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Jefferson Vascular Center Among the First to Implant Fenestrated Aortic Grafts

The Jefferson Vascular Center brings together surgical and medical specialties to provide comprehensive care to patients with vascular diseases (diseases of blood vessels) and thrombotic (blood-clotting) disorders, as well as care of complex vascular wounds.

The multidisciplinary center, launched in July 2009, is co-directed by 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 Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of Thomas Jefferson University Hospital; and Laurence Needleman, MD, Associate Professor of Radiology and Director of the Division of Abdominal Imaging. In the first few years, the center directors have focused on implementing innovative surgical devices and techniques, building a strong team of specialists, and expanding the service area beyond Jefferson and Methodist Hospital.

As Dr. DiMuzio explains, Jefferson recently became one of the first centers in the United States to implant the new FDA-approved fenestrated aortic graft (Cook Medical, Inc.) to treat juxtarenal aneurysms via a minimally-invasive technique. This type of aneurysm occurs in the abdominal aorta up to and including the area where the renal arteries branch off to supply the kidneys.

"Previously, the surgical approach required a large abdominal or thoracic incision," Dr. DiMuzio says. "With the new grafts, we’re able to use a minimally invasive – including a totally percutaneous – approach that can result in less pain and scarring and support a faster recovery.

In a percutaneous procedure, the surgeon punctures the skin of the groin area to access a blood vessel through which they insert and place the graft.

In addition to incorporating new devices, the Center has welcomed two new surgeons, Babak Abai, MD, FACS, and Dawn M. Salvatore, MD. The new faculty members are both fellowship-trained vascular surgeons board certified in General Surgery and Vascular Surgery. Both will be practicing in Center City and at satellite locations. Dr. Salvatore is expanding the Center’s reach to Voorhees, NJ, while Dr. Abai will be providing care to patients in Northeast Philadelphia.

On the medical side, Dr. Merli’s vascular medicine team treats many conditions, including deep vein thrombosis, peripheral artery disease and chronic venous insufficiency, and it staffs the Wound Care Program component of the Jefferson Vascular Center. The wound care specialists can diagnose and treat all types of wounds, such as surgical wounds that have not healed properly, radiation injuries and diabetic ulcers. Treatment options include debridement, application of skin substitutes and hyperbaric oxygen treatment, which involves the therapeutic use of oxygen to promote faster, more effective healing. The program has now attained 100 percent certification for hyperbaric wound care, meaning all five physicians have completed a series of tests to become board certified in this technique.

Finally, Dr. DiMuzio says, the Jefferson Vascular Center is anticipating its expansion later this year to a state-of-the-art space on the sixth floor of the Gibbon Building at 111 South 11th Street. In addition to tripling the Center’s footprint, this next phase of development makes the patient experience even more streamlined. The new office will be adjacent to a new multidisciplinary center devoted to angioplasty.

For more information about the Jefferson Vascular Center visit: www.jeffersonhospital.org/JVC