

Letter from the President

Welcome to the Venous Forum of the Royal Society of Medicine.

I should like to start by thanking Professor Alun Davies, immediate past-President, for his excellent leadership over the last two years. Along with Mr David Berridge, Secretary, and the other Executive Officers and Council, Alun has taken the Forum from strength to strength.

It is a great honour and a privilege to take over the Presidency of the Venous Forum at this time. I very much look forward to the challenges ahead and to building on what Alun and many others have achieved in recent years.

The Venous Forum is widely recognised within the UK and internationally for the work that it does in the field of phlebology to improve patient care through facilitating and promoting education and research.

The Forum has strong links with other learned societies such as the European Venous Forum, the American Venous Forum and the American College of Phlebology.

The Forum's recent achievements include the "VEIN 2 project" (published as a supplement to Phlebology) and "Recommendations for the referral and treatment of patients with lower limb chronic venous insufficiency (including Varicose Veins)" which is currently being distributed widely within primary and secondary care across the UK as an aid to evidence-based practice. These important documents can be found elsewhere on the web-site.

This year the Annual Spring Meeting (27 and 28 April 2011) will be held jointly with the British Association of Sclerotherapists, the Society of Vascular Nurses and the Society of Vascular Technologists. The 2011 meeting will, therefore, continue the Venous Forum's long-held tradition of promoting a truly multi-disciplinary approach to the management of venous disease and will offer a varied and interesting programme of practical value to all those involved in the management of venous patients.

The Venous Forum programme on Wednesday 27 April will comprise mainly of three Symposia, each with expert panels of UK, European and US speakers, addressing the following themes:

How will the care of lower limb venous disease be delivered in the face of changing economic priorities?

Most 'Western' countries face staggering levels of debt and are having to make severe cuts in public spending. Health care is unlikely to escape and further prioritising, or 'rationing', seems inevitable. As part of this process, it seems likely that the UK National Health Service and other similar organisations will continue to disinvest in the treatment of lower limb venous disease. What will the effect of this be on patients, phlebologists and the economy, both now and in the future? Who will and should pay for treatment and how much should they pay? How can we train and credential phlebologists in such a health care environment? How do we ensure that patients with lower limb venous disease get the care they need?

Thrombo-embolic prophylaxis following venous interventions

All interventions for lower limb venous disease are associated with a risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE). Such interventions are also associated with significant medicolegal activity and alleged negligent failure to institute proper venous thrombo-embolic (VTE) prophylaxis remains a common cause of litigation. Evidence for what constitutes reasonable practice following venous surgery is limited; evidence in respect of the new endovenous interventions is virtually non-existent. How are phlebologists best able to protect their patients from VTE and their own reputations?

What is the role of interventions to prevent and treat the post-thrombotic syndrome and venous outflow obstruction

Extensive deep vein thrombosis (DVT) remains a challenging condition to manage in the short and long term. The incidence of symptoms and signs of the post-thrombotic syndrome remains high following best medical therapy. Does early clot removal in the acute setting improve outcomes? In the chronic setting how should we diagnose and treat venous outflow obstruction

In addition, there will be research papers for oral and poster presentations; the Phlebology RSM Press Lecture and American College of Phlebology Prize presentation. The full programme can be found on this web-site.

On behalf of the Venous Forum, I should like to acknowledge the support given to us by the many organisations without whose generosity none of this important and valuable work would be possible. I should especially like to thank our major sponsors who once again this year are Angiodynamics, Biolitec, Covidien, Medi, and Olympus.

I should also like to thank Louisa Mason at the RSM for all of her hard work over the last few months since I took over as President.

On behalf of the Council and Members of the Venous Forum, I cordially invite you to join the Forum, attend the Annual Spring Meeting in April, and get involved in the work we do to improve the quality of the care received by patients with venous disease in the UK and overseas.

Andrew Bradbury

President 2011/2012