

Introduction



Vascular anomalies in some form or another are encountered frequently in day-to-day practice by diagnostic and interventional radiologists alike. In fact, depending on definition, they are now known to occur in at least 1-2% of the entire population. Within the younger pediatric population, the diagnosis of a vascular anomaly will usually mandate some series of medical consultations and possible intervention. A larger number of patients, however, will seek medical attention in adolescence or adulthood, either when lesions become symptomatic, or when incidentally detected by some other study. If untreated, the pain and disability that can accompany these congenital lesions can significantly impact one's quality of life in addition to that of one's family, and may even be life-threatening. Even though only a minority of vascular anomalies patients may become symptomatic, these disorders afflict a sufficiently large enough population during the prime of life to measurably impact Society as a whole. It is important to deliver appropriate diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up, which at times may be life long, to this distinct group of patients.

The pioneering work of early researchers in vascular anomalies along with their creation of the International Society for the Study of Vascular Anomalies (ISSVA) in the 1970s has gradually brought order to chaos within this mysterious and often misunderstood world of vascular entities. Major early breakthroughs occurred through correctly identifying and classifying lesions as either tumors or malformation subtypes according to histology and clinical behavior which in turn dictated appropriate therapy. Today, new advances in immunohistochemical, genetic, and cellular/molecular biologic analysis have allowed extremely specific vascular anomaly diagnoses and categorization and have brought clarity to heretofore unknown or misunderstood syndromes.

Better understanding the cellular processes occurring within vascular anomalies has opened a new door and in some cases, allows modulation of the disease process noninvasively via medical therapy alone or as an adjunct to traditional modes of therapy which have historically included surgery and more recently percutaneous interventional radiologic techniques.

This veritable explosion in basic science and clinical medical knowledge has perfectly coincided with the continued

deepening of interventional radiology's technical armamentarium that can be brought to bear through image-guided interventions. Therefore, it is now more important than ever that the interventional radiologist keep current in modern vascular anomalies therapy, including the ability to diagnose and work within the latest ISSVA classification and to understand the rationale and techniques in percutaneous intervention using any manner of embolics, sclerosants, adhesives, and other medical agents and devices. Most importantly, interventional radiologists must understand and acknowledge the role of their techniques as well as their role as a team member within a multidisciplinary consultative team that incorporates the most current diagnostic and therapeutic regimes within each of their respective specialties.

With this in mind, it was the intention of the editors to present a comprehensive spectrum of perspectives by including articles from recognized leaders in surgery and medicine treating vascular anomalies. This serves to complement and contextualize the core articles from interventional radiology experts on classification and interventional radiologic management of the most common vascular anomaly entities or syndromes.

We hope this compilation stimulates further reading and collaboration, encourages those in practice to incorporate the treatment of vascular anomalies into their practice, and deepens and broadens the knowledge of those already participating in these challenging and rewarding procedures.

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