The predictive value of the recently proposed SAFINOUS score still needs to be validated in a large multicenter cohort to assess the performance of the tool, particularly in the extremes of the risk spectrum. As with any risk score, it is virtually impossible to take all potential risk factors into consideration. For clinical decision making and surgery planning of CABG patients, in addition to the SAFINOUS score, the potential benefit of no-touch SVG harvesting should be considered.

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REPLY: THE NO-TOUCH SAPHENOUS VEIN: INCREASED PATENCY, BUT AT WHAT RISK?

Reply to the Editor:

I read with interest the letter by Kopjar and colleagues¹ regarding the role of the no-touch saphenous vein in coronary bypass surgery. There is no doubt that minimization of endothelial damage is key to the long-term patency rate of bypass conduit, and

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in fact small randomized trials have reported excellent angiographic outcomes for the no-touch saphenous vein.² On the other hand, the no-touch harvesting technique is associated with a higher risk of surgical site complications,² an issue particularly relevant for high-risk patients such as those with diabetes or obesity. Until we have clear data to understand the risk-to-benefit ratio between improved patency rate and increased risk of surgical complications with the no-touch saphenous vein, alternative conduits (the radial artery in particular) should be preferred.

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REPLY FROM AUTHORS: VEIN GRAFT BIOLOGY AND THE RISK OF GRAFT OCCLUSION

Reply to the Editor:

We thank Kopjar and colleagues¹ for their letter on the Saphenous Vein Graft Failure—An Outcomes Study in Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting (SAFINOUS-CABG) study,² and for giving us the opportunity to comment on the importance of vein harvesting for graft patency.

The SAFINOUS-CABG study² was an international collaboration between cardiothoracic centers with shared individual patient data from patients undergoing CABG and available angiographic data within the first year after surgery, and as such it was the first systematic effort to develop a comprehensive prediction model for early