

Medical Breakthroughs

Lung Surgery Offers Hope For Emphysema Patients

(NAPSA)—A landmark clinical trial studying lung surgery for emphysema patients showed that, on average, patients who undergo lung volume reduction surgery (LVRS) experience better quality of life compared to those who receive medical therapy alone. These patients also showed significant benefit in pulmonary function and exercise capacity.

The results of the six-year study could affect the more than two million emphysema sufferers in the U.S. looking for a more effective treatment for the incurable condition in which the lungs are severely damaged.

Symptoms include extreme shortness of breath, coughing and wheezing. Traditional treatment includes the use of medication, inhalers, oxygen and rehabilitation programs, all of which ease symptoms, but the disease continues to progress and ultimately makes everyday activities impossible to perform.

"These results support LVRS as an important treatment for emphysema patients who have few alternatives," said Dr. Robert Cerfolio, chief of thoracic surgery at University of Alabama at Birmingham and one of the reviewers of the study.

Lung volume reduction surgery



Clinical trial demonstrates benefits of lung surgery.

was first conducted in the 1950s and became popular in the 1990s as a way to improve breathing mechanics for patients with emphysema, which is otherwise irreversible and contributes to 100,000 deaths annually in the U.S. The procedure removes up to 30 percent of each lung so the remaining, healthier portions of lung can function more efficiently.

Lung volume reduction surgery is currently performed using surgical staples. There are companies currently looking to improve lung volume reduction surgery with alternate means of sealing delicate lung tissue. For example, medical device company Spiration's VALR™ surgical system is being evaluated in clinical trials for sealing lung tissue during LVRS.