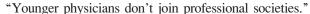


The Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions

SCAI President's Page

SCAI's Interventional Career Development Committee: A Critical Role, An Important Voice

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"What does a professional association have to do with ME?"

How many times have you heard these words expressed as conventional wisdom? In many fields (including medicine), that opinion is, unfortunately, all too close to reality. In our own field, for example, dramatic changes in both the business and the science sides of medicine, the demands of the workplace, and the responsibilities of family make it more and more challenging to devote scarce time to one's professional association.

Almost two years ago, one of our colleagues had an idea to counter this trend. As we prepared for our scheduled round of SCAI committee meetings (in this case, at our Annual Scientific Sessions in San Diego), a challenge was issued: What if we asked our core group of experienced SCAI Fellows and Members (those who contribute the most time and effort to our committees) to bring one of their younger colleagues to the next committee gatherings? Furthermore, what if



we used that opportunity to listen to them and invite their more active participation in our Society?

The concept was that by exposing those younger colleagues to the wide variety of activities being pursued by the Society, they would become more involved in ways worthwhile both to them and to SCAI. Even more important, we would demonstrate to those younger physicians that their voices are heard and have a meaningful voice in the governance of their Society.

In this case, concept rapidly turned into reality, a reality that went beyond our greatest expectations!

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I personally thank my colleague Lloyd W. Klein, M.D., FSCAI, for coming up with this idea, and for working closely with staff and colleagues to move this concept forward. I also thank my predecessors as SCAI President, Drs. John McB. Hodgson, M.D., FSCAI, and Michael Cowley, M.D., FSCAI, for nurturing this initiative during the past two years.

Equally significant, the roots of this idea can also be traced back to our friend and colleague Vijay Kalaria, M.D., FSCAI, who for several years has contributed a series of columns to SCAI's newsletter, specifically targeted to the issues and opportunities involved with establishing oneself as a new interventional cardiologist. Dr. Kalaria's columns have been invaluable in defining the challenges involved and in framing the debate, thereby encouraging the Society to begin this new committee.

At our San Diego Scientific Sessions, several of your colleagues responded to Dr. Klein's idea, bringing with them younger colleagues who had either recently joined their practice, were about to join, or had moved into the community. Those individuals were welcomed at our Interventional Committee meeting and other committee meetings.

At the end of the Interventional Committee meeting, Dr. Klein asked these young colleagues to meet informally and develop the key elements of an Early-Career Interventionalists Committee:

- A draft mission statement;
- A list of three things they would like to accomplish in the near term;
- A temporary chair or co-chair;
- An outline of an overall charge to the Committee; and
- A game plan for accomplishing said charge.

The initial group (approximately a dozen young interventionalists) responded enthusiastically and energetically. More important, the group has continued its efforts in very focused ways. Since that initial meeting, the group has expanded to pursue a variety of activities to help new interventionalists who are just embarking on their careers to meet their professional goals. The group has been active, vocal, and highly engaged, focusing on issues specific to recent entrants to the field of interventional cardiology. They also changed the committee's name to the Interventional Career Development Committee, reflecting one of their primary goals: to help early-career interventionalists to launch and develop their careers.

In the remainder of this column, I'd like to give you an overview of the types of activities they have been pursuing. I would also like to urge younger interventionalists who have not been active on this committee to join (contact Andrea Frazier at afrazier@scai.org for details).

What has the Committee accomplished or started in the past two years?

The short answer: a lot!

MENTORING

The Committee has begun developing a mentoring program, where an established SCAI member is the contact, or "go-to," person for four or five new members. SCAI mentors provide practical help with the nuts-and-bolts aspects of setting up a practice, including reimbursement, billing, and coding issues.

I have been very pleased that the Committee's cochairs, Drs. Michael Lim and John Young, have led this new committee with enthusiasm and a spirit of inclusiveness. As an example, Dr. Lim has encouraged the Committee to develop the mentoring initiative, noting that "they teach nothing anywhere in our training about how to run a practice or how to be a partner in a practice. That is why junior interventionalists are hungry to have contact and discussions with more senior people who can guide them." Dr. Lim and his colleagues are working with Bonnie Weiner, M.D., MSEC, MBA, FSCAI, the Society's Internet "guru," to set up computer programs that will facilitate interactions and foster discussions with other SCAI members.

