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Collaboration is Key to Treating Complex Vascular Diseases and Conditions

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Surgical Solutions

Collaboration is Key to Treating Complex Vascular Diseases and Conditions



Drs. Taki Galanis, Geno Merli, Walter Kraft, and Luis Eraso, comprise the vascular medicine component of the Jefferson Vascular Center—now caring for patients in Center City, Methodist Hospital, and Northeast Philadelphia.

As one of the highest-volume vascular practices on the East Coast, the Jefferson Vascular Center (JVC) brings together the physicians, surgeons and pharmacists needed to deliver coordinated, convenient patient care.

The JVC's integrated, multi-disciplinary approach is extremely effective in diagnosing, treating and monitoring vascular diseases (diseases of blood vessels) and thrombotic (blood-clotting) disorders – including complex arterial and vein thrombosis, peripheral artery disease, lymphedema, post-thrombotic syndromes, chronic venous insufficiency, varicose veins, vasculitis and congenital vascular conditions.

Launched in 2009, the JVC is led by Co-Directors Paul J. DiMuzio, MD, FACS, the William M. Measey Professor of Surgery and Director of the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, Geno Merli, MD, Senior Associate Chief Medical Officer of Thomas Jefferson University Hospital (TJU), and Laurence Needleman, MD, Associate Professor of Radiology and Director of the Division of Abdominal Imaging. Dr. Merli has long been a nationally recognized expert in deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a potentially deadly blood clot in the leg.

Housed on the sixth floor of the Gibbon Building at 11th and Chestnut Streets, the JVC recently completed a

renovation that tripled its footprint and brought the angioplasty center, staffed by an interventional cardiologist, in close proximity. JVC faculty members also care for patients at Methodist Hospital and in Northeast Philadelphia, serving a total of about 1,500 patients annually.

As a medical specialty, vascular medicine is relatively new. Jefferson's Taki Galanis, MD, received Board certification in vascular medicine by being sponsored and mentored into the specialty. More recently, physicians have been able to pursue fellowship training. One such specialist is Luis H. Eraso, MD, who joined Jefferson in June 2011 after completing three years of fellowship training at the Cardiovascular Division of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Eraso, who received Jefferson's Marjorie A. Bowman, MD, '76 Early Career Investigator Award for Primary Care Research for his work on novel biomarkers of peripheral arterial disease, emphasizes the value of an integrated, multi-disciplinary center.

"Other programs offer treatment for problems affecting the arterial, venous and lymphatic circulatory systems, but very few do so in one physical location," he says. "The Jefferson Vascular Center brings together medical, surgical and pharmacy specialists, which offers benefits to patients and improvement in care coordination and delivery."

Vascular medicine physicians also manage the vascular wound care program, an integral part of the JVC which provides advanced vascular wound services, such as multilayer compression and absorbent dressing (MCAD) therapy, outpatient surgical debridement, application of bioengineered skin grafts and substitutes, and/or use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Additionally, some of the certified vascular medicine physicians are involved in the interpretation of vascular ultrasound studies performed at the JVC vascular laboratory.

Equally important, Dr. Eraso says, are the roles of Walter Kraft, MD, who is board certified in both internal medicine and clinical pharmacology, and Lynda Thomson, PharmD, who joins the vascular medicine physicians in staffing the Jefferson Anticoagulation and Thrombosis Service (JATS). JATS is a busy inpatient and outpatient consult service dedicated to coordinating the transition of care as patients with complex vascular conditions move back into community-based primary care. JATS also provides guidance in the medical management of venous thromboembolic disease in special populations, including pregnant patients. Working closely with Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Jefferson's high-risk obstetrics team, the medical and pharmacy staff at the JVC helps to manage anticoagulation therapy throughout their pregnancy.

"Our multi-disciplinary approach helps prevent overlap in care—ensuring that two specialties within the same system aren't dealing with the same disease in different ways," he concludes. "Here, multiple specialists practice side by side. We consult with each other and collaborate in real time, which enables us to provide a more seamless experience and support better outcomes for our patients."

For more information about the JVC, please visit Jefferson.edu/JVC

Surgeon Speaks



"Patients with extensive acute deep vein thrombosis (DVT) of the legs provide an excellent example of why effective medical-surgical collaboration is so important.

"These patients typically benefit from emergency catheter-directed thrombolysis, an endovascular procedure performed by vascular surgeons. Subsequent medical management is directed toward preventing re-thrombosis and preventing the long-term complications of DVT. At the Jefferson Vascular Center, vascular medicine specialists initiate and transition that care, as well as provide long-term management of blood thinners and other medical measures.

"Across vascular diseases and conditions, Jefferson's vascular medicine specialists provide many outpatient services. In addition to the excellent care they afford, this collaboration allows the surgeons to focus on complex surgical and endovascular procedures."

Paul J. DiMuzio, MD, FACS
William M. Measey Professor of Surgery
Director, Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery

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