WHO WE ARE

The Mighty Hearts Project is led by owners of dogs who have benefited from this surgical repair intervention.

We feel passionately about bringing visibility to this surgery by sharing our knowledge and shared experiences with the world.

Our goal is to advance the care for dogs by collaborating with the world’s top veterinarians and supporters globally to bring you the most current research, palliative care and updates on emerging techniques regarding mitral valve disease and repair.

EDUCATION

We believe in educating dog owners about the most viable option for advanced treatment of mitral valve disease. We support bringing awareness to veterinary professionals about Dr. Masami Uechi’s repair technique and the surgeries being performed throughout all the clinics worldwide. We encourage cardiologists to increase their knowledge and exposure to this technique to better help their patients.

ADVOCACY

By increasing the demand for advanced care, we also wish to leverage the collective global interest in this technique by bringing internationally known inventor of mitral valve repair surgery in small breed dogs, Dr. Masami Uechi, to the US for direct interventions with dogs with mitral valve disease and mentor up and coming veterinary talents to be able to perform this technique with confidence saving more lives.

HOPE

We support dog owners from the inception of their animal’s diagnosis, through their decision-making process on what type of care is best for their family, all the way through intervention if they should choose to take that path. We also support emerging research on mitral valve disease and repair and share the best possible proven options for dog owners to make well informed decisions based off of current data.

Disclaimer: The information provided is for educational and informational purposes only and is not meant as a substitute for advice from a trained veterinarian or any other medical professional. Please do your own research and contact each clinic performing this repair surgery for the most up to date information.
MVD OVERVIEW

Degenerative mitral valve disease is an acquired disease, responsible for 75% of all canine heart disease. It affects five to seven million dogs in the United States alone.

Degenerative mitral valve disease affects the mitral valve, a flap that is located on the left side of the heart, between the atrium and the ventricle. This valve, whose tissue tends to degenerate with age, gradually thickens and, losing its elasticity, is no longer impervious. This lack of closure leads to abnormal blood flow inside the heart, known as mitral regurgitation.

As the disease worsens, the chordae tendineae (cords) connecting the valve to the left ventricle may rupture. This complication can lead to pulmonary edema (a buildup of fluid in the lungs making it difficult to breathe) and other complications that are detrimental to the dog’s life. Large dogs also suffer from Mitral Valve Disease, although it is less common, and they are typically less ill than small dogs.

Without MVR surgical intervention, MVD is a death sentence. Some pups live on medications for years, others die within a matter of months. The disease is unpredictable and treatment varies dog to dog.

For more information and a more detailed overview of the disease please visit our website at www.mightyheartsproject.org.

INTERVENTION: MITRAL VALVE REPAIR SURGERY

The goal of MVR surgery is to wean dogs from their medical treatments and lengthen their lifespan to their life expectancy inherent to their breed. JASMINE clinic's founder Dr. Masami Uechi is the creator of MVR surgery for dogs.

MVR surgery is performed in two parts with the use of the cardiopulmonary bypass machine. Surgeons first perform an annuloplasty of the mitral valve to draw the valve back down to a smaller size enabling the valve's edges to form a better seal. Then surgeons replace any ruptured or stretched chordae tendineae with GoreTex sutures helping to tighten the mitral valve by improving contact between the valve's edges. The entire procedure results in less leakage and a much improved, more efficiently functioning valve. Most dogs are able to come off of some or all of their heart medication as a result.

We encourage you to read more details about the surgery and risks on our website www.mightyheartsproject.org.

MVR SURGERY OPTIONS

Japan: Dr. Masami Uechi (inventor of MVR for dogs) performs mitral valve repair at JASMINE Clinic in Yokohama, Japan, this is about 40 minutes outside of Tokyo. To have your dog considered for surgery please have your dog’s cardiologist email your dog’s latest blood tests, medical records, chest X-rays and echocardiogram images and videos to muechi@cardiovets.jp. Please contact the team with any questions at +81.45.532.8451.

England: Dr. Dan Brockman and Dr. Poppy Bristow perform mitral valve repair surgery at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in Brookmans Park, United Kingdom. This is about a 40 minute drive from London Heathrow airport. To have your dog considered for surgery please have your dog’s cardiologist email your dog’s latest blood tests, medical records, chest X-rays and echocardiogram images and videos to qmhaheartsurgery@rvc.ac.uk. Please contact the team with any questions at +44-1707-666-366.

United States: In a medical surgical exchange program, Dr. Masami Uechi and his team will begin performing and teaching MVR surgery at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine Hospital in Gainesville, Fl in 2020. To have your dog considered for surgery please have your dog’s cardiologist email your dog’s latest cardiac reports, chest X-rays, echocardiogram images and videos to openheart@vetmed.ufl.edu. Please contact the clinic directly for the latest info at (352) 392-2235.