Collaboration Fuels Innovation

Catalyzing game-changing medical collaborations requires forums for stakeholders to discuss and brainstorm. Researchers need environments where fragmentation, silos and inter-organizational competition can be put aside. Vascular Cures is overcoming these barriers by bringing together innovators in confidential forums for shared brainstorming, creating shared research assets and providing novel forms of support.

In September, Vascular Cures hosted the inaugural Vascular Research Summit to initiate a new approach to fighting the epidemic of vascular disease. Fifty-six surgeon-scientists from 31 leading academic medical centers were convened to identify unmet scientific needs and launch the Collaborative Patient-Centered Research (CPCR) Program. This new Vascular Cures program is designed to stimulate high-risk, high-impact multi-institutional projects which that generate milestones within 1 – 2 years.

Vascular Cures was able to pioneer this program because of our track record as a trusted non-profit innovator without proprietary interest. We are focused on improving vascular health by innovating patient-centered research, catalyzing breakthrough collaborations and empowering people in their vascular health journey. Our network of vascular KOLs who combine both medical care and groundbreaking research make us the nexus of change for vascular health management.

To ensure a mix of experience and fresh thinking, both division chiefs and early career investigators were invited. Vascular Cures’ chief medical officer and UCSF Chief of Vascular Surgery, Dr. Michael Conte, facilitated a discussion of key unmet needs in 3 major areas of vascular health: Peripheral Artery Disorder (PAD), Aortic Aneurysms and Venous/Dialysis.

Participating Institutions

Baylor College of Medicine
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center
Emory University School of Medicine
Harvard University Medical School
Indiana University School of Medicine
Northwestern University School of Medicine
Stanford University School of Medicine
The University of Chicago Medicine
Thomas Jefferson University
University of California at Davis
University of California at San Francisco (UCSF)
University of Florida
University of Maryland Medical Center
University of Michigan Health System
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
University of Nebraska College of Medicine
University of North Carolina School of Medicine
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC)
University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio School of Medicine
University of Toronto
University of Utah
University of Washington Medical Center
University of Virginia Health Center
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Wake Forest Baptist Health
Washington University School of Medicine
Yale University School of Medicine
Examples of the discussion topics included:

- Why do some PAD patients do better than others in response to treatment? What molecular signatures are most effective in predicting treatment outcomes?
- Are there surrogate markers of the biologic process of aortic wall degeneration that we can identify before it becomes a problem for the patient?
- What are the determinants of recurrence after a first episode of venous thromboembolism (VTE)?
- Why do some dialysis patients respond better than others and what factors drive those outcomes?

The Summit was remarkable for the enthusiasm of the participants, the quality and quantity of ideas generated and the high degree of interest in working together to accelerate results.

It resulted in several outcomes:

- Launch of the Collaborative Patient-Centered Research grant program. By year’s end, Vascular Cures will grant several teams up to $150,000 to conduct their proposed projects.
- Vascular Cures will continue to engage invitees and their colleagues in new collaborative ventures, to be developed over the next 12 months.
- A portfolio of shared research assets will be developed, and Vascular Cures will be an information resource to the research community to facilitate usage.
- Collaborative tools will be developed, potentially including confidential discussion platforms, databases, legal infrastructure and a clinical trials network.
- Opportunities will be created to highlight partners and innovators across these initiatives.

Vascular Cures is the leading national non-profit focused on improving vascular health through innovative patient-centered research, breakthrough collaborations and patient empowerment. Its initiatives span career development grants to insure a pipeline of innovators, a research consortium and shared biobank, and Project Voice, focused on patient empowerment and patient-reported outcomes research.