Embolization: Expanding Evidence and Awareness


Embolization techniques and technologies continue to evolve, offering new solutions to health conditions that affect millions of people across the globe. Although the main principles of embolization have not changed, we can now be even more effective and cover a wider spectrum of indications. This is thanks to our committed interventional radiology (IR) physicians who continue pushing the boundaries of research and our industry partners who provide us with the state-of-the-art technology needed to perform these small miracles. Of course, there is still plenty to be done to ensure that all patients have access to the benefits of these lifesaving procedures regardless of their geography.

To start us off, Nadine Abi-Jaoudeh, MD, gives us her perspective on the current state of data for embolotherapy, focusing on the biggest gaps and the areas with the strongest data and most randomized controlled trials, as well as insights into clinical trial design.

Continuing the embolotherapy data theme, Tiago Bilhim, MD, and Ziv J. Haskal, MD, review recent influential studies in four areas—genicular artery embolization (GAE), uterine artery embolization, prostatic artery embolization, and spontaneous portosystemic shunt—and consider the big-picture relevance of each.

We also delve into the interventional oncology realm with William S. Rilling, MD, and Teik Choon See, MBBCh, who discuss the state of transarterial chemoembolization evidence and guidance, its potential in other applications, how to discuss the therapy with patients, and more.

Yuji Okuno, MD; Gerard Goh, MD; and Matthew J. Scheidt, MD, present a picture of where we stand with musculoskeletal (MSK) embolization—currently most promising in GAE—and look ahead to new developments in embolic materials and MSK applications and areas requiring more research.

Our discussion then shifts from data and techniques to awareness and access. A conversation with Isabel Newton, MD, of the Interventional Initiative reveals where awareness of embolization procedures is lacking most and how we can improve awareness for the general public, patients, administrators, and other specialties.

Then, Vincent Vidal, MD; Gloria Salazar, MD; and Gilles Soulez, MD, introduce us to FairEmbo, a project aiming to improve health care delivery in emerging countries via affordable, sustainable solutions and centered around a technique of using suture fragments for arterial embolization.

Rounding out this section is a discussion with Felister Wangari Maina, MD, and Ivan Rukundo, MD, on their experiences practicing IR in Kenya and Rwanda, respectively, and opportunities for growth and outreach.

Elsewhere in this issue, Caroline Caradu, MD, a vascular surgeon from Bordeaux, France, talks about her research in Hedgehog signaling in chronic limb-threatening ischemia pathology, biological substitutes in aortic care, and artificial intelligence for aortic management.

We would like to dedicate this special embolization issue to all the interventional radiologists who are working under challenging conditions to bring these lifesaving embolization techniques to many underserved populations across the globe. We hope that soon we will have a global strategy supported by academia, industry, and IR societies to help achieve their goal and save more lives. We must continue pushing until there is equitable access for all. ■

Amy C. Taylor, MD
Gregory Makris, MD, PhD, DIC, FRCR
Guest Chief Medical Editors