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## Anesthetizing minipigs for cardiac surgery

Anesthetic agents for cardiac surgery should produce analgesia, hypnosis and muscle relaxation while causing minimal cardiovascular stress. Combinations of drugs are often required to achieve full anesthesia. Liu *et al.* compared the cardiovascular effects of ketamine-pentobarbital or fentanyl-pentobarbital combinations in minipigs undergoing open-heart surgery and cardiopulmonary bypass. Their results suggest that ketamine-pentobarbital anesthesia was associated with more stable cardiovascular conditions for open-heart surgery and bypass in minipigs.

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## 'Sounding out' catheter placement

Many procedures in minipigs require reliable deep venous access with a large-bore catheter. In animal experiments, such catheters are typically implanted surgically, but in clinical settings, ultrasound imaging is routinely used as a less invasive option. Pinkernelle *et al.* used ultrasound guidance to place catheters in the minipig femoral vein. Their technique was successful in all six pigs tested and caused no physiological complications.

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## Rodent pain management

Clinical evaluation of animal pain continues to be a challenge in lab animal science. Behavioral assessment is frequently used as an indicator of pain, but its subjectivity and inability to be quantified limit its utility. Wheat and Cooper propose a more straightforward method of assessing pain in rodents: measuring changes in body weight, food consumption and water consumption. They recommend the use of this tool for evaluating postsurgical pain and analgesic efficacy in rodents.

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