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## **Monthly Report – February 2005**

**Mark your Calendar now!!!**  
**27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Vascular Society of New Jersey**  
**Wednesday, March 16, 2005**  
**Overlook Hospital, Summit, NJ**

Registration Materials were mailed to members – Please fax in your complimentary registration today!

### **From the President**

**Clifford Sales, MD**

LEARNED HELPLESSNESS is the phenomenon that occurs when mice are repeatedly subjected to painful stimuli from which they cannot escape. This concept threw Skinner's idea of Behaviorism for a loop—fooling all of Pavlov's dogs! Applying the mouse model to human behavior helped some explain theories of depression.

Are we, as Vascular Surgeons, the mice that have "learned helplessness" and thus given up all hopes of avoiding the negative stimulus? Have we been beaten down so much and lost so many battles that it is no longer worth "fighting the fight?" Are we so small and insignificant that any and all attempts at salvation are futile and not worth the costs?

There is an argument—with good data—to suggest that the answer to ALL of the above questions is "YES!" However, there are those who feel that while the battle is formidable, it is worth fighting as this is our livelihood, our life's work and what we have dedicated ourselves to be doing for the next few decades—not to mention that we believe that we do what we do fairly well!

The Vascular Society of New Jersey (VSNJ) is but a "blip" on the radar screen of life. We barely surface in terms of medical organizations in our state, let alone the country. Why bother getting involved? BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO BE HEARD! One can certainly continue to complain in the locker rooms and halls of the hospitals. The chance of that working is probably a bit less than contributing to VSNJ! New Jersey is a small state dominated by politicians who are quite content with avenging the 2003 election efforts put forth by the Medical Society. As physicians, although we may be disliked by the public at large, you are still liked and respected by your patients. These patients vote and these patients will listen to you!

Behavioral psychologists tell us that the small rewards can help overcome learned helplessness. We need not fight the entire war—simply small battles, one at a time! Unlike the mouse physically forced to stay in the cage with the electric pad under his feet, you, as a Vascular Surgeon, can have some input. Maybe it will not make a difference at all...but maybe, just maybe, it will!

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**We would like to extend an invitation to join thousands of physicians in an opportunity to voice support for effective malpractice liability reform by engaging our House and Senate leaders to join in this battle. On Wednesday, March 30<sup>th</sup> – National Doctor's Day – the Coalition for Accessible Physicians will sponsor an organized march on Washington, DC to educate lawmakers, the media, and the general public about the current crisis.**

More than anywhere else, physicians throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states have suffered from the rise in medical malpractice premiums. Six of the 20 states currently in medical liability crisis mode (gauged by the American Medical Association) are located in these regions while their surrounding states all show dangerous signs. It is only fitting that physicians in these states lead the charge to halt doctors from leaving their practices, their patients and our hometowns.

For less than it costs to fill up your gas tank, physicians in our region can make a difference in saving medicine from continuing its downward spiral. Please call Ruth Schulze at 201 445-1240 or Matthew Caruso at 201 964 2371 for more info.

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***NEW NEW NEW NEW for VSNJ members....***

***We invite you and your practice managers/billing staff to visit our website monthly for a coding or practice management tip....***

**[www.vascularsocietynj.org](http://www.vascularsocietynj.org)**

**TIP OF THE MONTH**

This section will be included on the website only. It will include a coding tip from those members who have found some helpful tricks in the current CPT coding schema. If you have a tip, PLEASE send it to us for inclusion. You will only be helping your colleagues!!

**THIS MONTH: Check out the tip on IVC Filter Placement**