



The Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions

SCAI President's Page

The 2005 National Meeting at Ponte Vedra: A Great Meeting and a Very Good Sign for the Future

Barry F. Uretsky, MD, FSCAI

Director

Division of Cardiology

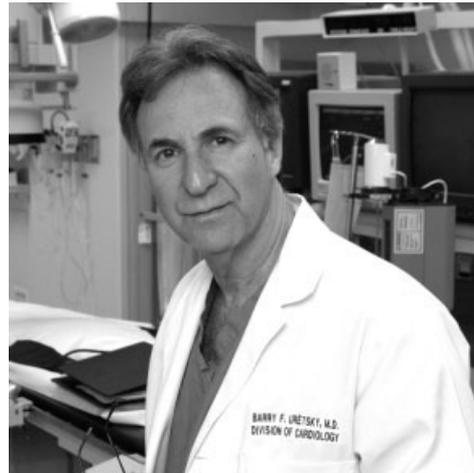
John Sealy Distinguished Centennial Chair

The University of Texas Medical Branch

Galveston, Texas

President

Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions



I am delighted to report that this year's annual meeting was the best ever, keeping the best parts of past meetings and adding new exciting venues. My credentials for critiquing this meeting include attending the last 11 SCAI meetings and chairing the 2000 meeting in Charleston, South Carolina. I personally thank the organizers, including the Program Director, Dr. Ted Bass, and his outstanding Program Committee: Drs. Marco Costa, Jeff Marshall, Jose Ettedgui, Robert Vincent, and Warren Laskey. Thanks also should go to SCAI's Director of Meetings, Rick Henegar, and the entire staff team for another job well done.

The meeting was also a very good sign for the Society's future. In the next few paragraphs, I'll give you my impressions of the meeting and what it portends for the Society's future.

Why It Was a Great Meeting

First and foremost, the quality of the intellectual content was uniformly superb. This truly was a world-class scientific meeting of cardiovascular researchers and practi-

tioners demonstrating the latest advances and the knowledge borne from experience. This included, for example:

- The Wednesday Judkins Imaging Symposium, chaired by Warren Laskey;
- The Founders' Lecture by Patrick Serruys on the future of drug-eluting stents;
- The Hildner Lecture by Gary Roubin on carotid artery stenting and the cardiologist as endovascular specialist;
- Congenital heart disease programs led by Drs. Jose Ettedgui and Robert Vincent, constituting a focused learning community in this particularly dynamic field;

Correspondence to: Barry F. Uretsky, MD, FSCAI, Director, Division of Cardiology, John Sealy Distinguished Centennial Chair, University of Texas Medical Branch, 301 University Blvd., Galveston, TX 77555-0553. E-mail: president@scai.org

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- The multiple international symposia developed by our colleagues from the Asia-Pacific region, Brazil, Mexico, Italy, Japan, and Spain;
- The continued collaboration and cooperation with SOLACI and CACI;
- The multiple practical “how-to” sessions;
- The highly informative TCT symposium;
- The carefully selected televised live cases;
- The Saturday full-day courses on interventions of extracardiac vascular beds chaired by Drs. Jeff Marshall and Chris White and the stem-cell symposium organized by the Texas Heart Institute; and
- A broad spectrum of educational satellite symposia organized by numerous organizations.

This educational effort was accomplished in a relaxed, collegial environment, with the educational presentations, abstract posters, and exhibits in close proximity to one another.

Why This Is a Hopeful Sign for the Society's Future

The SCAI national meeting, in addition to its educational function, serves as the one time during the year that a large part of the membership meets together to conduct the Society's business and interact socially. As this year's meeting demonstrates, there is a LOT of business going on!

Additionally, the Society's meeting increasingly provides an appealing venue for other constituencies and communities—nonmember physicians, cath lab technicians, industry, journalists, government officials—to gather, interacting both with one another and with the Society's membership.

The high level of activity at this year's meeting bodes very well for your Society. The Society conducts much of its ongoing business and decisions through its open committee structure. It is a matter of great pride that virtually all of SCAI's committees are open to all members who wish to participate. At this year's meeting, attendance and levels of activity within those committees were particularly brisk — an important barometer of your Society's efforts on your behalf. Most committees hosted new members and in many cases younger members, always an encouraging sign for the future. An equally promising sign: each committee meeting was very participatory, substantive, and results-oriented.

In addition to committee meetings, many other events took place:

- A member-initiated grassroots effort culminated in the inaugural meeting of the Transradial Working

Group (chairs: Drs. Samir Pancholy and John Coppola).

