Reused pacemakers cost-saving, safe option in Third World countries

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Pacemaker reuse may be a safe, effective and ethical alternative to address the medical needs for people in Third World countries who couldn't otherwise afford therapy, according to a new study.

Researchers examined pacemaker reuse compared with a control population of new device implantation in studies from Jan. 1, 1975 to July 1, 2009. They assessed complication rates, risk of infection, physiological complications and device malfunction.

In four trials with 603 patients, they found new pacemaker implantation was associated with a 4 percent decrease in overall complications compared to reuse of previously implanted devices. However, the finding is not statistically significant.

They also found no increased risk of infection, physiological complications or device malfunction. There were no device-related deaths among those who received new or reused pacemakers.

Provided by American Heart Association

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