

# Totally endoscopic robotically assisted coronary artery bypass grafting

## 1 Guidance

- 1.1 Current evidence on the safety and efficacy of totally endoscopic robotically assisted coronary artery bypass grafting does not appear adequate for this procedure to be used without special arrangements for consent and for audit or research.
- 1.2 Clinicians wishing to undertake totally endoscopic robotically assisted coronary artery bypass grafting should take the following actions.
- Inform the clinical governance leads in their Trusts.
  - Ensure that patients understand the uncertainty about the procedure's safety and efficacy and provide them with clear written information. Use of the Institute's *Information for the public* is recommended.
  - Enter all patients having totally endoscopic robotically assisted coronary artery bypass grafting onto the UK Central Cardiac Audit Database ([www.ccad.org.uk](http://www.ccad.org.uk)).
- 1.3 Publication of safety and efficacy outcomes will be useful. The Institute may review the procedure upon publication of further evidence.

## 2 The procedure

### 2.1 Indications

- 2.1.1 In coronary artery disease, plaque deposits on the inner walls of the coronary arteries lead to narrowing or occlusion, and subsequently decreased oxygen supply to the heart. This may cause angina or myocardial infarction, and long-term weakening of the heart muscle leading to heart failure or arrhythmia.

- 2.1.2 The aim of a coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) is to increase the flow of blood to the heart by inserting grafts to bypass narrowed or obstructed coronary arteries.
- 2.1.3 CABG is usually performed with open surgery through a sternotomy. Less invasive approaches avoiding sternotomy, cardiopulmonary bypass and general anaesthesia have been developed, using either left anterior small thoracotomy (LAST), regional anaesthesia or catheter-based intervention.

### 2.2 Outline of the procedure

- 2.2.1 Totally endoscopic robotically assisted coronary artery bypass (TECAB) systems vary, but they generally include a surgeon's viewing and control console with display system. Remote-control handles control robotic arms that position and precisely manoeuvre an endoscope and endoscopic instruments within the patient. Some equipment uses voice-controlled robotic arms.
- 2.2.2 Following deflation of the lung, small port incisions are made in three intercostal spaces through which one robotic arm carrying the endoscope and two arms with surgical implement attachments are introduced. Grafts are harvested from suitable donor sites, and are used to bypass one or more diseased coronary arteries.
- 2.2.3 TECAB treatment of the beating heart is carried out using a stabilisation device consisting of two branches that immobilise the site for anastomosis while the heart continues to beat. This removes the need for cardiopulmonary bypass. The stabilisation device is introduced into the chest through an additional port incision.

## Interventional Procedure Guidance 128

### This guidance is written in the following context:

This guidance represents the view of the Institute which was arrived at after careful consideration of the available evidence. Health professionals are expected to take it fully into account when exercising their clinical judgement. This guidance does not, however, override the individual responsibility of health professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Interventional procedures guidance is for health professionals and people using the NHS in England, Wales and Scotland.

This guidance is endorsed by NHS QIS for implementation by NHSScotland

## 2.3 Efficacy

- 2.3.1 Fully patent grafts were achieved in 95% (21/22) of patients when assessed at 3 months by postoperative angiography, together with good functional results.
- 2.3.2 Most case series used duration of operation as a measure and this varied according to the type of procedure undertaken and the number of vessels bypassed. In 45 consecutive patients undergoing TECAB, the mean operating time was 4 hours 12 minutes for single vessel surgery and 6 hours 18 minutes for multiple vessel surgery. In 35 patients, including eight in whom the procedure was performed on the beating heart, the operating time ranged from 3 hours 30 minutes to 8 hours (mean 5 hours 47 minutes). In a further 37 patients (29 of whom had the beating heart procedure), the mean operating time for the early cases in the series was 4 hours 40 minutes, but this was reduced to 3 hours 6 minutes following the introduction of endoscopic stabilisation. The mean length of stay in an intensive care unit varied from 14 hours to 74 hours, and the mean total length of hospital stay ranged from 5.0 to 15.4 days. The upper limits for length of stay were following multiple vessel surgery. For more details, refer to the Sources of evidence (see below).
- 2.3.3 The Specialist Advisors noted that bleeding could potentially make vessel identification difficult. They also noted that patency rates of coronary bypass grafts were not sufficiently well documented.

## 2.4 Safety

- 2.4.1 Conversion rates to open procedures (either mini-thoracotomy or full sternotomy) were reported in all case series and ranged from 19% (5/27) to 51% (19/37) of procedures initiated as TECAB.
- 2.4.2 There were no cases of operative mortality associated with the TECAB procedure (n = 142).
- 2.4.3 In a case series of 45 patients, operative complications included port access failure in 7% (3/45) of patients, prolonged cross clamp time in 9% (4/45), myocardial infarction in 2% (1/45), hypoxic brain damage in 2% (1/45) and internal thoracic artery injury in 2% (1/45) of patients.

- 2.4.4 In a series of 45 patients, 4% (2/45) needed secondary intervention because of bleeding from the site of anastomosis. There were no cases of wound infection at the port site throughout the series. For more details, refer to the Sources of evidence.
- 2.4.5 The Specialist Advisors noted theoretical complications as myocardial infarction, pneumothorax, cardiac tamponade and fatal haemorrhage. They also noted that there is potential for stenosis or occlusion at the site of anastomosis.

## 2.5 Other comments

- 2.5.1 There are a number of other procedures for treating patients with coronary artery disease but no good studies have been found that compare these with TECAB.

Andrew Dillon  
Chief Executive  
June 2005

## Information for the public

NICE has produced information describing its guidance on this procedure for patients, carers and those with a wider interest in healthcare. It explains the nature of the procedure and the decision made, and has been written with patient consent in mind. This information is available from [www.nice.org.uk/IPG128publicinfo](http://www.nice.org.uk/IPG128publicinfo)

## Sources of evidence

The evidence considered by the Interventional Procedures Advisory Committee is described in the following document.

*Interventional procedure overview of totally endoscopic robotically assisted coronary artery bypass grafting*, August 2004

Available from [www.nice.org.uk/ip202overview](http://www.nice.org.uk/ip202overview)

## Ordering information

Copies of this guidance can be obtained from the NHS Response Line by telephoning 0870 1555 455 and quoting reference number N0878. *Information for the public* can be obtained by quoting reference number N0879.

The distribution list for this guidance is available at [www.nice.org.uk/IPG128distributionlist](http://www.nice.org.uk/IPG128distributionlist)

Published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, June 2005; ISBN 1-84629-040-6

© National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, June 2005. All rights reserved. This material may be freely reproduced for educational and not-for-profit purposes within the NHS. No reproduction by or for commercial organisations is permitted without the express written permission of the Institute.