

# Guest editorial

## Vascular surgery

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The aim of this edition of *CME* is to review current concepts in the management of common vascular problems. An attempt has been made to invite contributors over a wide base covering academic vascular surgical centres in South Africa.

Vascular surgery is a rapidly expanding field with exciting technological advances. This applies particularly to catheter-based interventions such as angioplasty and stenting. As with all new developments, the applications and indications are constantly under review and require ongoing audit in order to define the indications for their use. This becomes all the more problematic as technology improves and wider applications are entertained.

Extracranial cerebrovascular disease has reasonably well-defined indications for intervention but the various clinical presentations are often not well understood and the current focus is on carotid stenting. Another major development has been better understanding and improvement of medical therapies, and it is necessary to define how this will influence indications for intervention.

With regard to aortic aneurysm therapy endovascular repair is well established, but with improving device technology and design the major question is whether the indications should be widened.

Lower-limb venous thrombosis has always been an important component of surgical practice, particularly with regard to postoperative complications. Protocols related to diagnosis and therapy in the light of new developments in anticoagulant agents and thrombolytic therapy require focus.

Claudication is probably the most common presentation of arterial insufficiency and the major area of debate and controversy is whether the indications for intervention should be liberalised in the light of developments in catheter-based modalities. It is also important to understand the significance and scope of investigation and the non-operative treatment of this problem.

The entity of the diabetic foot is very poorly understood by medical practitioners in general and it is important to identify the patients and understand the principles of therapy.

South Africa is the epicentre of the HIV epidemic and throughout the country patients are presenting with HIV-related vasculopathies. It is therefore becoming increasingly important for practitioners at all levels to understand the pathology and dilemmas presented by its management.

Varicose veins present a common problem and there are exciting new technologies related to their treatment.

Finally, trauma presents another epidemic in South Africa. Non-invasive technologies present a new and cost-effective therapeutic modality. The place of this therapy in the management of trauma is in the process of being defined.

It is hoped that this edition of *CME* gives assimilable information to non-specialists and provides the necessary insights into diagnosis and management of these frequently encountered clinical problems.