

## Heart to Home:

### Does Dexamethasone Increase Number of Days Alive at Home after Cardiac Surgery?

In this issue, Myles *et al.* conducted a **pragmatic** randomized trial of dexamethasone 1 mg/kg vs. control in patients undergoing cardiac surgery in 7 hospitals in Australia and The Netherlands.<sup>1</sup>

#### PRAGMATIC DESIGN<sup>2</sup>

- ✓ Routine surgical care (not protocolized)
- ✓ Outcomes captured from routinely collected data
- ✓ Randomization before consent
- ✓ Randomization designed to favor local practice 2:1

#### PRIMARY OUTCOME

Postoperative number of days alive at home up to 30 d

**No significant difference**

##### Dexamethasone

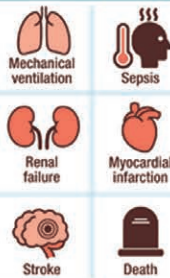
Median 23.1 d  
[IQR 20.1–24.6]

##### No dexamethasone

Median 23.0 d  
[IQR 20.1–24.1]

#### Secondary Outcomes

No significant differences



#### ICU Length of Stay

Significant difference

##### Dexamethasone

Median 1.2 d  
[IQR 0.9–2.1]

##### No dexamethasone

Median 1.8 d  
[IQR 1.0–3.0]

##### Discharge rate ratio

1.13  
(95% CI 1.03–1.25)  
*P*=0.004

#### Conclusion

High-dose dexamethasone reduced ICU stay but did not increase number of days at home alive after cardiac surgery with cardiopulmonary bypass. There were no differences in major complications between groups.

ICU, intensive care unit; IQR, interquartile range.

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1. Myles PS, Dieleman JM, Munting KE, *et al.*: Dexamethasone for cardiac surgery: A practice preference–randomized consent comparative effectiveness trial. *ANESTHESIOLOGY* 2024; 141:859–69
2. Mclsaac DI, Wijesundera DN, Bartoszko J: Routine innovation in perioperative clinical trials: The best chance to answer our most important questions? *ANESTHESIOLOGY* 2024; 141:825–8