



University of Miami Health System Recognized as a Mitral Valve Repair Reference Center from the American Heart Association and the Mitral Foundation

The University of Miami Health System has received the Mitral Valve Repair Reference Center Award from the American Heart Association and the Mitral Foundation for a demonstrated record of superior clinical outcomes resulting from evidence-based, guideline-directed degenerative mitral valve repair.



Joseph Lamelas, M.D

The Mitral Valve Repair Reference Center Award was developed to identify, recognize, and promote the nation's recognized medical centers for mitral valve repair surgery. UHealth earned the award for demonstrating adherence to evidence-based treatment guidelines as well as an ongoing commitment to



reporting and measuring quality and outcome metrics specific to mitral valve repairs.

“We are proud that the work we have done in the area of mitral valve repair has been recognized by the American Heart Association and the Mitral Foundation,” said Joseph Lamelas, M.D., chief and program director of cardiac surgery at UHealth and the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. “This is truly a team effort, and we are proud to be able to offer our patients the best possible outcomes in their journey to better heart health.”

Dr. Lamelas, who is also the pioneer of the minimally invasive approach to cardiac surgery called “*The Miami Method*,” performs anywhere from five to seven mitral valve repairs and/or replacements each week. His approach, which offers less time in hospital, quicker recovery, and reduced risk of infection and complications, is especially promising for high-risk patients who otherwise have limited surgical treatments.

The recommended treatment for degenerative mitral valve disease is mitral valve reconstruction, as opposed to valve replacement with a bioprosthetic or mechanical valve since valve repair is associated with improved survival and fewer long-term complications. Many patients who would benefit from repair receive replacement valves, with higher rates of death or complications within five years after surgery.

“We are pleased to recognize University of Miami Health System for their commitment to patients who need mitral valve repair,” said Robert O. Bonow, MD, professor of cardiology at Northwestern University and past president of the American Heart Association. “Choosing the right hospital for heart surgery is one of the most important healthcare decisions that



patients and their referring physicians must make to ensure best outcomes. The Mitral Valve Repair Reference Center award identifies hospitals with excellent processes and outcomes and gives patients and cardiologists the information necessary to make these important decisions when mitral valve surgery is required.”

Under Dr. Lamelas’ leadership, University of Miami Health System, has received maximum star ratings for mitral valve repair by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS). As well, Dr. Lamelas maintains the overall highest volume of cardiac surgery in the state of Florida, according to data from the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA – y-end 2020). In his career, Dr. Lamelas has performed more than 17,000 cardiac surgeries, 9000 of which have employed a minimally invasive approach, and has trained over 1,000 physicians around the world in minimally invasive cardiac surgery.

More information about the American Heart Association and Mitral Foundation Mitral Valve Repair Reference Center Award is available at on www.heart.org. For more information on The University of Miami Health System’s cardiac surgery program, visit umiamicardiac.com.

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