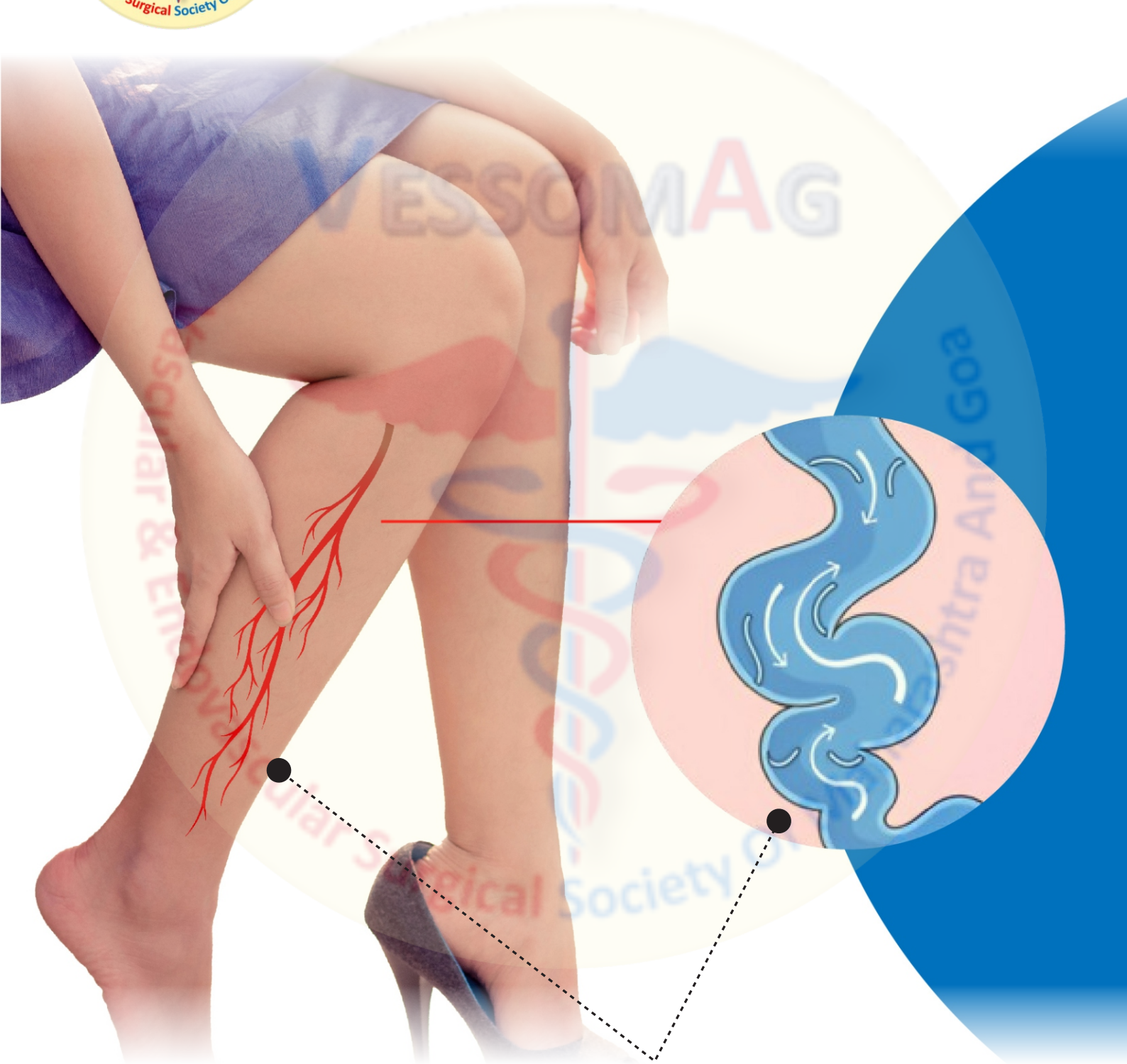




VASCULAR & ENDOVASCULAR SURGICAL SOCIETY OF MAHARASHTRA AND GOA



VARICOSE VEINS

NOT JUST A COSMETIC PROBLEM

FOR PATIENT INFORMATION / EDUCATION PURPOSES

VARICOSE VEINS

WHAT ARE VARICOSE VEINS?

