UT SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER NEWS

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UT Southwestern tests device for patients with severe heart failure

DALLAS – Aug. 2, 2007 – As part of a 40-site national trial, researchers at UT Southwestern Medical Center are studying a new medical device designed to treat patients with chronic congestive heart failure.

Researchers will be testing the effectiveness of a system that includes internal catheters and a small external pump in patients who have been hospitalized for severe heart failure – an inability of the muscle to function and maintain adequate blood flow.

"This system allows us to improve heart function without replacing the heart or most of its functions," said Dr. Tayo Addo, assistant professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern. "We hope that it will help stabilize a subset of patients who have very challenging health issues."

The Cancion System, manufactured by Orqis Medical Corp., is a pump device that is introduced into the body via catheters inserted through tiny incisions in the groin. Once placed, the pump draws blood from the patient's iliac artery – located in the pelvis – into a small external pump. From there, the blood goes through another catheter placed in the heart's descending aorta, where it is re-introduced for continuous blood flow.

"The device itself takes only 20 to 25 minutes to insert, and we use local anesthesia," said Dr. Addo, an interventional cardiologist. "The use of this may help patients avoid or delay much more invasive therapy."

Patients receive the pump in the hospital, and the device is removed after treatment, said Dr. Addo. Effects of treatment can last several weeks or months.

Patients who are not responding well to traditional treatments for heart failure must often have implanted devices, and in the most serious cases, heart transplants. Nearly 5 million people in the U.S. and 14 million people worldwide suffer from heart failure. Heart failure can be caused by coronary artery disease, heart attacks, cardiomyopathy and other underlying cardiovascular disorders.

"We think the device could offer another option where pre-existing medical therapy is not providing enough support for the patient," said Dr. Dan Meyer, associate professor of cardiovascular

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and thoracic surgery. "The device is pumping the patient's blood and, in the process, it may offer enough cardiac support for the patient so that their own organ systems can function adequately."

The pump could function as a stopgap to help some patients maintain their own heart function for a period of time, which in turn might minimize hospitalizations.

To be eligible for the trial, heart failure patients must be hospitalized for their condition and demonstrate inadequate improvement from medication. Patients who meet the criteria may be enrolled in the trial after meeting with their physician, receiving information about the study and signing a consent form. Because the trial is randomized, some participants will receive device treatment in addition to standard therapy, while others will remain on standard medical therapy alone.

For more information, please contact UT Southwestern's Heart, Lung and Vascular Center at 214-645-8000.

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