"The idea is for us to be able to go to the Internet and get advice on how to handle certain problems, difficult patients, and cases. We're also working on ways to bring together the early and more experienced interventionalists at SCAI's national meeting every spring to encourage dialogue," reports Dr. Lim.

Similarly, Dr. Young emphasized that "there are lots of people within SCAI who don't realize that experienced members are only a phone call away. This fact needs to be disseminated to the newer members."

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION

My colleagues and I have been equally impressed with the Committee's fast start in developing opportunities for writing, research, and publication — areas of career development where mentorship is crucial. The overarching goal of the Committee is to develop opportunities for career development that are relevant to practice. The group is making plans to recruit senior interventionalists for newdevice proctoring and for assistance in getting junior interventionalists involved in clinical trial work. Dr. Mort Kern, an SCAI Past President, has been instrumental in supporting these goals. Mort has been tireless in working with the Committee closely to provide mentorship in how to get research funding and the all-important area of how to get published.

www.scai.org

SCAI's website is becoming an even more useful resource to the early-career interventionalist, thanks to the efforts of the Committee. A new section of *www. scai.org* is serving as a resource for younger members, with new content being added all the time. In recent months, the Committee has worked with Dr. Weiner and SCAI staff member Andrea Frazier to add considerable content of interest to younger members:

- Fellowship research award programs
- Fellowship training programs
- An expanding SCAI job bank, for job seekers and employers
- Recent salary survey data
- Advice on how to get papers published, by Dr. Kern
- Extensive board review materials, such as didactic slide sets
- A link to CardioVillage, a comprehensive CME resource prepared by the University of Virginia
- SCAI "mini-guidelines" downloadable to your PDA

Even more content is on the way, and we welcome your contributions.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The subcommittee has also suggested the establishment of SCAI-sponsored training for new procedures, and I am encouraging the Committee to partner with our CME Committee to that end. Dr. Young reports that the Committee has major plans in this area, insightfully noting that "Interventional cardiology is a bit unique in that new devices or new technology are constantly evolving, and it's very difficult to maintain training in all of these areas once you leave formal fellowship training. We would like to have SCAI offer proctoring and training for these new procedures, or have access to affiliated centers where this training can be done."

NETWORKING

When I was an "early-career angiographer" (admittedly a few years ago), one of the most useful things

for me was simply to get to know others in the field, both those starting out and those more established. Since the field was much (much!) smaller back then, it was a little easier to get to know all experienced senior physicians, forging relationships that have helped me throughout my career and are even more valuable today.

With the growth in, and globalization of, our field, forging those networks can be much harder to do, but potentially be enormously valuable. Thus, one of the simplest, yet most valuable, functions the Interventional Career Development Committee has been doing is to provide forums for all of us — those just starting out and those more established — to get to know one another.

To that end, the Committee plans to set up a separate forum at future SCAI Scientific Sessions so that interventionalists-in-training can become acquainted with the Society before they finish their fellowship training. "Hopefully, when they go into practice, they will be interested in joining the Society," Dr. Young emphasizes. My goal as President is to encourage all of us as a society to support, encourage, and participate in those efforts.

In summary, Dr. Lim recently observed, "I'm amazed at how fast we've gained acceptance and appreciation by the Society as a whole. We have been universally encouraged in every aspect by all members. It's a pleasant surprise. It wasn't expected, but it's very nice to see." Dr. Young has been equally heartened by the response to this important initiative.

Dr. Klein recently summed it all up very nicely when he said, "The Society is to be applauded for supporting its younger members. Their support shows that SCAI is sensitive to the needs of its membership. The leadership understands that some members are in the young-career category and we want them to feel enfranchised about what goes on."

Drs. Lim, Young, and Klein, I couldn't have said it

For more information about SCAI's ICD Committee, contact Andrea Frazier at *afrazier@scai.org* or 800-992-7224.

I would like to hear your thoughts on this topic: contact me at president@scai.org