- Abstract submissions increased by a full 57 percent over last year (which was at record levels from the previous year). The accepted abstracts were of high quality. Abstract submission and presentation are important aspects of the meeting not only for the scientific content but also as a means to engage the young researcher.
- The Society continues to address the needs of the entire interventional cardiology community and, to that end, an extremely successful Interventional Fellowship Training Directors meeting was held under the chairmanship of Drs. Joe Babb, Tom Bashore, and David Kandzari.
- Thanks to the efforts of SCAI Trustee (and *CCI* editor-in-chief) Dr. Chris White, this year's *CCI* Editorial Board meeting was held for the first time at our meeting. This was an important opportunity to commemorate the *Journal's* rapid growth and impact, to thank Chris and his hardworking (volunteer!) Editorial Board, and to show gratitude to our colleagues at Wiley Publishing for their tireless efforts.
- At the banquet on Friday night, I was delighted to shake hands and welcome into the Society over 300 new members or Fellows. What was especially gratifying was that these new members spanned the gamut in age and geographical region with many from Asia, Europe, and South America as well as the United States. This broad membership increase leads me to believe that the interventional community is appreciating the relevance and importance of the Society to represent their particular interests in the various arenas we work.

Finally, I had a really good feeling about the “buzz.” The attendees truly seemed to enjoy themselves, both related to the quality of the educational product and the structure of the meeting. I was pleased when these positive comments were confirmed through the formal evaluation process.

The Meeting's Future

I see the high quality of this year's meeting as a very satisfying, rewarding outcome, but also as a challenge: we can always do better, and should strive to improve further. Our meeting may never be the biggest meeting (and I'm not certain we want it to be!), but it should always be “the best of the best.”

Concurrently, we must continue to devote much energy to meeting the needs of our early-career members, an area where we have made great strides in



Fig. 1. A former SCAI president (Dr. Morton Kern) and I meet with potential new members.

recent years. One of the Society's goals is to incorporate interventional trainees and new interventionists into the Society. Their interest and involvement starting early in their career is the best investment toward the viability and high quality of the Society. To that end, our meeting must incorporate educational content that will specifically meet their needs.

A Caveat

The meeting should first and foremost be a reflection of our Society. As active Society members, we need to work for its success and utilize this gathering to advance the goals of the Society — excellence in education, excellence in practice, and above all dedication to our patients.

To be sure, the primary goal of the meeting will remain education in invasive and interventional cardiology. The additional goals it achieves, including conducting our business meetings on behalf of the needs and interests of the interventional cardiologist everywhere, holding special meetings such as the Interventional Fellowship Directors' meeting, and the gathering of our members together, should not be underestimated.

Thus, my caveat for future meetings: consider the analogy of a geographically desirable living area faced with pressures of over-development, crowding, pollution and other dangers that effectively negate the locale's original attraction. Such is the risk we face with the national meeting (Please refer to "Small Was Good; Will Big Be Better?"[1]).

Ponte Vedra meeting Chair Dr. Bass put it best, aptly stating, "The annual meeting is at a crossroads.



Fig. 2. I had the privilege to speak with one of the pioneers of pediatric interventional cardiology, Dr Charles Mullins.

Do we want to maintain the feel of a small intimate gathering or become a large scientific congress?" As the Society and its annual meeting grow, I believe we should try hard to maintain the sense of intimacy and social and intellectual interchange (Figures 1 and 2) that have characterized the meetings to date while at the same time increase the attendance and educational opportunities.

Can we have it both ways? I will provide a personal example where the product has grown and the sense of intimacy remained.

When I started at my current Cath Lab position, our lab looked very much like many other Cath Labs with inadequate patient or equipment space. There was a feeling of being cramped and rushed and "very busy." There was always a surfeit of equipment in the halls, including boxes, stretchers, and sometimes a patient or two. A large scheduling board was in the central hallway and as patients were wheeled by, they could see not only their name but also the names of all the other Cath patients for that day (A HIPAA no-no!). Clearly not a good situation.

In the lab redesign that we then undertook, we added a large, comfortable patient holding unit. We increased storage space and added more facilities for nurses and physicians. The halls have been effectively cleared of extraneous items and people. The scheduling board has been replaced by a computerized screen in each Cath Lab suite.

The result? The whole area now has a sense of calm. When one looks down the main Cath Lab corridor during an average workday, it appears that very little is going on. In fact, the number of interventional procedures has more than doubled.

In the same way, I have no doubt that the Society can reengineer its annual gathering into a larger meeting with more attendees and activities yet retain the small-venue collegiality and intimacy—in short, its “feel”—that is the hallmark of your Society’s identity. However, we must continually remember our primary goals so we do not lose sight of them during the reengineering process.

I have suggested a few of many ways to grow the meeting and improve its quality. I would like to hear your ideas. Please write to me at president@scai.org.

REFERENCE

1. Uretsky BF. Small was good, will big be better? *Cathet Cardiovasc Intervent* 2005;65:315–317.