therefore, we remain optimistic for the future. I think industry will remain a strong supporter of both research and education.



**Roger M. Greenhalgh, MD**

**Founder, Charing Cross Symposium**

The vascular community of clinicians and industry working together is the powerhouse of advancement in medical technology, which benefits patients.

I am confident that industry will wish to provide continued support to enhance education, innovation, and evidence that a new technology works.

I see evolution in progress. The first Charing Cross meeting was in 1978, and there has been constant change in the vascular community since then. There has been a tendency for fewer and larger meetings to emerge, especially those with very professional organization and a business approach. To me, meetings divide into endovascular surgical meetings (eg, Veith in the United States and Charing Cross in Europe) and interventional cardiology meetings (eg, LINC in Europe and VIVA in the United States).

Industry consolidation could lead to fewer sponsors. My belief is that the vascular community will strengthen if clinicians and industry continue to work together on the proper relationship each seek to achieve. There are some who feel that the cost of travel will lead to virtual symposia with everyone staying at home. This would miss the buzzing vitality of the vascular community where inventor, new technology, and enthusiastic clinicians come together and bring about advancement. I believe that neither side would wish to see this destroyed.

It is easy to take for granted that in the last 25 years, endovascular repair conquered the entire arterial tree, from the heart to the toes and way up into the brain. Venous surgery has become unrecognizable compared to where it was 10 years ago. Patients benefit from these technologies by avoiding unnecessary anesthetics and painful dangerous procedures. I do not believe that industry and clinicians would be stupid enough to make any move that would destroy the vascular community that we enjoy and that drives innovation. We may each need to work very closely to preserve it, and clinicians and industry need to work together to understand regulatory restrictions.



**Sean P. Lyden, MD**

**Board Member, VIVA Physicians, Inc.**

As a current example, now that Medtronic and Covidien have become one company, all the meetings for the periphery just had a major sponsor disappear. There is now a medical device company

that is as big as a pharma company, and I am positive that the size and scope of Medtronic will lead to more mergers of other companies trying to keep up with them.

There are a lot of meetings. I predict that some of the smaller meetings are going to struggle financially, and I think we'll probably see a consolidation over the next 5 years. Two or three big meetings that we have now will probably not be here in 5 years.

The big companies will still be around, even though there will be fewer of them. Hopefully, as the companies become bigger, sponsorship will go up, but that is never a guarantee.



**Frank J. Veith, MD**

**Founder, VEITHsymposium**

Yes, industry consolidation in the vascular field is real and a cause of concern. We at VEITHsymposium are trying to maintain the industry support that makes the high quality of our meeting possible by

continuing to do the things that have made the meeting popular over the last decade.

One element is to include balanced presentations of all controversial topics by having multiple speakers with differing views on the topic present their case. A second element is to try to cover all important and exciting new topics or new views of old topics. We want our meeting to present as complete coverage as possible of the current vascular field—including interventional, surgical, and medical treatments and facts related to these treatments. To these ends, we try to invite the most knowledgeable experts from around the world to present and moderate at our meeting. We also make the entire meeting available in an online library, so anyone who is interested can gain access to the talks and panels for review, study, or research.

In addition, in the last few years, we have set up programs for podium and poster presentations for younger and less well-known vascular specialists and trainees to show their work and have it memorialized for citation on our web page ([www.veithsymposium.org](http://www.veithsymposium.org)).

Finally, we have introduced a new program to bring together innovators, industry representatives, and investors to further each others' goals and objectives. We hope the quality of our meeting and its annual overview of the vascular space will continue to attract increasing industry support despite our changing environment. ■