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## 50 Years Ago in *THE JOURNAL OF PEDIATRICS*

### Impact of Technology and Innovation on Congenital Heart Disease Survival

Hurwitz RA, Simmons RL, Girod DA. Survival of infants with severe congenital heart disease. *J Pediatr* 1970; 77:412-6.

In the 1950s, the availability of cardiac catheterization and cardiopulmonary bypass revolutionized the diagnosis and treatment of congenital heart disease (CHD). During the 1960s, repair of tetralogy of Fallot, left-to-right shunts, and the atrial switch procedure for transposition of the great arteries (dTGA) were routinely performed in older infants and children; however, surgery for severely ill neonates with CHD did not become a reality until the 1970s.

This report by Hurwitz et al, written on the cusp of the availability of neonatal cardiac surgery, describes survival in 170 infants born between 1963 and 1968 with severe CHD. Overall survival was 44%, and most deaths occurred before 3 months of age. Survival improved over time from 27% to 51%, due to the availability of balloon atrial septostomy and improvements in surgical approach. No infants with hypoplastic left heart syndrome (HLHS) or total anomalous pulmonary venous return survived. The authors concluded that survival would continue to rise and that 59% of the survivors could expect to have definitive surgery with acceptable risk.

In the ensuing 50 years, the management of infants with severe CHD progressed far beyond the predictions of Hurwitz et al. In the late 1970s, transthoracic echocardiography quickly supplanted diagnostic cardiac catheterization, and at present, fetal echocardiography can detect up to 90% of severe CHD. Prophylactic use of prostaglandin E1 prevents the negative consequences of hypoxia and poor perfusion in ductal-dependent CHD, and neonatal cardiac surgery is routinely performed for the most complex lesions. The anatomically correct arterial switch procedure has supplanted the atrial switch in dTGA with outstanding results, and staged palliation of HLHS has resulted in 1-year survival of 69%. Current estimates predict that 90% of children born with CHD will survive beyond 18 years of age.

We are now in an era where more adults are living with CHD than children. The oldest survivors of open-heart CHD surgery are in their 70s, receiving care from board-certified adult CHD subspecialists. The care of patients with CHD has evolved beyond improving operative survival to addressing the challenges of long-term cardiac, medical, psychosocial, and neurodevelopmental outcomes and optimizing quality of life.

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