

Current Status of Cardiac Surgery in Taiwan

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In 1960, first open heart surgery was performed in Taipei, Taiwan at the Veteran's General Hospital. Although the first step of cardiac surgery was rather late, subsequent development of the field was very fast. Twelve major hospitals in Taiwan do open heart surgery nowadays and many of them have performed over 1,000 cases in 1991, total number of cardiac surgery performed in Taiwan was over 4,000 cases.

The first cardiac transplant was done in 1989 at the National Taiwan University in Taipei and up to now, there are total of 54 patients received new hearts with survival rate of 75 %.

Involvement of anesthesiologists in these procedures are very obvious and anesthesiology has contributed a lot in the development of cardiac

surgery in Taiwan.

It is of interest to point out that use of the anesthetic agents reflects trend of thoughts in the field of anesthesiology. From 1960 to early 1980's, the most frequently used agent for cardiac surgery in Taiwan was halothane with interspersed use of high dose narcotics such as morphine or fentanyl. When isoflurane became available, use of this agent grow rapidly until the danger of coronary steal was reorted. The island-wide consumption of isoflurane in cardiac surgery decreased until recent reports denying its steal effect.

It is also of interest to note that coronary bypass graft surgery which was only a few in 1960 and 70's has increased 10 folds, indicating change of living style and diets in the islands.

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