

UC Heart & Vascular Center Performs Nation's First Angiogenesis Procedure

Surgeons and physicians at the UC Heart & Vascular Center were the first in the U.S. to treat heart patients with a growth factor protein in an attempt to grow new coronary vessels (angiogenesis). The first two patients were treated in early November at The University Hospital. The procedure involves injecting the growth factor directly into the heart to trigger new blood vessel growth to increase blood flow around blocked arteries and relieve the chest pain associated with coronary artery disease.

Dr. Merrill was assisted by Professor Thomas Stegmann of the Fulda Medical Center in Fulda, Germany. Dr. Stegmann was the first doctor in the world to perform the procedure. The UC Heart & Vascular Center is one of four U.S. medical centers launching an early-stage clinical trial to test FGF1 as a way to relieve chest pain. Lynne Wagoner, M.D., director of cardiac services at The University Hospital, is the principal investigator in the study sponsored by CardioVascular Genetic Engineering of Tustin, California.



Dr. James Hurst, Executive Director of The University Hospital, announces the breakthrough procedure. Left to right are Dr. Lynne Wagoner, Dr. Daniel Snavely, Dr. Walter Merrill, Dr. Thomas Stegmann, and Ms. Constance Donley, of Cold Spring, Kentucky, the first such patient treated in the U.S.

Walter H. Merrill, MD., the John B. Flege, Jr., M.D. Professor and Chief, Section of Cardiothoracic Surgery at UC, made a small incision in the patient's chest and injected growth factor FGF1 directly into the heart muscle in an attempt to grow new coronary vessels.

The UC Heart & Vascular Center is a collaborative effort that includes physicians and surgeons from the UC College of Medicine. For further information, please contact (513) 584-3278.

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