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Pulmonary-Artery Catheters in High-Risk Surgical Patients

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To the Editor: The majority of pulmonary-artery catheters are used in patients undergoing cardiac surgery. For these patients (and, we argue, for all patients), the catheter is used primarily for the prevention, early detection, and treatment of ventricular dysfunction, as well as the control of increased pulmonary intravascular pressure (minimization of pulmonary transudation). However, this practice was not evaluated, and the usefulness (or lack thereof) of pulmonary-artery catheters for patients undergoing cardiac surgery should not be inferred.

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