The Vascular Surgery Covid-19 Collaborative (VASCC)

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Dear Editor,

The unprecedented pandemic spread of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2; Covid-19) has severely impacted the delivery of health care services in the United States and around the world. As of April 9, 2020, there are more than 1.5 million confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide and over 16,000 deaths in the United States alone [1,2]. The important public health guidelines of social distancing to help curtail and flatten the curve through mitigation and suppression has resulted in a dramatic reduction of in-person clinic visits, if not halting them completely. Furthermore, in an effort to preserve the very scarce assets of personal protective equipment as well as Intensive Care Unit resources, such as ventilators, medications, and trained personnel, elective vascular surgical cases have decreased significantly.

The American College of Surgeons placed recommendations on the management of elective surgical procedures with the use of the Elective Surgery Acuity Scale on March 13, 2020, and specific tiers to triage vascular surgery operations [3, 4]. On March 14, 2020, the Surgeon General urged the widespread halt of hospital elective procedures due to the mounting concerns of the Covid-19 surge. Given these discussions, most vascular surgeons have reduced their practice patterns to emergency vascular surgery and/or very urgent cases.

The adage of “time is tissue” remains a paramount concern for the vascular surgery community. On behalf of our patients, we are concerned about the delays of these procedures but clearly understand the public health necessity to restrict the use of valuable equipment and personnel. Despite physical distancing, within several days vascular surgeons organized through social media both locally and internationally to work, understand, and help predict what these unanticipated delays would be on patient outcomes. This led to the inception of the Vascular
Surgery Covid-19 Collaborative (VASCC), the combined international effort to help obtain prospective data on the impact of widespread vascular surgical care delays due to a national crisis and pandemic. We currently have over 300 members representing a majority of the states in the United States and over 28 countries worldwide, and we are continuing to grow and amass a data registry in cooperation with the Vascular Low Frequency Disease Consortium (VLFDC).

On behalf of the myriad of vascular surgeons involved among multiple practice patterns, we request our vascular surgery community to contribute and assist in this international disaster that affects us all.

#VASCC
References:


