Dr Anderson receives salary support from the NHLBI/NIH K23 HL133454.

FIXING THE SUPPLY PROBLEM

Reply to the Editor:

I have to concur with the comments of McCarthy and colleagues.¹ The solution to the transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) cost problem is

not to do fewer TAVRs but rather to increase the TAVR device supply by encouraging competition and to pressure existing suppliers to lower device costs. There is no good reason why transcatheter devices ought to cost so much more than surgically placed devices. Device companies will claim that they need to recuperate research and development expenses and that restricting their profits would stifle innovation. To some extent the former is true; they do need to cover the costs of many false starts with the success of a handful of blockbuster items. But the needs have been exaggerated over the years. The device companies in question are not struggling startups enticed into the market by the prospect of high rewards now working to cover previous losses. The market is dominated by a few giants. These companies have manifested net profit margins of 15% to 20% year over year. The current prices are the effects of inelastic markets and effective monopolies. We ought to push to lower entry barriers for smaller companies and leverage the collective bargaining power of the tens of thousands

FIGURE 1. Supply–demand curve: As supply increases, prices drop.

of Americans requiring aortic valve replacements to demand lower TAVR prices (Figure 1).

Brett R. Anderson, MD, MBA, MS
Division of Pediatric Cardiology
Columbia University Irving Medical Center
New York, NY

Reference

1. McCarthy FH, Desai ND. Long-term outcomes will determine the cost-effective approach to aortic valve disease. *J Thorac Cardiovasc Surg.* 2018;155:2425-6.

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