Physician Practice Habits on Treating Claudicants who Smoke

Objective
Smoking abuse is the most important modifiable risk factor for patients with vascular disease. Smoking is known to increase the incidence of peripheral arterial disease more than threefold in a dose-dependent fashion by pack-year history. By quitting smoking, patients have better outcomes from cardiovascular disease to overall post-operative mortality. Our goal was to identify practice habits of physicians by using social media through the Society of Vascular Surgery (SVS).

Methods
By utilizing a survey which was emailed to the members of the Society of Vascular Surgery (SVS), we wanted to reach different providers across the world and see their practice habits and views on treating patients with claudication who smoke. A 14 question survey was shared with the members of SVS both nationally and internationally. Results
We had a total of 837 responses. 34% of responses were from the US, about 35% from Europe, 15% from Asia, 6% from South America. Further 87% of responses were vascular surgeons with 3.35% being interventional radiologist and 2% interventional cardiologist. About 45% of physicians have been in practice less than 10 years with 55% being in practice over 10 years. 75% of our polled physicians are in academic practice and 25% in private practice. When asked if the physicians would treat patients with claudication who smoke with endovascular surgery, 65% responded yes, 25% said no, and 10% said depends on the patient. In regards to open surgery, only 56% of physicians would offer surgery to actively smoking patients. Lastly when asked about treating electronic cigarettes the same as conventional cigarettes, 62% of physicians view them the same.

Conclusions
This study was unique in that it illustrates a different approach into gaining insight into physician practice habits. By using a survey via the SVS email platform, we were able to collect data on over 800 physicians. We plan to conduct further analysis of this data that could provide insight into practice variations across specialty and geography.