My name is Prajna Kota and I’m a vascular resident from India. I had the chance to present my research in the ESVS annual meeting, 2018 and have been fortunate to receive the travel grant as well. This is my first international presentation in any conference of sorts and it has been a rewarding experience. Young Indian surgeons often do not make it to International conferences mainly due to lack of guidance and financial constraints. If it hadn’t been for your funding, I wouldn’t have had this wonderful opportunity.

During the course of the conference, I had the pleasure of meeting multiple top-notch vascular surgeons from across the world and interact with them. It only helped in reinforcing why I took up this specialty. India has different patterns of vascular disease as compared to the western society. Though we have ample patients , though we do reasonable amount of open and endovascular procedures, we lack registries . This leaves us limp regarding the course of management and extrapolated guidelines may not always work. (As, pointed out by Dr. Sonia Anand, We are trialists..) I was inspired by your symposium on registries and Big data. Though there maybe many obstacles in the way, our chat with Dr. Jack Cronenwett ( who I previously saw only on the cover of Rutherford’s textbook of vascular surgery) convinced us to take the first steps.

India has relatively less vascular surgeons, fewer interested in academic pursuits and even fewer women pursuing this specialty. The presidential address called for inclusivity and I think that’s something we need to address in India. Women in India, do feel apprehensive becoming surgeons, they are more often than not criticized as compared to their male counterparts. I have no data in this field and I realise there is a need for studies on the same to make the truth obvious. Female vascular residents need role models. They may not be necessarily female. The reason I have had the opportunity to attend this meeting is due to my supervising consultants, Dr. Sunil Agarwal, Dr. Edwin Stephen, Dr. Philip Joseph and Dr. Gnaneswar Atturu, who have seen potential in me and encouraged me ,despite the existing prejudice. The Volodos lecture was pure motivation. In the few years I have been in surgery, I learned it’s important to be stubborn. If everything else falls apart, persistence helps. If you get rejected six times, there is always the seventh. Anything is possible with time and effort. Thank you, Dr. Sumaira Macdonald for reinforcing the same.

I am also thankful to the society for conducting a talk on Vascular surgeons in dangerous areas. Vascular trauma is one of my main interests. I had already worked on a voluntary basis in a resource poor setting in North-east India (Assam). My gruesome experience with vascular trauma and the high amputation rates in such patients is one of the main reasons I decided to go ahead with my vascular residency. The David Noth foundation was not something I was aware of. I would definitely consider applying for a scholarship there before returning to Assam.

I am deeply appreciative of the society to encourage me and other young surgeons outside Europe. Diversity does create knowledge and is often transformative. I hope to attend the next year’s meeting with effective research and the same zeal.

Gracias !