



## BARIATRIC SURGERY PREVENTS OBESE PATIENTS FROM DEVELOPING ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

*First of its kind study presented at Heart Rhythm 2014 shows positive correlation between weight loss surgery and reduced risk of atrial fibrillation*

SAN FRANCISCO, May 2014 – New research has found that bariatric surgery is an effective way to control weight in morbidly obese patients who are at risk for developing atrial fibrillation (AF). Bariatric or weight loss surgery is an operation on the stomach that limits food intake and is typically recommended for patients who are unable to lose weight on their own through diet and exercise.<sup>i</sup> The first study of its kind to look at the relationship between AF and bariatric surgery on a large patient population was presented today at Heart Rhythm 2014, the Heart Rhythm Society's 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Sessions.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than two-thirds of the adult population in the United States is considered to be overweight or obese.<sup>ii</sup> Obesity is a known risk factor for arrhythmias like AF, and other risk factors for AF include smoking, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. AF is the most common arrhythmia and affects more than 2.7 million American adults. It is characterized by a rapid and irregular heartbeat when the top chambers of the heart (the atria) quiver (fibrillate) erratically, sometimes faster than 300 times per minute.

“Obesity has become an epidemic in our culture and prevention efforts are more important now than ever,” said Yong-Mei Cha, MD, FHRS, professor of medicine at Mayo Clinic. “Bariatric surgery is a preventative measure that obese patients may choose to take and our study shows that the surgery helps them not only lose weight, but also reduces their risk of developing a serious cardiac condition, like AF. It is important to continue the conversation about how to help prevent this epidemic from becoming even more widespread.”

The retrospective study was conducted in 438 patients with a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or higher and identified as good candidates for bariatric surgery. Of these patients, 326 elected to undergo surgery for weight reduction and 112 controls who are managed medically. The diagnosis of AF was documented by electrocardiogram (ECG) or ambulatory monitors and metabolic profiles were collected at baseline and follow-up.

The baseline BMI was different in the patients that underwent surgery versus those who did not have surgery (46.9 vs. 43.2kg/m<sup>2</sup>). The prevalence of AF at baseline was not significantly different between the two groups (surgical 3.7 percent vs. control 4.5 percent p=0.63) at baseline. After a mean follow-up duration of 7.2±3.7 years, new onset of AF occurred in 3.1 percent of surgical group, significantly lower than 12.5 percent (p<0.01) in the medically treated group. Additionally, the surgical group had a significant reduction in BMI and improvement in metabolic profile compared to the control group.

Heart Rhythm 2014 is the most comprehensive educational program for heart rhythm professionals, featuring more than 8,000 attendees, 250 educational sections and more than 130 exhibitors showcasing innovative products and services. The Heart Rhythm Society's Annual Scientific Sessions have become the must-attend event of the year, allowing the exchange of new vital ideas and information among colleagues from every corner of the globe.

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About the Heart Rhythm Society

The Heart Rhythm Society is the international leader in science, education and advocacy for cardiac arrhythmia professionals and patients, and the primary information resource on heart rhythm disorders. Its mission is to improve the care of patients by promoting research, education and optimal health care policies and standards. Incorporated in 1979 and based in Washington, DC, it has a membership of more than 5,800 heart rhythm professionals in more than 72 countries around the world. For more information, visit [www.HRSonline.org](http://www.HRSonline.org).

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<sup>i</sup> [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)