Carotid Artery Stenting Possible For High Risk Lesion Patients

Patients who are not candidates for traditional surgery for severe carotid artery disease lesions could be treated with carotid artery stenting, according to results of a small feasibility study by cardiologists at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth). The results were presented by lead investigator Colin M. Barker, M.D., at the Cardiovascular Research Foundation's annual scientific symposium, Transcatheter Cardiovascular Therapeutics (TCT) 2011 in San Francisco.

"These were high-risk patients who had no alternatives because they were not candidates for surgery," said Barker, assistant professor of cardiology at the UTHealth Medical School. "We performed interventional stenting on these 10 patients with no complications or deaths." The patients, who had symptoms of stroke related to their carotid artery disease, had been evaluated by James C. Grotta, M.D., professor and chair of the Department of Neurology at UTHealth. Grotta, co-director of the Mischer Neuroscience Institute, then approached the UTHealth cardiology interventional team to see if stenting was a possibility.

"Dr. Grotta wanted to offer them something," Barker said. "These were frail and elderly patients with 99 percent blockage and co-morbidities including kidney, heart and lung disease. It's been something that no one wanted to try but we were willing to break that barrier." The procedure, done through the groin artery, took approximately one hour and is done while the patients are awake with mild sedation. One-year follow-up with six of the patients revealed no obstructive disease in the artery.

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