

## Masterclass on innovations in heart bypass

Thanks to a unique and innovative recent masterclass funded by Heart Research UK, local surgeons learnt first-hand, from world-renowned surgeons, about a range of heart bypass techniques.

The course, which took place in Oxford, was paid for completely by Heart Research UK and led by Professor David Taggart, Professor of Cardiovascular Surgery at the University of Oxford and

Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon at John Radcliffe Hospital.

Thirty six trainee cardiothoracic surgeons from across the UK came to the course to learn the most up-to-date and innovative techniques through a series of lectures and video presentations of operations. The surgeons also got the chance to practice these new techniques in a hands-on, interactive simulation.

The trainee surgeons found out about new and innovative ways to harvest blood vessels, explored which blood vessels are best to use in different situations and how best to graft the vessels into the heart – discussing their own techniques and methods and learning about new ideas from the experts.

Prakash Nanjiah, Specialist Registrar at Nottingham City Hospital, said: ‘The Masterclass was exceptional – an excellent, evidence-based, comprehensive and up-to-date review of contemporary surgical coronary artery revascularization, providing in-depth insight into current global practice. It has the potential to be one of the most sought after courses in the UK in the near future.’

This was the first in a series of masterclasses funded by Heart Research UK to help young clinicians learn directly from some of the most experienced colleagues in their field. Further information can be found at [www.heartresearch.org.uk/](http://www.heartresearch.org.uk/)

**Those attending practiced the new techniques in an interactive simulation.**



## Children allergic to eggs can benefit from ‘egg therapy’

Giving children with egg allergies increasingly higher doses of the very food they are allergic to can eliminate or ease reactions in most of them, according to results from an American study (Burks et al, 2012).

In the study, 35 of 40 children treated with egg immunotherapy experienced improvement. Five patients dropped out of the study, four as a result of allergic reactions related to treatment.

Eleven of the 35 patients experienced complete long-term elimination of egg-related allergic reactions, the most sought-after therapeutic outcome. The rest were able to tolerate higher doses of egg with only mild or no symptoms, but lost some of their tolerance after discontinuing treatment.

This higher threshold of tolerance is an important therapeutic endpoint because it can protect against serious reactions from accidental or incidental exposures.

The researchers say the results are promising but caution that, at present, oral immunotherapy is still experimental and should not be used outside of a strictly controlled research protocol.

Burks AW, Jones SM, Wood RA et al; Consortium of Food Allergy Research (CoFAR) (2012) Oral immunotherapy for treatment of egg allergy in children. *N Engl J Med* **367**(3): 233–43

## Lifestyle behaviour in adolescents may adversely affect blood pressure risk in adulthood

Lifestyle behaviour in adolescents may adversely affect blood pressure and cardiovascular risk in adulthood, according to results from a large pregnancy follow-up study in Australia.

In particular, alcohol consumption among boys, use of oral contraceptives among girls, and high salt intake and increasing body mass index in both sexes were important factors linked to blood pressure levels in late adolescence.

The investigators warn that the substantial differences in

blood pressure found between those with a healthier or less favourable lifestyle ‘are likely to significantly affect their risk of both ischemic heart disease and stroke in adulthood’.

Behind the warnings lie results from the Western Australian Pregnancy Cohort (Raine) Study, in which the 2868 live births of 2900 pregnant women enrolled in 1989–1992 in Perth were followed up at 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 14 and 17 years of age; by then, 1771 adolescents were available for the study. At that

time study subjects were asked about alcohol consumption, smoking, physical activity, prescription medications (including the use of oral contraceptives), and dietary patterns, and the association between each of these factors and systolic and diastolic blood pressure was calculated.

Le-Ha C, Beilin LJ, Burrows S, Huang RC, Oddy WH, Hands B, Mori TA (2012) Oral contraceptive use in girls and alcohol consumption in boys are associated with increased blood pressure in late adolescence. *Eur J Prevent Cardiol* Jul 11 (Epub ahead of print)