

An Image, A Thousand Words, Hundreds of Thousands of Dollars...

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A left heart assist device (HAS) (Thoratec IVD) was implanted to a 26-year-old male patient with an end-stage idiopathic dilated cardiomyopathy. His body mass index was high (180 kg, 1.90 m) and his blood type was 0 negative. Sixty-three days later a second HAS (Thoratec IVD) was implanted due to right ventricular failure refractory to treatment. The patient had an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator which had been inserted due to ventricular arrhythmias unresponsive to treatment before the first HAS was implanted. Considering the costs derived from a hospitalization 100-day long in an intensive care unit and the use of drugs (which included recombinant activated factor VII, alfa drotrecogin and nesiritide), the image per se gives the idea of the high costs of treatment for end-stage heart failure in a young male patient, as more than 250,000 American dollars were spent only in devices. A computed tomography scan with administration of contrast media was performed with a gated 64-multislice dual-source cardiac CT scanner Phillips Brilliance MX 8000. Maximum intensity projections (MIP) were used to build 3D and 2D slices with software and a Phillips Workstation.

