

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Prior to 1925, when Sir Henry Souttar reported the first mitral commissurotomy in the *British Medical Journal*, heart surgery was thought to be impossible. Souttar wrote that the heart should be as amenable to surgery as any other organ, and the main problem was maintenance of blood flow, particularly to the brain, during surgery. The first real advances occurred in the late 1940s and early 1950s, driven by surgeons who gained confidence and experience under the pressures and opportunities provided by war. This was followed by the development of cardiopulmonary bypass (CPB) in the mid-1950s, which permitted longer, more complex surgery. Recently, the outlook of patients with congenital, valvular and degenerative heart disease has improved drastically because of advances in the range, complexity and technical expertise in cardiac surgery.

The role of surgery in valvular heart disease • The role of surgery in congenital heart disease • The management of aortic pathology • The management of pericardial disease • The principles of cardiopulmonary resuscitation after cardiac surgery

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