



The Best Outcomes in Cardiology

NEWS RELEASE

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The Care Group Cardiologists Comments on Stents vs Medication (The COURAGE Study)

(Indianapolis) -- COURAGE (Clinical Outcomes Utilizing Revascularization and Aggressive Drug Evaluation) was a 5-year study (1999-2004) involving 2,287 people at 50 Centers across North America. Patients with partially blocked coronary arteries and chronic stable angina were randomly divided up into two groups. One group had angioplasty with a bare metal stent implanted along with medication and healthy lifestyle changes. The other group of people in the study just took medication and made healthy lifestyle changes, but did not have angioplasty and stent placement. The COURAGE trial was formed to find out if combining angioplasty and stents with medication and lifestyle changes was more effective at preventing death or heart attacks than just taking medications and making lifestyle changes alone.

The COURAGE study showed no meaningful difference in survival or reduced risk of heart attack with the use of interventional device procedures (angioplasty, bare metal stents) plus optimal drug therapy compared with optimal drug therapy alone.

James Trippi, MD, FACC interventional cardiologist with Indianapolis-based The Care Group, LLC at Methodist Hospital reacted to the release, "It is important to remember that this study does not include the newer medicated stents and only used bare metal stents in patients with chronic stable angina. Medical studies select patients with very defined problems. Applying the results of these studies to individual patients with different characteristics and complexities may not be appropriate. Stable angina is defined as few episodes of pain easily controlled with medication."

According Dr. Trippi, "A patient with a 70% lesion, few symptoms and good cardiac functional ability might do just as well with or without a bare metal stent provided the patient adheres to an intense regimen of medications. It should be noted that many of the medically treated patients in the study eventually ended up with stents or coronary artery bypass because of increasing symptoms. Patients who are getting bare metal stents when they have a moderately tight blockage with controlled symptoms don't have heart attacks or die any less because they get good medical treatment for all the other less severe lesions that are just as likely to thrombose causing a heart attack as the stented lesion. This study confirms that state of the art medical treatment is effective."

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The Care Group, LLC, with 133 cardiologists and primary care physicians, is the largest non-academic practice in the United States and is recognized as a premier site for cardiovascular services, including prevention, diagnosis, treatment and research. The Care Group has 52 locations throughout Indiana with three Indianapolis flagship locations at St.Vincent Heart Center of Indiana at 106th & North Meridian and at 86th Street and at Methodist Hospital. The Care Group physicians pioneered many treatments in cardiology including angioplasty, atherectomy and stents.

The Care Group is proud to be the exclusive provider of cardiac services for St.Vincent Heart Center of Indiana, the #1 cardiovascular program in Indiana and in the top 5% in the United States for overall cardiac services as rated in both 2006 and 2007 by HealthGrades, America's leading provider of independent hospital ratings.

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