Reviewer's report

Title: Variations in clinical decision-making between cardiologists and cardiac surgeons; a case for management by multidisciplinary teams?

Version: 2 Date: 11 February 2006

Reviewer: Michael Crittenden

Reviewer's report:

General:
This is an important article and merits publication in the JOURNAL. Most often discussion about PCI vs CABG occurs after a diagnostic catheterization documenting significant coronary pathology. The manuscript describes patients who all have multivessel CAD. Using validated, objective scoring system (NZ and ACRE) most of these patients were ostensibly candidates for surgery. Despite this, there was "poor agreement" amongst providers about the mode of revascularization on the first round of discussion which improved to "moderate" on the second round. There may be a few heart centres worldwide where a multidisciplinary discussion occurs after a diagnostic catheterization but these centres would represent a distinct minority. Proper informed consent should include a rational explanation of the risks and benefits and alternatives to the proposed procedure. More often than not, the patient is "counseled" about the risks and benefits while he or she is on the table in the midst of drapes, surgical masks and image intensifiers. It is difficult to imagine that a fair and balanced discussion can take place in this scenario. The authors findings suggest that all heart centres should reexamine how these complex decisions are made in their institution and how a multi-disciplinary approach could be implemented to protect the interests of the patient.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept without revision

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.