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Ventricular reconstruction surgeries do little to help the patient in the long run, but cost a lot of money
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Experts say it offers no real benefits

The latest scientific data on the matter prove that a controversial type of heart surgery, in which doctors fold the scar tissue of the heart unto itself, has little significant results for the well-being of the patient. Rather, it poses a great danger to their health, on account of the fact that the procedure is very risky and that something can go wrong at any moment in the operating room.

This type of surgery, known as ventricular reconstruction, was first designed to assist more than 5 million people in the United States who suffered from heart failure, a condition that stems from the massive damage that hearts get following heart attacks.

Over time, the muscles and the walls of the organ find themselves unable to support non-stop functioning and eventually shut down. This is one of the leading causes of death in North America, and the reconstructive procedure has been squarely aimed at giving people suffering from it more time to live.

As it attempts to fix the damage suffered from strokes, the heart of patients who go through one usually gets larger, to try to compensate for the areas that are no longer functioning properly. But this means that it also pumps blood far less efficiently than it usually did, which can lead to complications. In a very large survey, experts have analyzed more than 1,000 people who got heart bypass surgeries. Some 500 of them also got ventricular reconstruction performed.

After four years of study, the team in charge of the investigation has concluded that having the surgery does nothing to improve the patients' quality of life, and that the risk of dying is not at all diminished. That is to say, between the control group and the one whose members got the surgery there has been no significant statistical evidence that one method of treatment is better than the other. The find has been presented in Orlando, at an American College of Cardiology meeting.

Duke University Medical Center expert Dr. Robert Jones tells Reuters that not having the reconstructive surgery will save each patient an average of \$14,595. He also adds that the "cost difference is substantial," between patients going with heart bypass and those getting the ventricular procedure as well. "It doesn't seem to have any great benefit at all. Many patients have a lot fewer symptoms, but some people improve that much with good medical treatment," he concludes in a telephone interview.