

Open chest surgery alternative found

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A U.S. scientist has found an alternative to open chest surgery in treating mitral regurgitation -- blood leaking into the heart through the mitral valve.

Dr. Ted Feldman, a professor at the Northwestern University school of medicine and lead researcher of the study, found a variety of advances have allowed for the potential treatment of MR through various catheter techniques, similar to angioplasty.

While more than 50,000 mitral valve surgical procedures are performed annually, open chest surgery is an undesirable option, especially for high-risk patients, Feldman noted.

The study reports on the first phase of a clinical trial that employed the new treatment method on surgical candidates with moderate-severe and severe MR. The procedure involved the positioning of a guide catheter in the left atrium of the heart.

"The procedure has been accomplished safely and a significant reduction in MR has been achieved in the majority of patients treated," said Feldman.

The study is detailed in the Journal of Interventional Cardiology.

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