



The Cutting Edge

April 4, 2008

The Cutting Edge Newsletter

News for the OR Professional

Published by Surgical Information Systems

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Study Suggests It May Be OK to Let Small Hospitals Do Heart Stent Procedures

Is it safe to have your arteries unclogged at a hospital that lacks heart surgeons who can operate if something goes wrong? Many states ban this except in emergencies like heart attacks. But more small hospitals are trying it in non-urgent cases, and the largest study ever done of this, released on Saturday, suggests it may not be as risky as has been feared. If confirmed by other ongoing studies, it could change policies in many states. That would mean money for community hospitals struggling to stay profitable and options for patients who must travel to big cities for care. (Associate Press – March 29, 2008)

More at

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/A/ANGIOPLASTY_SAFETY?SITE=OKPON&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

Miami doctor breaks new ground in cancer surgery

Dr. Tomoaki Kato had to remove a lot more than a cancerous tumor during an unprecedented operation on a 63-year-old Florida woman earlier this month. To get to the tumor, which was buried deep in Brooke Zepp's abdomen and threatened to kill her within months, the organ transplant specialist said he first had to remove her stomach, pancreas, spleen, liver and small and large intestines. The organs were chilled and preserved outside Zepp's body during a painstaking 15-hour operation at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Medical Center. (Reuters – March 24, 2008)

More at

<http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSN2432812620080324?feedType=RSS&feedName=healthNews>

**Cured, the boy whose blood flowed the Wrong Way round his body**

A toddler has had pioneering surgery to stop his heart pumping blood the wrong way around his body. Alec Hutchinson, three, was born with a rare condition which meant the blood vessels in his heart were plumbed in back to front. Only a handful of babies every year are born with the condition, which is called Congenitally Corrected Transposition. In sufferers, the artery taking oxygenated blood to the body, the aorta, is connected to the smaller pumping chamber of the heart, the right ventricle. This means it cannot create a large enough amount of pressure to push blood all the way round the body. (Telegraph – March 26, 2008)

More at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2008/03/26/nheart126.xml>

Appendix Removed via Patient's Mouth

Last week Jeff Scholz of San Diego became the first person in the U.S. to have his appendix removed through his mouth. Other than what he describes as a very mild sore throat, the 40-year-old former Marine says he felt very little pain after the surgery and was back to normal within a few days. "They told me to take it easy, but I feel great," he told WebMD Tuesday afternoon -- six days after having his diseased appendix removed in a procedure known as Natural Orifice Transluminal Endoscopic Surgery (NOTES). (WebMD Medical News – March 19, 2008)

More at http://www.webmd.com/news/20080319/appendix-removed-via-patients-mouth?src=RSS_PUBLIC

Innovative Care Is Helping Iraq War's Injured Survive

After five years of war in Iraq, there's some relatively good medical news about the casualties over there: more than 90 percent are now surviving injuries that would have been fatal in previous conflicts. In the March issue of The Journal of Craniofacial Surgery, the surgical and treatment advances behind these gains are discussed in special articles by craniofacial surgeons who specialize in head and facial trauma injuries -- cases involving noses and lips ripped away in bomb blasts, skulls and jaws shattered by bullets, and skin sheared off by burning debris. (HealthDay – March 24, 2008)

More at http://online.wsj.com/article_print/SB120224055435844931.html

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