

New clinic improves access to specialized heart surgery

A first in the province, the Surgical Mitral and Tricuspid Valve (MTV) clinic will offer patients an expedited pathway to receive specialized valve surgeries.

A damaged valve can interfere with the proper direction of blood flow, making the heart work harder to send blood throughout the body.

At the clinic, surgeons will focus on valve repairs with an aim to reduce the number of valve replacements. Because there are limited surgeons with this expertise and skillset, patients can have long wait times, can experience exacerbated disease symptoms and experience reduced quality of life.

“With similar care models that are working well, the doctors see the impact and value of serving a particular population and are doing the same for MTV surgical patients,” says Dr. Jian Ye, medical director of the new clinic.

Launching in July 2022, the team will start by identifying MTV referrals on existing wait lists and reassign them to a most appropriate surgeon at the new clinic. The clinic will have a weekly surgeon on-call schedule, have team rounds and start accepting new referrals.

“Caring for MTV patients at the clinic will free up surgeons at different locations to perform other cardiac surgeries, getting surgical patients the care they need faster,” says Dr. Ye.

After consultations with multiple stakeholders, the team is working to improve the patient journey by creating a streamlined, standardized process for all MTV surgical referrals; increasing the percentage of valve repairs compared to replacements; following-up with surgical patients about their quality of life and fidelity of the valve repair or replacement; monitoring of patients who are not ready for surgery; and, having partnerships that coordinate and integrate existing resources within the system.

Questions, comments or suggestions are welcomed by Dr. Jian Ye at JYe@providencehealth.bc.ca and Faisal Aziz, VCH/PHC regional cardiac strategy leader, at Faisal.Aziz@vch.ca.



Photo caption: Physicians leading the Surgical Mitral and Tricuspid Valve clinic (left to right): Dr. Jamil Bashir, Dr. Anson Cheung, Dr. Richard Cook, Dr. Peter Skarsgard and Dr. Jian Ye.