Too often, healthcare decisions don’t include patient input, priorities and values. Outcomes decline very quickly if treatment is not well matched to the individual situation. Yet resources can be difficult to find, patient participation is low and there are few tools available to easily share information.

We are building the first online vascular community to improve health for patients and those at risk. It will be linked to a unique database that integrates patient-centered and clinical outcomes to improve decision-making. Digital health management tools will be used to create a platform of information from patients and clinicians beginning in 2015.

Project VOICE is the latest example of our passion for collaboration through the Vascular Care to Cure Continuum. As a non-profit, Vascular Cures is a unique catalyst for collaboration between organizations that typically operate in isolation. Our 2014 Vascular Innovation Summit brought together leading doctors, health care systems, pharmaceutical and medical device companies, and insurers. They identified projects that could leverage shared data, resources and expertise to address crucial unmet needs in vascular health.

Vascular Cures has always believed that patient-centered research will yield the best new treatments and technologies. The next step is to improve healthcare itself.
Biobanks: the Foundation of Personalized Medicine

Experts such as Sue Siegel, CEO of GE healthymagination, refer to high quality patient biosamples as “liquid gold” because of their extraordinary scarcity and power to develop diagnostic tests and drugs that address individual biology and genetics.*

To achieve this quality standard, biosamples (such as blood and tissue) should be matched to patient medical history and treatment results, collected across a broad population and reliably managed. Biobanks are the foundation of “personalized medicine” but many are too small or narrowly focused to have a major impact.

Providing “Liquid Gold” For Vascular Medicine

The Vascular Cures Research Network and Biobank Meet the Test

The Stoney Vascular Biobank is a dynamic, growing resource. New medical centers are continuing to join the Vascular Cures Research Network (VCRN), with each contributing patient samples and data on an ongoing basis. This increasingly powerful collection will be available to researchers around the world to solve multiple problems in vascular disease. This ever-growing “library” will yield results for decades.

We are a unique catalyst for collaboration. Many biobanks are created by only one institution for the benefit of its own researchers. Since this project is managed entirely by Vascular Cures, a non-profit without proprietary interests, multiple institutions are willing to share proprietary research assets and expertise. This provides a critical mass of demographically diverse samples to develop therapies for varied populations.

We have an extraordinary team of committed leaders guiding the creation, management and use of the Vascular Cures Research Network and Biobank. They include leading experts in cardiovascular medicine, surgery, pathology, genetics, biochemistry, and clinical trials.

VCRN has launched at UCSF, the San Francisco VA, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, and the University of Florida. The University of Washington/Puget Sound VA and the University of Pittsburgh/Pittsburgh VA are expected to come online in early 2015, with another five by the end of 2016. VCRN has reached the critical mass to undertake its first research project.

Could Omega-3 Fatty Acids Lead to Better Vascular Healing?

Patients with advanced peripheral artery disease often face inadequate vascular healing due to protracted inflammation after procedures to open blocked arteries. The goal of VCRN’s first research project is to identify compounds that regulate this response in patients after bypass surgery, stents or angioplasty. Recent work has identified critical pathways of resolving inflammation, including those governed by bioactive lipids derived from omega-3 fatty acids (e.g. fish oils). This research will involve at least 100 patients from 4–5 sites and may lead to new ways to improve vascular healing.

Today’s medical guidelines rarely include patient input when selecting among the many possible treatments for vascular diseases. Dr. Matthew Corriere at Wake Forest University, our 17th Wylie Scholar, is developing an innovative automated tool to pilot a new approach. He is collaborating with the business school at Wake Forest University to use consumer product research strategies to identify a vascular patient’s goals and values during a clinic visit, so that these can be directly applied to consideration of alternatives. This project challenges existing clinical practice by adding an individualized, patient-based perspective to decision-making.

Long-term innovation requires investment in those who will have a lifetime of influence. The Wylie Scholar Award is a $150,000 three year career development grant program created by Vascular Cures in 1996. Since 2013, it has been co-sponsored by the Society for Vascular Surgery.

What Does Success Mean To An Individual Patient?

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Vascular Cures Acquires Vascular Disease Foundation
The Vascular Disease Foundation (VDF) was founded in 1998 to provide resources to patients, raise awareness, and educate the general public and medical professionals. VDF also sponsored the PAD Coalition and the Venous Disease Coalition to lead public policy initiatives. Vascular Cures acquired VDF in 2014 and is now the only national organization representing the millions of patients with diseases of the vascular system.

CIRCULATE!
VASCULAR CURES ANNUAL DINNER
Over 150 guests joined us at the Olympic Club in San Francisco to enjoy an elegant evening with inspirational speakers including Bob Lloyd, a former professional NBA player and chairman of The V Foundation for Cancer Research. When Bob was diagnosed with a life-threatening aortic aneurysm, he realized that although nearly half of deaths from cardiovascular disease are due to problems outside the heart, vascular research is severely underfunded. Special thanks to Life Line Screening, the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Cook Medical, Emergent Medical Partners, Mercator MedSystems, Genentech and the many others that made this event a success.

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