

# CARDIOLOGY / CARDIAC SURGERY

## Routine Clinical Review of Patients Following Heart Valve Surgery

Patients who have undergone surgery for heart valve disease can be divided into three different groups:

1. Patients receiving a mechanical valve(s)
2. Patients receiving bioprosthetic valve(s) or homograft
3. Patients who have undergone valve repair

### Mechanical valves

#### Anticoagulation Management:

Post-op anticoagulation would be commenced in hospital.

Patient education given by dedicated nurse educators.

On leaving hospital anticoagulation would be managed by the anticoagulation clinic or general practitioner according to local circumstances.

Follow – up visits to an anticoagulation clinic by patient for further education if required.

Patients who are stabilised, and compliant would normally be referred to their General Practitioner (GP) for management of anticoagulation. Appropriate information (e.g. a copy of the anti-coagulation chart, INR range and duration of Rx =permanent) needs to be provided to the general practitioner when the patient is discharged. Education of GP's Practice nurse re special requirements of patients with prosthetic valves may be required and could be provided by anticoagulation clinic nurses.

Referral back to anticoagulation clinic to be instituted if patient INR is difficult to control or there are significant compliance problems.

Review of anticoagulation management to be undertaken at time of routine clinic review.

Self-monitoring kits to measure INR may be appropriate in some cases.

#### Clinical Management:

In some centres a post-op review by surgeon at 4 weeks.

Cardiology clinic review normally by three months following surgery and usually by six weeks, (will vary depending on whether or not there has been a post-op visit to surgeon).

The visit to include the following assessment:

- Clinical review including anticoagulation management
- ECG
- Chest X-ray
- Echocardiogram (in the absence of significant abnormalities serves as a baseline)

Further annual visits with clinical review, ECG, review of anticoagulation.

An echo to be carried out as clinically indicated.