

Performing surgery on a beating heart may be safer

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According to a review of the latest clinical trials, coronary artery bypass surgery performed on a beating heart, without the aid of a heart-lung machine, is a safe option that leads to fewer negative side effects for bypass patients. This review is featured in *Journal of Cardiac Surgery*.

“Previously, it was more common for doctors to perform artery bypass surgery on the heart by stopping the heart and passing the blood through a heart-lung machine,” says author Dr. Shahzad Raja. “However, this process frequently leads to ‘whole body inflammation,’ which includes complications such as brain swelling, heart arrhythmia and infections.” According to Raja, performing the surgery on the beating heart, while more technically challenging for the surgeon, keeps these side effects low and allows for a quicker recovery.

“If the surgeons are skilled enough to perform the surgery without stopping the heart, it can be offered to high-risk patients who would not be likely to survive the side effects of the traditional stopped-heart method,” says Raja. “For this reason, quality training needs to be provided for those surgeons who wish to offer this option to their patients.”

Source: Blackwell Publishing

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