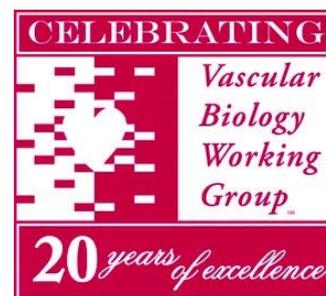


The Vascular Biology Working Group Twentieth Anniversary

Dr Carl J. Pepine reports on the achievements of the Vascular Biology Working Group at the National Faculty Meeting, Washington, DC. The Vascular Biology Working Group celebrated its twentieth anniversary at its meeting just preceding the American College of Cardiology Annual Scientific Sessions (ACC14) in Washington, DC, on 28 March 2014



Dr Carl Pepine, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, the University of Florida, founded the Vascular Biology Working Group (VBWG) in 1994 and chaired the programme. In his opening welcome, he reemphasized that the VBWG is a postgraduate educational forum for clinicians focused in cardiovascular medicine. Most of the

rapidly evolving science of molecular cardiology and its relevance to cardiovascular disease was not available when the majority of clinical cardiologists completed their formal training.

'Our model has been to create a venue for the exchange of this new basic science and integrate discovery into clinical practice', says Prof. Pepine. 'The overarching goal is to provide novel programs where the latest in cardiovascular biology is presented by highly motivated experts from the major academic programs around the world'. This information is then discussed with other members of the faculty audience. From these activities, educational materials have been generated that are utilized to update and train faculty who would then disseminate this material to the regional opinion leaders and select clinical practitioners and on to the mainstream of medical practice.

This format of 'training the trainers' or 'physicians teaching physicians' has been the operating framework for all VBWG educational programmes since its inception. The educational content development is done in accordance with the principles and requirements set forth by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), including the material that does not provide actual CME credit. Sponsorship for these educational activities comes from educational grants provided from multiple industry partners.

Details of each educational programme's components vary based on the specific needs of each topic area. Since its inaugural meeting in 1994, the VBWG has held over 1500 conferences worldwide with >25 000 participants. In addition to the National Faculty Meetings held in conjunction with each annual scientific session of the ACC and the American Heart Association, VBWG has done multiple programmes at the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) annual sessions (in Munich, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Berlin, etc.), and in Canada and Mexico. The VBWG has also provided Hospital Grand Rounds Series, Regional Faculty Meetings, Office Practice Seminars, CME Monographs, Journal Supplements, and other focused enduring materials. Its web site (www.vbwg.org) contains a curriculum of >2000 slides, videos, core curricula, data alerts, etc.



Dr Thomas F. Lüscher, editor-in-chief of *European Heart Journal*, provided the keynote address. His topic was 'Percutaneous Renal Artery Denervation for Resistant Hypertension: Did Simplicity HTN 3 Scorch the Future'. Dr Lüscher has been a member of the VBWG Advisory Board since its inception.

- The first Session on 'Novel Methods to Modify Risk' was led by Deepak L. Bhatt, MD, MPH, of the Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA. He discussed 'New Approaches to Modifying Risk by Improved Glycaemic Management: SGLT2 Inhibition, Incretin Therapy and the Future'.
- 'Future Pharmacological Options for Heart Failure' was presented by Christopher O'Connor, MD, Duke University, Durham, NC, USA. 'PCSK9
- 'Inhibitors and the Unmet Need for LDL-C Reduction' was addressed by Evan A. Stein, MD, PhD, from the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, USA.
- The second Session, entitled 'Stroke Prevention', was led by David R. Holmes, Jr, MD, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, discussing 'Is Left Atrial Appendage Occlusion Really an Alternative to Lifelong Anticoagulation'.
- Michael Ezekowitz, MD, PhD, of the Thomas Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, PA, USA spoke on 'Translating Clinical Trial Results of Novel Anticoagulants for Stroke Prevention into Clinical Practice'.
- In the following session, 'Looking Over the Horizon in 2014', Andreas M. Zeiher, MD, Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany, was scheduled to review 'Key Lessons Learned From Cell Therapy Clinical Trials: Advances in Delivery Systems and Applications'.
- Next Dr Jean-Claude Tardif from the Montreal Heart Institute, Montreal, Quebec, shared his work on 'A Novel Approach to Preventing Aortic Stenosis'.
- Then John R. Teerlink, MD, from the UCSF School of Medicine, San Francisco, CA, USA presented a provocative talk entitled 'Serelaxin: 'Breakthrough Therapy' or 'Also-ran'.

The formal programme was followed by a reception with 'time for conversation'. Over 150 participants from >15 countries participated in this twentieth anniversary programme.

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