

Aortic valve reconstruction with processed bovine pericardium

Interventional procedures guidance

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[nice.org.uk/guidance/ipg604](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ipg604)

Your responsibility

This guidance represents the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take this guidance fully into account. However, the guidance does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to implement the guidance, in their local context, in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Nothing in this guidance should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 Current evidence on the safety and efficacy of aortic valve reconstruction with processed bovine pericardium is inadequate in quantity and quality. Therefore, this procedure should only be used in the context of research.

- 1.2 Further research should address patient selection and report long-term outcomes, particularly the durability of the valve.

2 The condition, current treatments and procedure

The condition

Aortic valve disease (stenosis or regurgitation) is usually progressive and causes an increase in cardiac workload, left ventricular hypertrophy and heart failure. Symptoms can include palpitations, fatigue, shortness of breath and chest pain on exertion. Mortality rates are high in symptomatic patients.

Current treatments

- 2.1 Conventional treatment for a significantly diseased aortic valve is surgical replacement with an artificial (biological or mechanical) prosthesis. Transcatheter aortic valve implantation may also be considered. Bioprosthetic valves do not perform as well as native valves and have limited durability, which may be an issue for younger patients. Lifelong anticoagulation is needed in patients with mechanical valves, which increases the risk of haemorrhagic complications and is not optimal in women wishing to become pregnant. In some patients with aortic regurgitation, the aortic valve may be repaired with patches as an alternative to replacement.
- 2.2 Aortic valve reconstruction with bovine pericardium may be considered in patients who cannot or who refuse to take anticoagulation, patients with an aorta too narrow for a standard prosthetic valve and young patients who wish to avoid long-term anticoagulation.

The procedure

- 2.3 With the patient under general anaesthesia, the heart is accessed by a sternotomy and cardiopulmonary bypass is established. The heart is stopped with cardioplegic arrest, the aorta is opened and the valve is inspected. The diseased valve cusps are carefully removed and the intercommissural distances are measured. Commercially available bovine pericardium is trimmed to the desired size using a template, and sutured to the annulus to replace the removed cusp(s). The aorta is closed, normal circulation is restored and the

chest is closed. The function of the valve is assessed intraoperatively by transoesophageal echocardiography.

3 Committee considerations

The evidence

- 3.1 To inform the committee, NICE did a rapid review of the published literature on the efficacy and safety of this procedure. This comprised a comprehensive literature search and detailed review of the evidence from 5 sources, which was discussed by the committee. The evidence included 4 case series (1 of which was reported with 9 and 16 years of follow-up) and 1 case report, and is presented in table 2 of the [interventional procedures overview](#). Other relevant literature is in appendix A of the overview.
- 3.2 The specialist advisers and the committee considered the key efficacy outcomes to be: reduction in aortic valve gradient, health-related quality-of-life measures and exercise tolerance.
- 3.3 The specialist advisers and the committee considered the key safety outcomes to be: mortality, bypass time and cross-clamp time, valve durability, embolic events including stroke, and infection and bleeding.
- 3.4 [Commentary from 1 patient](#) who had experience of this procedure was received, which was discussed by the committee.

Committee comments

- 3.5 This guidance covers the use of processed bovine pericardium, and does not cover the Ozaki procedure which uses glutaraldehyde-treated autologous pericardium.
- 3.6 The processed bovine pericardium is used as a scaffold in this procedure and has different properties to the bovine pericardium that is routinely used in cardiac surgery.
- 3.7 The committee was informed that patients who have this procedure receive aspirin but do not need lifelong anticoagulation.

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Endorsing organisation

This guidance has been endorsed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

Accreditation

