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HeartMate II LVAD as a Destination Therapy: The Beilinson Experience

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Objectives: Left ventricular assist devices (LVAD), used in the setting of destination therapy, for patients with deteriorating severe heart failure are continuously developing. The second generation, the axial flow pumps, have been introduced since some years.

Results: Six patients with end staged ischemic cardiomyopathy were implanted with the HeartMate-II. All patients were in severe left and right heart failure and were considered non transplantable at time of LVAD implantation. Two patients died early after surgery, 1 from sepsis secondary to empyema, and 1 due to multiorgan failure secondary to right ventricular dysfunction. The 4 remaining patients are alive 3 – 15 months following surgery. Quality of life improved in all survivors. One patient developed cerebellar stroke with gradual improvement. This patient also had drive line infection and had episodes of bacteremia. One patient who had severe pulmonary hypertension developed chronic fistula from mediastinum to skin and is currently under chronic antibiotic therapy. His pulmonary pressures decreased dramatically and he was listed for transplantation. Another patient with severe preoperative pulmonary pressures, had a decrease in his pulmonary pressures that made him a good transplant candidate, however the patient refuses transplantation and prefer the assisted circulation.

Conclusions: In these severely ill patients, the use of HeartMate II continuous-flow LVAD for long-term support improve quality of life and offers a good chance of surviving, although not complications free.