Figure 1. The Robicsek–Thubrikar “tailor-made” sinus graft.

However, even if someone may be able to accomplish an anatomic match between sinuses and leaflets, normal compliance of the aortic wall, a prerequisite to significant stress reduction, will remain elusive. Our experience indicates that positioning the “grooves” of the Dacron prosthesis at the level of the neosinuses vertically will indeed provide some compliance, but it will not reach that of a normal aortic root. Also, with the passage of time even this disappears. It is indeed important to try to imitate Mother Nature in our efforts to restore and maintain aortic valve function by creating neosinuses. We agree with the authors that the onion configuration itself provides very little stress reduction and that the presence of 3 neosinuses may reduce the stress on the aortic leaflets; however, it also needs to be emphasized that this will occur only if the sinuses are appropriately matched with the leaflets, and unless long-lasting compliance is provided, the stress reduction will be temporary and miniscule.

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Reply to the Editor:

We thank Dr Robicsek for his comment on our article “Six Stitches to Create a Neosinus in David-type Aortic Root Resuspension.” He has extensive experience in this field. We agree that a rigid tube will never achieve the same compliance as the native aortic root, and that this increases the stresses on the leaflets. However, the question is still to be answered if this has clinical impact, especially whether the higher leaflet stresses have more impact on long-term durability than an optimal geometric reconstruction. Because the aortic sinuses and leaflets dilate, stretch, and reshape to an individual configuration in many patients, each leaflet and sinus has to be recreated to achieve an optimal coaptation. Clinical reports do not show perfect or sub-optimal long-term results for the remodeling operation.¹ In David and colleagues’ personal comparison,¹ reimplantation had significantly better long-term results than remodeling.² In our opinion, this is because it is easy to overcorrect the aortic valve in the David procedure, avoiding any sagging and stabilizing the slightly dilated annulus. We fully agree that the onion shape is a suboptimal solution because it does not support the naturally straight course of the commissures. This is optimized by the technique described in our article.

It still has to be proven that the optimal leaflet stress reduction is achieved in the manner suggested by Dr Robicsek, that is, the sinotubular junction is kept rigid by the Dacron tube and the elasticity of the remaining aortic root is preserved. The latter will be reduced by the scarring process in the long term.

Individual matching between sinuses and leaflet is easily accomplished with our technique because the reduction at the sinotubular junction is only done with the valve already inside the tube and thus can be easily positioned at the optimal spot.

Because the total load on the leaflets is determined by the product of area, time’s pressure overcorrection reduces the mechanical stress on the usually enlarged leaflets. There is currently no proof that optimizing root remodeling with respect to compliance and thus possibly reduced leaflet stresses achieves better long-term results than does an optimal straightforward geometric repair with slight overcorrection.

We thank Dr Robicsek for his important thoughts.

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If older donors are acceptable, then older recipients should also be acceptable

To the Editor:

I read with interest the article by De Perrot and colleagues,¹ in the February 2007 issue of the *Journal*.

The article examines the outcome of lung transplantation using lungs obtained from donors aged 60 years or more. The average age of donors was 65 years; the average age of recipients was 49 years.

Considering that the life expectancy of a 60-year-old, just as that of a 50-year-old, exceeds the “predicted life” of the transplanted lung, if elderly people are good enough to be donors, why aren’t they good enough to be recipients? Are we facing age discrimination?

I am most interested in the author’s reply.

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