Response to Letter Regarding Article, “Complications Associated With Revision of Sprint Fidelis Leads: Report From the Canadian Heart Rhythm Society Device Advisory Committee”

We would like to thank Dr Maytin and colleagues for highlighting some important issues with regard to the Fidelis lead and its appropriate management. The experience that we reported is the only comprehensive experience regarding the Fidelis lead and complications related to its revision.1

The complication classification that we used is based on prior reports on complications due to device advisories or replacements.23 Our study was not designed specifically to examine complications due to transvenous lead extraction, so the system of classification suggested by Maytin et al would not be applicable. If traction was attempted, but the lead was abandoned, the patient was classified as lead abandoned. The data reported by Maytin et al4 have significant potential referral bias, as patients with a higher degree of comorbid illness may not have been referred. In addition, the long-term complications of this complex procedure, where a greater degree of infection may be expected and which may lead to a significant degree of morbidity or mortality, were not reported.

There are currently no data examining the outcome of systematic prophylactic removal of this lead, as our data reported summary data only. Complications related to prophylactic revision of this lead may be underestimated due to limited numbers. We agree completely with Maytin et al’s statement that the decision to perform any procedure “mandates an assessment of risk.” The issue of risk is dependent on patient factors, rather than just factors associated with the procedure. Given the constant risk of Sprint Fidelis failure (1% to 1.5% per year) and the significant reduction in inappropriate shocks through institution of the Lead Integrity Alert, careful observation remains prudent for this lead, particularly as the time from implant lengths, which was the single predictor of need for laser extraction tools in the analysis of patients in the study by Maytin et al. If a system modification is going to be performed for another reason, insertion of either a new pace/sense lead or a new high voltage lead, without extraction, should be attempted at most centers. The role of regional high volume extraction centers is exemplified by the report of Maytin et al, so that if extraction is to be contemplated, it should be done in centers with significant experience.

Disclosures
R.P. received funding from Medtronic, Inc. and St. Jude Medical; E.C. received funding from Medtronic, Inc., St. Jude Medical, Boston Scientific, and Sorin/ELA; D.B. received funding from Medtronic, Inc.; D.E. received funding from Medtronic, Inc., St. Jude Medical, Boston Scientific, and Sorin/ELA; B.T. received funding from St. Jude Medical, Medtronic, Inc., Sorin Group, and Boston Scientific; A.V. received honoraria and research grants from St. Jude Medical, Biosense Webster, Medtronic, Inc., Sanofi Aventis, and Boehringer Ingelheim; V.E. received honoraria and minor speaker fees from Medtronic, Inc; and S.S. received funding from Medtronic, Inc.

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(Circulation. 2011;123:e376-e377.)
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Circulation is available at http://circ.ahajournals.org
DOI: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.110.003517
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_Circulation_. 2011;123:e376-e377
doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.110.003517

_Circulation_ is published by the American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX 75231
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Print ISSN: 0009-7322. Online ISSN: 1524-4539

The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the World Wide Web at:
http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/123/10/e376

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