

# Transcatheter Pulmonary Valve Replacement With the Melody Valve in Small Diameter Expandable Right Ventricular Outflow Tract Conduits



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## ABSTRACT

**OBJECTIVES** This study sought to evaluate the safety, feasibility, and outcomes of transcatheter pulmonary valve replacement (TPVR) in conduits  $\leq 16$  mm in diameter.

**BACKGROUND** The Melody valve (Medtronic, Minneapolis, Minnesota) is approved for the treatment of dysfunctional right ventricular outflow tract (RVOT) conduits  $\geq 16$  mm in diameter at the time of implant. Limited data are available regarding the use of this device in smaller conduits.

**METHODS** The study retrospectively evaluated patients from 9 centers who underwent percutaneous TPVR into a conduit that was  $\leq 16$  mm in diameter at the time of implant, and reported procedural characteristics and outcomes.

**RESULTS** A total of 140 patients were included and 117 patients (78%; median age and weight 11 years of age and 35 kg, respectively) underwent successful TPVR. The median original conduit diameter was 15 (range: 9 to 16) mm, and the median narrowest conduit diameter was 11 (range: 4 to 23) mm. Conduits were enlarged to a median diameter of 19 mm (29% larger than the implanted diameter), with no difference between conduits. There was significant hemodynamic improvement post-implant, with a residual peak RVOT pressure gradient of 7 mm Hg ( $p < 0.001$ ) and no significant pulmonary regurgitation. During a median follow-up of 2.0 years, freedom from RVOT reintervention was 97% and 89% at 2 and 4 years, respectively, and there were no deaths and 5 cases of endocarditis (incidence rate 2.0% per patient-year).

**CONCLUSIONS** In this preliminary experience, TPVR with the Melody valve into expandable small diameter conduits was feasible and safe, with favorable early and long-term procedural and hemodynamic outcomes. (J Am Coll Cardiol Intv 2018;11:554-64) © 2018 by the American College of Cardiology Foundation.

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In 2010, the Melody transcatheter pulmonary valve (TPV) (Medtronic, Minneapolis, Minnesota) was granted HDE approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of dysfunctional right ventricular outflow tract (RVOT) conduits. In reports of trial patients and other cohorts, TPV replacement (TPVR) has been shown to restore pulmonary valve function and extend the life span of various surgical conduits and pulmonary valves (1-7). Until early 2017, the instructions for use for the Melody valve followed the U.S. investigational device exemption (IDE) trial in specifying that the RVOT conduit must have been  $\geq 16$  mm at the time of surgical implant (8). Accordingly, there are limited published data on TPVR into smaller RVOT conduits, which are generally embedded within larger series (4,9-11). Although the IDE trial required that conduit diameter measured 14 to 20 mm by sizing balloon after initial predilation (8), the instructions for use does not specify criteria for actual conduit size at the time of TPVR.

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This disparity is noteworthy, as the original size of the implanted conduit may or may not correspond to its diameter at the time of TPVR. As documented recently, many RVOT conduits, homografts, and valved bovine jugular vein conduits in particular become substantially narrowed in situ, whereas others may enlarge after implant (1,3). Moreover, homograft conduits tend to lose the mural structure and mechanical behavior of arteries and become less compliant over time, such that the originally implanted size may not reflect the expected capacity of the remodeled conduit to expand (12-14). Thus, it is not clear that small original conduit diameter should be an a priori exclusion criterion for TPVR. Considering these factors, the purpose of this multicenter study was to evaluate the procedural characteristics and outcomes of TPVR in patients with an expandable RVOT conduit that was  $\leq 16$  mm at the time of surgical implant to determine whether efficacy and safety were similar to published data on implants in larger conduits.

## METHODS

**PATIENTS.** All patients with an expandable RVOT conduit who underwent percutaneous catheterization for intended TPVR at 9 participating institutions from January 2010 to March 2017 were reviewed, and those whose original (implanted) conduit diameter was reportedly  $\leq 16$  mm were analyzed for this study. Expandable conduits were defined as those composed of biological tissue without a rigid frame, specifically,

homografts and valved bovine jugular vein (Contegra, Medtronic) conduits. Synthetic tube grafts, composite conduits, and stented pulmonary valves were excluded, as were any type of biological graft  $>16$  mm at implant. Ring-supported Contegra conduits were considered eligible because the expandability is unknown.

Written informed consent was obtained for clinical percutaneous catheterization and TPVR. Institutional review board approval for retrospective data collection and analysis was obtained at each of the participating centers.

Pre-catheterization data included demographic, diagnostic, and historical information. Standard measures were recorded from pre- and post-implant imaging studies, including echocardiography and magnetic resonance imaging if applicable. Pulmonary regurgitation (PR) was evaluated qualitatively by spectral and color Doppler ultrasound, and categorized as either moderate-severe or mild or less. The underlying hemodynamic indication for TPVR was classified as PR (moderate or severe), stenosis (maximum Doppler gradient  $\geq 50$  mm Hg, mean Doppler gradient  $\geq 35$  mm Hg, or peak invasive gradient  $\geq 30$  mm Hg), or combined stenosis and PR. The narrowest angiographic conduit diameter in any projection was measured, and the degree of conduit calcification was graded as heavy (extensive, circumferential) or minimal or none. Acute post-implantation hemodynamic data and final conduit size were recorded. Longer-term outcomes, including death, RVOT reintervention, and endocarditis, were specifically ascertained, along with attributed causes. The mean Doppler RVOT gradient was not available as often as maximum gradient, so only the latter is reported.

**TPVR PROCEDURE.** TPVR was performed following general techniques that have well described (1,5,6), but specific technical measures were at the discretion of the implanting physician. The number and type of pre-implants implanted before TPVR were recorded. Ratios were calculated of balloon sizes to original implanted, narrowest angiographic, and final post-TPVR conduit diameters, and of angiographic or implanted and final or implanted conduit diameters. The narrowest angiographic/implanted diameter ratio was used as a marker of shrinkage from the time of surgical implant to catheterization, whereas balloon/angiographic or implanted diameter ratios and final post-TPVR/angiographic diameter ratios were indices of the aggressiveness of dilation and conduit expansion.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>CI</b>	= confidence interval
<b>IDE</b>	= investigational device exemption
<b>OR</b>	= odds ratio
<b>PR</b>	= pulmonary regurgitation
<b>RVOT</b>	= right ventricular outflow tract
<b>TPV</b>	= transcatheter pulmonary valve
<b>TPVR</b>	= transcatheter pulmonary valve replacement

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