The initial experiment with the Shelhigh valve in a self-expandable conduit was performed in sheep by us and the results published as a book chapter in *Transcatheter Valve Repair* by Hijazi, Bonhoeffer, Feldman, and Ruiz.⁵ In this animal experiment, the Shelhigh valve that had been placed in the self-expanding Cook Z stent (Cook Inc, Bloomington, Ind) was placed with the help of a delivery gun into the right ventricular outflow tract of sheep. The approach was periventricular and no cardiopulmonary bypass was used. The clinical application of this approach followed this animal experiment.

I was astonished that none of our animal work with the Shelhigh valve or the periventricular approach was acknowledged by Berdat and coworkers in the case report.

Zahid Amin, MD

University of Nebraska/Creighton University
Joint Division of Pediatric Cardiology
Omaha, NE

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doi:10.1016/j.jtcvs.2006.06.038

Reply to the Editor:

We greatly welcome the valuable comments from our colleague Dr Amin and his important contribution to the development of this technique.¹ Due to space restrictions for published articles, we could not go into

details regarding the development and historical background of this new device. We therefore greatly appreciate that this information is still presented to the readership. We would like to emphasize, however, that our group was the first to clinically implant the Shelhigh injectable pulmonary valve, although Schreiber and colleagues² were the first to publish their experience.

Pascal A. Berdat, MD

Thierry P. Carrel, MD

Swiss Cardiovascular Center Bern
Clinic for Cardiovascular Surgery
University Hospital
Bern, Switzerland

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doi:10.1016/j.jtcvs.2006.08.008

Inflow occlusion in the era of modern cardiac surgery

To the Editor:

We read with interest the article titled "Inflow Occlusion Pulmonary Embolectomy in the Modern Era of Cardiac Surgery" by Bobadilla and associates.¹ The following points are not clear from the contents of the article.

First, how was the core temperature lowered? Was it lowered with a cooling blanket or just by dropping the temperature of the operating theater, and how long did it take for the temperature to drop to 32°C?

Second, for what duration was the inflow occluded?

Absence of structural or functional damage to the brain has been noted during circulatory arrest. Probability of safe circulatory arrest according to degree of hypothermia is shown in Table 1.

There are a number of situations wherein familiarity with inflow occlusion technique may be of use, such as pulmonary valvotomy, aortic valvotomy, and atrial septectomy. Patients who have pulmonary atresia with intact septum can undergo relief of

TABLE 1. Probability of safe circulatory arrest according to hyperthermia

Temperature (°C)	Duration of safe circulatory arrest (min)
37	3
28	10
18	45-60

Revised from Kouchoukos NT, Blackstone EH, Doty DB, Hanley FL, Karp RB. Hypothermia, circulatory arrest and cardiopulmonary bypass. In: Kirklin/Barratt-Boyes Cardiac Surgery, 3rd ed. Philadelphia: Churchill Livingstone; 2003. p. 80 (Table 2.9A). Reprinted with permission from Elsevier, Inc.

right ventricular outflow tract obstruction with a patch, pulmonary valvotomy, or a Brock procedure. Other procedures that have been performed safely by this technique are tricuspid valvectomy, emergency perforation of a ventricular septal patch, obtaining full thickness myocardial biopsy, and repair of penetrating wounds of the heart.²

Undoubtedly, this technique represents a considerable cost savings over the same procedures performed with cardiopulmonary bypass. In the current economic era of limited health care budget, any surgical technique that provides equivalent results is to be preferred over more expensive alternatives.

Jaswinder Singh, MCh

Rajinder S. Dhaliwal, MCh

Suvakanta Biswal, MS

Naveen Swami, MS

Department of Cardiovascular

& Thoracic Surgery

Postgraduate Institute of

Medical Education & Research

Chandigarh, India

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Reply to the Editor:

We graciously thank the authors of this letter to the editor for supplying further

supporting data that could not be included in the original manuscript because of space limitations. To briefly clarify the two points of interests raised by this letter, a brief episode of occlusion of less than 5 minutes was used in extraction of the embolism and repair of the pulmonary arteriotomy. The method of patient cooling was both active (cooling blanket) and passive, through operating theater temperature and radiation losses during line placement and anesthetic induction. As is illustrated by

the table supplied by Singh and associates, core temperatures from 28°C to 37°C allow occlusion times of 3 to 10 minutes. We appreciate the additional indications for the use of inflow occlusion, and we fully agree with this list, as our senior author is an experienced pediatric cardiac surgeon and intimately familiar with these procedures. In conclusion, we agree that inflow occlusion continues to have a select place in the armamentarium of today's cardiac surgeon and that its clinical results, not withstand-

ing any economic benefits, reserve it a continued place in the modern era of cardiac surgery.

J. L. Bobadilla, MD

C. H. Wigfield, MD

P. S. Chopra, MD

*Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery
University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics
Madison, WI*

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