Abstract:
Thoracic aortic aneurysms and dissections (TAADs) are responsible for significant morbidity and mortality in young and old individuals alike. Advances over the past 15 years in genetics have revealed diverse mutations that either lead to or associate with TAADs. These mutations tend to affect extracellular matrix proteins, transmembrane structures / receptors, or actomyosin machinery. The goal of this presentation is to discuss how knowledge of these mutations led naturally to a hypothesis of dysfunctional mechanobiological responses by the aortic smooth muscle cells, which in turn likely leads to a dysregulated mechanical homeostasis. Moreover, based on biomechanical data from multiple mouse models, we present biomechanical simulations and calculations that support a new hypothesis for the fundamental role of accumulated glycosaminoglycans in thoracic aortic dissection.

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