It's not just an open or shut case

Donald D. Glower, MD

From the Duke University Medical Center, Durham, NC.

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Address for reprints: Donald D. Glower, MD, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, NC 27710 (E-mail: Glowe001@mc.duke.edu).

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In a series of 26 patients from several institutions, Praz and colleagues¹ show that use of a transcatheter device is not exclusively an open or shut case. In other words, the transcatheter devices designed to be inserted percutaneously in a closed heart fashion can also be used in an open fashion on cardiopulmonary bypass. This report is relatively new as a successful early series using transcatheter aortic valve prostheses readily available on the market to replace the mitral valve in patients who are otherwise poor candidates for standard mitral prostheses.

Other open applications of transcatheter technology do exist in the literature. For example, the growing numbers of sutureless aortic valve devices are arguably transcatheter aortic valve devices modified to be inserted in an open fashion on pump. Case reports also exist for using transcatheter devices to perform open closure of ventricular septal defects^{2,3} that are not easily accessible in a closed fashion. Although the authors could potentially have treated these 26 patients with off-pump transapical implantation of a transcatheter valve into the mitral position, the on-pump open approach used here does have advantages. Specifically, with the open approach, one can use adjunctive open techniques such as partial valve resection and limited application of sutures to ensure undistorted valve placement without perivalvular leakage.

Although the ultimate goal might be to use transcatheter technology percutaneously in an awake patient off cardiopulmonary bypass, this goal will not always be achievable.

Transcatheter valve implantation for severe mitral annular calcification.

Central Message

The development of transcatheter devices does not exclude their open application.

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The authors are to be commended for successful application of new devices in an innovative manner that could potentially open options for otherwise high-risk or untreatable patients. The development of transcatheter devices does not exclude their open application. The use of a transcatheter device is not exclusively an open or shut case.

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