

## The Society for Cardiac Angiography & Interventions

## President's Page



## **Better Information, Better Communication**

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"Information overload," "knowledge explosion," "information superhighway," "just-in-time guidelines." What do these terms have in common?

The answer is twofold. First, they are all painfully overused cliches. Second, they are all completely, utterly true. In this month's President's Page, I would like to address how the information revolution (yet another cliché) is changing our lives as invasive and interventional cardiologists.

In previous President's Pages, I have explored with you three of my five goals for SCA&I: closer partnerships internationally, expanded advocacy domestically, and expanded educational programs. This month I would like to explore goal four: managing information effectively. Finding more effective ways to manage information and communicate with one another are fundamental to achieving our goals.

We must develop better and faster ways to:

**Communicate** to the media and the public the value of what invasive and interventional cardiologists do;

Manage, analyze and disseminate **clinical information** to healthcare professionals for the benefit of our patients; and

Identify and respond to **your professional needs** and goals in a timely manner.

"Better information, better communication" is the broadest of all of our goals, involving virtually all activities of your Society. The explosion in information systems and

new communications technology presents dramatic opportunities to link us together as never before.

How is your Society addressing those challenges and opportunities?

Communicating the value of what we do. Candidly, until relatively recently the Society's visibility has not been what it should have been. With SCA&I's move to Bethesda, we have taken steps to change that and increase the visibility of your profession. Our objective is to make the medical press, the lay press and the public aware that #1, invasive/interventional cardiologists provide invaluable services to society, and #2, SCA&I is the official organization representing those cardiologists, in close partnership with international interventional societies.

To increase such awareness, in recent months we have taken several steps:

We have made the SCA&I newsletter much more readable and substantive, and regularly mail it to thousands of invasive and interventional cardiologists worldwide, with plans underway to have excerpts translated into Spanish;

We mail the newsletter to a growing list of contacts in the medical press;

We are planning to form a SCA&I media spokesperson panel, consisting of carefully-briefed SCA&I members willing to serve as the Society's spokespersons in various locales; Monthly SCA&I newsreleases are posted on www.scai. org and mailed to the medical press; and

Other publications have either been completed (membership directory) or are under development (SCA&I annual report and information brochure among many) for the widest possible distribution.

This is a good start, but much work lies ahead if we are to ensure that the value of invasive and interventional cardiology services are fully and widely recognized.

Manage and disseminate clinical information. SCA&I has been in the data sampling and analysis business since our Registry began in the 1970's. We need to transform this process, not only to move the Registry into this millennium but also to advocate on your behalf, foster educational exchange, and connect our members to one another.

To facilitate this, we have transformed the Registry Committee into the Registry and Information Committee. Chaired by Bonnie Weiner, MD, FSCAI, this Committee recently directed the complete redesign of SCA&I's website. In addition to including many e-commerce features, the website will become a central source of clinical information for our members. Examples:

Clinical guidelines vital to the practice of invasive/interventional cardiology will reside at www.scai.org. We have already had requests for this from one of our Trustees (Dr. Neil Cumpston, who resides in Australia and feels the ready access of such information would enhance our image and our influence while being a dynamic way of maintaining uniform guidelines globally.

Private listserves for SCA&I clinically-oriented committees (e.g., Interventional Committee, Congenital Heart Disease Committee, Lab Performance Standards Committee, etc.) will foster the vigorous debate and free exchange of ideas essential to performance of their responsibilities; and

The CME Committee (chaired by Dr. Ted Feldman) has organized an online slide library on the SCA&I website, for interventional training program directors to use in providing core curriculum training to interventional fellows.

Evaluating the feasibility of placing our position papers, already gathered in hard copy monograph form, online at our website.

In addition to web-based initiatives, other efforts are underway. The CME Committee is pursuing providing clinical guidelines on Palm-Pilots<sup>TM</sup> and other handhelds. The Lab Performance Standards Committee has been the catalyst for development of the NEMA/SCA&I standard for building and properly using a phantom (for testing calibration of cath lab fluoroscopy equipment), and is disseminating information about that initiative via an SCA&I-organized pilot study currently underway.

SCA&I has partnered with ACC to provide late-breaking clinical information via CathSAPII, the interventional board review program, and the ACCIS interventional symposium at the ACC's annual meeting. Of course, the most comprehensive source of relevant clinical information is SCA&I's own Annual Scientific Sessions, which will be held May 15–19, 2002 in Seattle. We urge you to attend this, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary session, featuring "the best of the best in interventional cardiology."

Together, these initiatives are moving the Society forward toward a fundamental objective, facilitating your access to the latest, most clinically relevant information toward better patient care.

Responding to your professional needs. One of the most important professional needs any society can serve is providing its members better ways to keep in touch with one another. In that respect, we have made great progress. For example, fully 70% of SCA&I members have provided us their e-mail addresses, available via the "members only" part of www.scai.org. This has advanced the goal of building a true worldwide community of invasive/interventional cardiologists. If you have not already done so, would you please take a minute right now to provide us with a contact e-mail address for you via president@scai.org? We need to have rapidly available contact for all our members.

I thought you would be interested to know efforts being made to apply information technology to better respond to your professional needs. These efforts are due to the hard work of many SCA&I members throughout the world, working cooperatively toward the betterment of patient care. Please let me know your thoughts on these efforts and give me your ideas as to how the Society can continue to expand the value of membership. Send any comments to me by e-mail at president@scai.org. Thanks.