

South Africa leads again on heart operations

Groote Schuur Hospital again leads heart surgery as it becomes the first hospital in Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, and Turkey to implant the world's smallest pacemaker: the Medtronic Micra Transcatheter Pacing System (TPS).



The pacemaker is delivered directly into the heart through a catheter inserted in the femoral vein. This miniaturised technology is designed to provide patients with the advanced pacing technology of traditional pacemakers via a minimally invasive approach.

The device was implanted as part of the Medtronic global pivotal clinical trial. One-tenth the size of a conventional pacemaker, and comparable in size to a large vitamin, it is securely attached to the heart wall and can be repositioned if needed.

The miniature device does not require the use of wires, known as "leads," to connect to the heart. Attached to the heart via small tines, the pacemaker delivers electrical impulses that pace the heart through an electrode at the end of the device.

"This miniaturised technology is designed to provide patients with the advanced pacing technology of traditional pacemakers via a minimally invasive approach," said Dr Ashley Chin, Consultant Cardiologist/Electrophysiologist at Groote Schuur Hospital and the University of Cape Town, who implanted the pacemaker.

"We are proud that Groote Schuur Hospital was selected among an elite group of institutions to take part in this global clinical trial. If positive, the results of the trial could potentially benefit the more than one million people globally who receive pacemakers each year."

In contrast to current pacemaker implant procedures, the implant does not require a surgical incision in the chest and the creation of a "pocket" under the skin. This eliminates a potential source of complications and any visible sign of the device. The pacemaker is an investigational device worldwide.

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