



The Cutting Edge

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Blood Procedure Allows Kidney Transplants, Can Help Minorities

Surgeons at two Washington hospitals have performed seven kidney transplants involving 14 recipients and donors who did not match, using a process that virtually eliminates the chances of organ rejection. The process, called plasmapheresis, can make it easier for underserved African-American patients to receive organs for transplant. Of the 80,000 people on the kidney transplant list, 36 percent are African-Americans but only 15 percent of living donor kidneys go to African-Americans. That discrepancy is caused, in large part, by a lack of suitable matching organs, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says. (CNN – August 6, 2009)

More at

http://www.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/08/05/kidney.transplant.plasmapheresis/index.html?eref=rss_health

Pacemakers Used to Help Children with Stomach Problems

Physicians at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio are turning to a device typically used in adults with heart problems to help children with severe stomach conditions. In June, surgeons implanted a pacemaker in a 16-year-old patient with gastroparesis, a debilitating stomach condition that affects the way the body processes food. This is the first time the procedure has been performed in a child at Nationwide Children's Hospital, which is now one of only a handful of institutions across the country offering this type of treatment in children. (Newswise – July 31, 2009)

More at <http://www.newswise.com/articles/view/554848/?sc=rsmn>



Heart Operation Death Rates Fall after Data Published

The death rates of people undergoing heart operations have dropped dramatically over the last few years – ever since surgeons started publishing the figures. The data on 400,000 operations over the last five years, published by the Society of Cardiothoracic Surgery, shows death rates in coronary artery surgery have fallen by 21% and in aortic valve replacement operations by one third, despite the fact the age of the patients and the complexity of their conditions has increased. (Guardian – July 29, 2009)

More at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2009/jul/30/heart-surgery-death-rates-fall>

Heart Surgeon Shortage Predicted

Over the next 15 years, there could be a severe shortage of cardiothoracic surgeons at a time when an aging population will probably increase the demand for surgical procedures that fall under their purview, a new study predicts. The shortage could lead to diminished quality of care and delays in care for people needing heart and lung surgery, according to the study, which was done by the Center for Workforce Studies at the Association of American Medical Colleges. By 2025, the researchers say, there could be a 46 percent increase in the demand for cardiothoracic surgeons, but a drop of at least 21 percent in the number of available surgeons. (AAMC – July 28, 2009)

More at <http://www.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=629407>

Study Highlights Work-Life Issues of Female Surgeons

Even with the demands of surgical careers, most surgeons would still choose their profession again. Women surgeons, however, are far more likely to postpone having children or to not have children at all and would prefer more flexibility in their work schedules, a national survey conducted by UC Davis researchers has found. The survey findings are reported today in the Archives of Surgery, one of the JAMA/Archives journals. (JAMA – July 21, 2009)

More at http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-07/uoc--uds072109.php

GENERAL HEALTHCARE Articles

Cooling is Catching On for Cardiac Arrest Patients

More than 90 percent of people who suffer cardiac arrest end up dying. For more than a decade, there has been evidence that cooling a patient's body – or therapeutic hypothermia – improves those odds. No one quite knows why, but it's thought that the cold reduces the body's need for oxygen and slows the deadly chemical cascade that sets in when oxygen isn't circulating because the heart stopped beating. Yet, as one 2007 paper put it, "implementation of hypothermia is lousy." In 2006, researchers at the University of Chicago found that just 34 percent of critical care physicians, and just 16 percent of emergency physicians, had ever attempted to use hypothermia to treat cardiac arrest. Makers of cooling equipment say fewer than 300 hospitals, out of more than 6,000 nationwide, have the necessary equipment. (CNN – August 5, 2009)

More at <http://www.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/08/05/cardiac.arrest.cooling/index.html>

New Research Links Social Stress to Harmful Fat Deposits, Heart Disease

A new study done by researchers at Wake Forest University School of Medicine shows that social stress could be an important precursor to heart disease by causing the body to deposit more fat in the abdominal cavity, speeding the harmful buildup of plaque in blood vessels, a stepping stone to the number one cause of death in the world. The findings could be an important consideration in the way the United States and other Western countries try to stem the rapid rise of obesity, said Carol A. Shively, Ph.D., a professor of pathology and the study's principal investigator. (Wake Forest University – August 5, 2009)

More at <http://newswise.com/articles/view/554925/>



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