The Reasons Why Vascular Surgery Needs To Be An Independent Specialty With Its Own Separate Board And RRC: It Is Time To Move From Being A Colony To A Nation, Or A Territory To A State

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Surgical Specialization

- John Hunter
  - Scientific foundations of surgery
  - Origins of Physician / Surgeon “divide”
  - “Mr.”
- US 20th Century
  - Post-graduate surgical schools
  - Residency for Surgery
  - Profusion of residencies for surgical specialties
  - “Vascular Surgery” inevitable

Drivers of Specialization

- Development of new therapies for a given condition or body system
- Prevalence of condition to support full-time activity
- Demonstration of superior results based on specialized training

All of these are true for Vascular Surgery

ABMS requirements

1. Represent a distinct and well-defined field of medical practice;
2. Solely offer a single standard of preparation for and evaluation of expertise;
3. Offer distinct training to meet certification requirements;
4. Demonstrate that candidates for certification will acquire, and then maintain, knowledge and skills in that field;
5. Establish defined standards for training and a system for evaluation of educational program quality; and
6. Demonstrate support from the relevant field of medical practice and broad professional support.

Arguments

- But we’ve made so much progress
  We have….and that's great, but that's not an argument to not complete the process
- We don't need another “war” / “schism”
  Agreed! We need to complete the functional relationship that will allow us to collaborate effectively with ABS and other boards
Challenges for VS

- We have distinct challenges that other surgical specialties do not.
- Our field of practice now shared with numerous other (much larger) specialty groups with no primary vascular training...maintenance of a common standard for vascular practice...irrespective of primary training.
- In reimbursement, government and other contexts, vascular surgery is INVISIBLE.

Developing our Specialty – We’ve not even started on subspecialization

- Orthopedic Subspecialties
  - Hand Surgery
  - Sports Medicine
  - Pediatric
  - Spine
  - Foot and Ankle
  - Joint
  - Trauma
  - Oncology

Political Minorities..
Or Why We Have a US Senate

- US Senate the result of the “Great Compromise” at Constitutional Convention of 1787.
- Minorities need specific identification and mechanism for effective representation:
  - Rhode Island
  - Native American “nations”
- Ability to effectively collaborate:
  - “Be at the table”
  - Effective coalitions
  - Maintain degree of leverage in critical issues

Effective Partnerships
(add “no” for “doomed partnership”)

- Shared Risk
- Defined boundaries
  - Negotiable areas
  - Non-negotiable areas
- Balanced Power
- Communication and Collaboration

Product of Evolving Relationship
The “Special Relationship”
Our Strongest Alliance

An Independent VS Board will...

- Give us official designation as the specialty fully dedicated to the procedural treatment (open and endovascular) of vascular disease.
- Allow us to train vascular surgeons:
  - Respond to increasing subspecialization of vascular
  - Maintain standards of care
  - Respond to workforce demands
  - Initiate programs based on vascular surgery needs, not other specialty needs.
- Begin the process of creating an identity for Vascular Surgery beyond the medical community.
- Allow us to function as a full and equal partner with other surgical disciplines.
What a Independent VS Board won’t do

- Make hospital administrations support us more
- Stop other specialists from engaging in the practice of vascular surgery/intervention
- Solve any of our local practice challenges
- Get us more reimbursement

Bottom Line

- Minorities need official recognition
  - avoid complete assimilation
  - avoid loss of identity
  - competence as effective partner with other specialties
- Independence for VS should be a "win/win" for ABS and other surgical boards
- Our patients care is dependent on our assertiveness in consolidating and advancing the evolution and identity of our specialty and maintaining highest standards of care

Thank you

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