

## **Gee, Am I Glad We Had An Echo**

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Cardiac function and reserve are two of the most important factors to be taken into consideration in providing safe anaesthesia and in the diagnosis of adverse haemodynamic states in the perioperative period. Echocardiography has high sensitivity and specificity in the assessment of the heart but access to cardiology services is often limited. Often the information required by anaesthetists is significantly less than would be reported in a comprehensive study. Having even limited information at the point of care is invaluable. (Faris et al 2009).

Our group at the University of Melbourne has developed a limited, goal directed, focused, point of care echocardiography examination the Haemodynamic Echo Assessment in Real Time, HEART Scan. We teach this scan on our HARTScan <sup>(TM)</sup> courses throughout Australia and New Zealand. Training and skills acquisition for comprehensive echo can also be within the reach of anaesthetists and other critical care physicians.

This presentation will draw on the experience we have obtained in the past two years in Perth with a small series of illustrated clinical vignettes where our own echo studies likely made a significant difference to outcome to patients and certainly made the anaesthetics easier for those concerned. And, yes, we were very glad we were able to obtain these echo images. The presentation is a preliminary to the two other papers in this session.