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In Clinical Trial, Blood Flow Technology from VasSol® Inc. Identified Risk of Recurrent Stroke; NOVA® (Non-invasive Optimal Vessel Analysis) Software Runs on MRI Equipment

RIVER FOREST, IL, FEBRUARY 12, 2015 -- A recently completed National Institutes of Health-funded trial confirms the efficacy of blood flow measurement technology from VasSol Inc. to predict the possibility of repeated stroke in at-risk individuals.

VasSol's NOVA (Non-invasive Optimal Vessel Analysis) software provided the quantitative data that underpinned the VERiTAS (Vertebrobasilar Flow Evaluation and Risk of Transient Ischemic Attack and Stroke) clinical trial, which found that low blood flow to the back of the brain increased patients' risk of recurrent strokes. The results, presented today at the International Stroke Conference 2015 are expected to substantially improve both the study and treatment of stroke, the fourth leading cause of death in the United States, and the leading cause of permanent disability among Americans.

"Identifying those at highest risk for a stroke makes studying the condition easier and leads to better, more precise therapies and more focused implementation of health care resources," said Dr. Fady Charbel, inventor of NOVA, which runs on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) equipment found in most hospitals and imaging centers worldwide. Chairman of neurosurgery at the University of Illinois at Chicago Hospital, where much of the product's research took place, Charbel founded VasSol in 2001 to commercialize NOVA and continues as the company's chief scientific officer.

"More aggressive procedures such as angioplasty and stenting carry significant risks and are expensive. However, they may be necessary for high-risk patients. NOVA provides information that an MRI alone can't provide. And because it helps patients receive the appropriate treatment, it improves patient safety and reduces health care costs," he said.

VasSol CEO Chuck Doherty believes that qMRA® (quantitative Magnetic Resonance Angiography) tests, the procedure that NOVA software performs, will become a standard of care in evaluating posterior stroke patients, other stroke patients and those at risk for stroke.

"The rigorous protocols of the VERiTAS trial were impressive," he said. "Before VERiTAS, physicians were in a quandary regarding treatment for posterior stroke. The average stroke rate in all posterior stroke patients was 8.5 percent in the first 12 months – too low to justify anything but medical management. "

"Decision-making is easier now that physicians can use our NOVA software to identify the low blood-flow patients who are most at risk for another stroke. Physicians can confidently prescribe more complex procedures to improve the quality of life and lifespan of these patients."

To meet expected demand for NOVA software stemming from the VERiTAS results, VasSol is seeking a partner that can provide worldwide distribution, according to Doherty.

About the Trial

The VERiTAS trial observed 80 patients who had recently suffered a stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA) affecting the blood supply to back of the brain, known as the vertebrobasilar area. Posterior circulation strokes account for 30-40 percent of all ischemic strokes – approximately 200,000 cases annually in the United States alone.

Over a two-year period, each participant received a baseline and three subsequent qMRA tests using NOVA software, the first and only product to quantify the volumetric blood flow rate in vessels of the brain. NOVA tests provided researchers with a three-dimensional view of the blood vessel being studied as well as measurements in cubic centimeters per minute of how much blood is flowing, how fast and in what direction.

The NOVA results identified approximately one-quarter of those enrolled as having low posterior blood flow. Those individuals had a stroke risk four and one-half times higher during the first 12 months of the study than those participants with normal blood flow. When studied for a full 24 months, those with low blood flow had a stroke rate of 30 percent versus 13 percent for patients with normal blood flow.

About NOVA

FDA-approved since 2001 and available throughout the United States, Asia, Canada and Europe, NOVA helps answer fundamental questions that clinicians confront when treating vascular disease: what is the severity, how is the condition best treated, and what is the outcome.

NOVA applications have also been developed to provide blood-flow information about vessels in other regions of the body including the kidneys, lower extremities and hands. VasSol is exploring applications to measure blood flow in the ophthalmic artery in the eye, and the flow of cerebral spinal fluid.

About VasSol Inc.

VasSol Inc. is a privately owned medical technology company based in River Forest, Ill., in Chicago's western suburbs. It was founded in 2001 by Dr. Fady Charbel, neurosurgeon and inventor of NOVA, the only technology to non-invasively provide physicians with detailed, quantitative information (velocity, volume and direction) of blood flow through any particular vessel in the brain. NOVA received FDA approval in 2001, and is currently used in over 40 hospitals and imaging centers worldwide.

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