Varicose veins are a very common problem, appearing as twisting, bulging, rope-like cords on the legs. They are the result of problems with the valves within the venous system of the leg. All the veins in the leg contain one-way valves that keep blood flowing from the legs up towards the heart. When the valves become faulty, the blood gets accumulated in the vein, making it enlarged and swollen, called varicose veins. The veins become weak and twisted, and the lumps bulge out from just under the surface of the skin. Varicose veins usually occur in the legs but they can also be formed in other parts of the body.



Figure 1 - Varicose veins

What causes varicose veins?

- Heredity
- Pregnancy
- Prolonged standing
- Hormonal factors
- Obesity
- Idiopathic

What problems do varicose veins cause?

- Heaviness/tiredness
- Unsightly appearance
- Black/brown spots at the ankle
- Itching

What are the complications of varicose veins?

- Hard black skin
- Ulcer
- Bleeding
- Pain, tenderness, swelling

TREATMENT OF VARICOSE VEINS

There are no medicines that can cure varicose veins. However, venoactive medicines can help in reducing the pain and swelling as well assist in ulcer healing.

Conservative treatment advice : This includes lifestyle changes, including avoidance of standing, active ankle exercises, control of body weight and keeping legs elevated at night. Compression stockings are often used for symptomatic relief.

Sclerotherapy : This procedure is suitable for smaller varicose veins or as an additional treatment in which your vascular specialist will inject a chemical directly in the varicose veins to block them.

Endovenous ablation techniques : These minimally invasive procedures have revolutionized the treatment of varicose veins and are currently considered the treatment of choice for a majority of patients. These are non-surgical methods wherein a very small catheter is introduced in the vein under sonography guidance and the vein is fired by laser or radiofrequency energy. The closed vein will eventually be absorbed within the body. Newer advances include radial laser fiber, introduction of mechanical and chemical ablation (MOCA) for non-thermal treatment of varicose veins as well as the use of GLUE.



Figure 2 - Foam Sclerotherapy

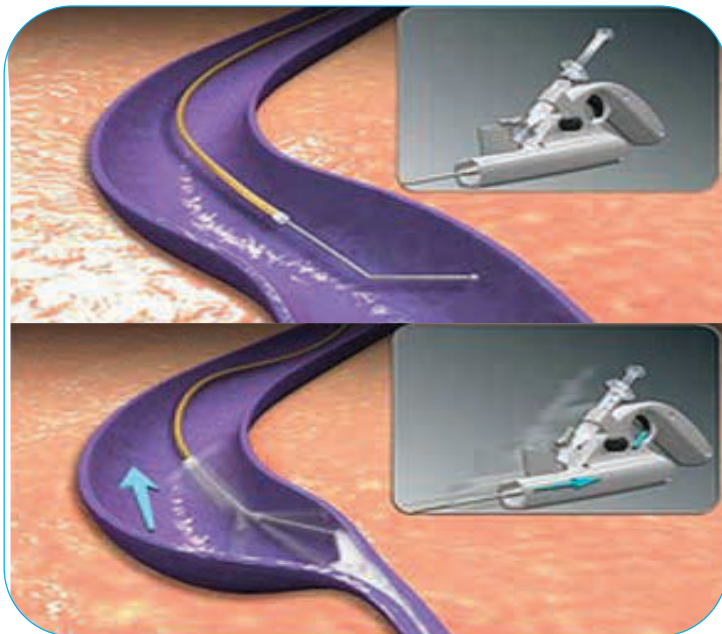


Figure 3 - MOCA



Figure 4 - Glue

Surgery

Surgical ligation and removal of the veins was earlier considered the gold standard of treatment but its use has been decreasing since the past decade. Surgery may however be considered for patients with very large varicose veins, which are removed using small incisions. Bruising, numbness and swelling often occur after surgery. Another recent advance is the use of phlebectomy hook, in which large varicosities can be removed from small stab skin incisions using special vein hooks.

REMEMBER

- Having varicose veins is not just a cosmetic problem.
- Some skin-damaging changes are often irreversible. Get yourself treated before complications appear.
- Newer treatment methods are effective and have rapid recovery.
- Recurrence of varicose veins can occur in 10% of patients after treatment.



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Courtesy: internet

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