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On vs. Off: Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery from a Patient's Perspective

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**ON VS. OFF: CORONARY ARTERY BYPASS SURGERY FROM
A PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE**

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Throughout the years, technological advances have changed the face of cardiac surgery, but at times, it is a return to a previous technique, which proves beneficial. Prior to the introduction of cardiopulmonary bypass, cardiac surgery was performed on a beating heart, but due to the lack of an appropriate immobilizing device, the surgery was extremely complicated. With the introduction of new stabilization devices, immobilization of the heart has become easier and beating heart surgery has gained popularity once again. Multiple studies have been done which discuss the benefits of off-pump coronary artery bypass surgery (OPCAB), but none of the studies have explored the surgery from a patient's perspective. The patient is medicine's most important ally and as such, it is important that health care providers understand the fears, anxieties, and experiences that their patients undergo. Studies have compared OPCAB with conventional coronary artery bypass (CABG), but the patient's experience has not been explored.

The purpose of this study was to determine how people who have had both OPCAB and CABG view the surgical experience, their outcomes, and the fears they had prior to surgery. The sample was comprised of four men living independently in a small Midwestern community. The sample was recruited with the help of a local cardiovascular surgeon's office. The participants were interviewed using an interview guide. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Inductive data analysis was completed using the transcribed interviews as well as field notes from the researcher. From the data, eight categories and five subcategories were formed. The categories included suggestions to other patients, recommendations to healthcare professionals, preoperative preparation, medications, symptoms prior to surgery, trust in doctors, postoperative depression, and comparisons between CABG and OPCAB. The last category was further subdivided into five subcategories, which included general comparison, subjective look of patient, length of stay, recovery period, and intubation experience.

The information gleaned from this study is of importance to nurses as well as other healthcare professionals as they work with patients before and after either type of bypass surgery. "It's a lifetime experience," and, therefore, it is important that healthcare professionals are fully prepared to care for and educate patients as their hearts are mended. The findings of this study may help to provide insight and knowledge about the patient's experience as they undergo one of these life-changing surgeries.