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Press Release

HYGEIA: Treatment of aortic insufficiency without open heart surgery

A novel transcatheter valve implantation procedure is now performed at HYGEIA Hospital offering treatment to selected patients suffering from aortic valve insufficiency who until recently remained untreated due to their perceived prohibitive risk for conventional open heart surgery.

The first in Greece transcatheter valve implantation to treat pure aortic valve insufficiency took place in our state-of-the-art Hybrid Room by the cardiac surgeons of the 2nd Cardiac Surgery Clinic and the cardiologists of the Transcatheter Heart Valve Department. The patient, who has already been discharged, had coexisting conditions that made conventional valve replacement contraindicated.

The procedure that had been performed on less than **80 patients worldwide**, took place just one week after the CE mark was granted to the first transcatheter valve for pure aortic insufficiency (JENA, Germany). The new valve is based on a special 3-clip mechanism fixing it in the patient's own valve. It is implanted transthoracically through a small incision between the ribs, without sternotomy and without stopping the heart. The release of a new model that is inserted through the femoral artery similarly to a coronary angiography is expected soon.

Transcatheter aortic valve replacement is a recognized method that is rapidly gaining grounds in the treatment of aortic valve stenosis, and with the new valve patients with aortic insufficiency can also be treated. It is performed on selected patients who are considered high-risk for conventional surgical replacement, offering all the benefits of surgery, with evidently less risks, faster recovery and improved quality of life for the patient.

Dr Stratis Pattakos, cardiac surgeon and Director of the 2nd Cardiac Surgery Clinic, noted, "Many would believe that such feats take patients away from cardiac surgery. But this is not the case. These newer techniques forge strong cooperation between cardiac surgery and cardiology, with the patient ultimately being benefited. We are delighted that HYGEIA Hospital has been at the forefront of these steps, which constitute significant milestones in the treatment of heart diseases in general, as they also include high-risk patients."

On his part, **Dr Konstantinos Spargias, interventional cardiologist and Director of our Transcatheter Heart Valve Department**, stated, "We are very satisfied by this new technology that offers treatment to high-risk patients suffering from aortic insufficiency. Although aortic insufficiency is not as common as aortic valve stenosis, the development of symptoms and the decision to proceed with replacement are often delayed, and this delay can increase the surgical risk disproportionately. With the introduction of this new valve, all aortic and mitral valve diseases can now be treated percutaneously in high-risk patients."



Over 300 patients with heart valve diseases have been treated with the newest transcatheter techniques by the HYGEIA Hospital team and the results are very satisfactory and comparable to those of the largest medical centers abroad.