

VASCULAR SURGERY TRAINING, EXPOSURE, AND KNOWLEDGE DURING GENERAL SURGERY RESIDENCY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

JM Boutros, MS Sekhon, E Webber, RS Sidhu

Department of Surgery, St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver BC Canada

Purpose/Background: Vascular surgery has been removed from the Canadian General Surgery Objectives, and has become a primary certificate specialty in the US. These changes may ultimately affect vascular practice. The purpose of this study was (1) to determine residents' perspectives on the role of vascular surgery; (2) to determine residents' perceived competence in vascular surgery; and (3) to assess residents' knowledge of vascular principles.

Methods: General Surgery Residents at a university-based program participated in this two-part study. Part one was a survey of attitudes, future plans, and experience in vascular surgery. Part two was a 10-item short-answer examination designed by a panel of vascular surgeons to assess fundamental vascular knowledge.

Results: Twenty-nine of 35 residents participated (83%). The average length of vascular rotations was 2.5 months.

Part 1: Seventy-six percent of residents thought that removal of vascular surgery from the Canadian objectives was inappropriate. Residents reported being inadequately trained to perform 10 of 13 procedures surveyed; however, 6 of these procedures were reported as being integral to training. Although 26 of 29 residents reported an intention to perform vascular procedures during their career, none planned on pursuing vascular certification. Significant factors for not pursuing vascular surgery included patient population and lack of role models. **Part 2:** The mean examination score was 47% with no difference between senior and junior residents ($p > .05$).

Conclusions: Surgery residents want vascular training to complement eventual practice, but do not wish to pursue vascular surgery as a career. Based on the examination, vascular knowledge is marginal at best (not increasing after the junior years). These findings have implications for current trainees who may lack the skill/ability to deal with vascular emergencies in communities without vascular expertise. With an increasing divide between vascular and general surgery, attracting residents to vascular is another issue that demands attention.