

1 **Feasibility of Coronary Alignment in TAVI with Balloon-Expandable Valves: Insights from a**
2 **COMPARE-TAVI 1 Substudy**

3
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10

11 **Abstract**

12 Background

13 Coronary alignment may be an important prerequisite for redo-TAVI and may be achieved with
14 ballon-expandable valves (BEV) by intentional orientation of neo-commissures during crimping.

15

16 Aims

17 To evaluate whether coronary alignment is possible during implantation of BEVs and to assess
18 the risk of coronary obstruction limiting the feasibility of redo-TAVI.

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1 Methods

2 On post-TAVI CT scans available in 375 patients enrolled in the COMPARE-TAVI 1 study, we
3 assessed coronary alignment defined by neo-commissure-to-coronary-angles and assessed
4 coverage of coronary ostia by the THV frame and valve-to-aorta distance.

5 Patients were randomized to treatment with Sapien 3 (Group A) or Myval (Group B) with
6 random orientation of neo-commissures during valve crimping (Period 1), or Sapien 3 (Group C)
7 or Myval Octacor (Group D)(Period 2), where intentional orientation of neo-commissures during
8 crimping was attempted according to pre-TAVI CT-scan.

9 Results

10 Left main alignment or mild misalignment occurred in 50%, 51%, 47% and 55% of patients in
11 groups A, B, C and D, $p=0.33$, and right coronary alignment or mild misalignment occurred in
12 52%, 62%, 54% and 53%, $p=0.53$. The proportion of patients considered feasible for redo-TAVI
13 defined as a) no coronary coverage by the THV frame, b) coronary coverage but $VTA \geq 2$ mm, or
14 c) coronary coverage and $VTA < 2$ mm but coronary alignment optimal or only mild misalignment,
15 was 81%, 78%, 80%, 87% in groups A, B, C and D, $p=0.33$.

16 Conclusions

17 Crimping BEV neo-commissures at predefined angles did not increase coronary alignment,
18 however, the majority of patients treated with BEVs were still considered eligible for redo-TAVI.
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2 **Abbreviations and acronyms**

3 BEV: Balloon expandable valve

4 LM: Left main

5 MSCT: Multislice computed tomography

6 RCA: Right coronary artery

7 TAVI: Transcatheter aortic valve implantation

8 THV: Transcatheter heart valve

9 VTA: Valve-to-aorta distance

10

11 **Introduction**

12 Coronary alignment is defined as the angle between a coronary ostium and
13 the nearest transcatheter heart valve (THV) neo-commissure and categorized into aligned
14 (angle 45-60°), mildly misaligned (angle 30-44°), moderately misaligned (angle 15-29°), and
15 severely misaligned (angle 0-14°)(1). The major pitfall of redo-TAVI is the occurrence of
16 coronary obstruction. Accordingly, obtaining coronary alignment during the index
17 procedure might be beneficial to mitigate the risk of coronary obstruction and to perform
18 leaflet modification techniques in high risk anatomies(2, 3). As guidelines expand TAVI
19 treatment to younger patients with longer life expectancy(4-6), coronary alignment
20 becomes increasingly important.

21 The current evidence regarding the practical feasibility of coronary alignment
22 in TAVI procedures is limited. Commissural alignment has proven feasible for several self-

1 expandable valves(7-9), but was only recently introduced for ballon-expandable valves
2 (BEV)(10, 11). In theory, coronary alignment can be achieved with attention to neo-
3 commissure orientation during crimping (Figure 1). However, individual differences in
4 coronary eccentricity and iliofemoral and aortic tortuosity may challenge the validity of this
5 theory.

6 The aim of this study was three-fold: 1. to evaluate coronary alignment after
7 implantation of Sapien 3/Sapien 3 Ultra THV series and Myval/Myval Octacor THV series. 2.
8 to evaluate if patient-specific rotation of a THV neo-commissure during valve crimping
9 facilitates coronary alignment. 3. to assess subsequent coronary coverage by the THV
10 frame and the risk of coronary obstruction that may limit the feasibility of redo-TAV.
11

12 **Methods**

13 *Study population*

14 This is a substudy of the TAVI-COMPARE 1 trial(12), a multicenter all-comers RCT
15 randomizing (n=1031) patients with severe aortic stenosis 1:1 to Sapien 3/Sapien 3 Ultra
16 THV series (Edwards Lifesciences, Irvine, California, USA) and the Myval/Myval Octacor
17 THV series (Meril Life Sciences Pvt. Ltd., Vapi, Gujarat, India) BEV (Figure 2). From June
18 2020 to August 2021 (study period 1) Sapien and Myval THVs were used in the study.
19 Patent-related issues made Myval unavailable from August 2021. When enrollment was
20 resumed in August 2022 (study period 2) Myval Octacor was introduced instead of Myval,
21 and with this the idea of coronary alignment using the OctaAlign technique(10). Patients
22 enrolled in the COMPARE-TAVI 1 trial at Aarhus University Hospital (n=538) who also had a

1 one-month post-TAVI MSCT scan performed as part of a MSCT-substudy (n=375) comprised
2 the current study population(13). At Aarhus University hospital LM alignment was
3 prioritized in all patients randomized to Myval Octacor.

4 5 *Pre-TAVI MSCT measurement of Left Main orientation*

6 Patients had a pre-TAVI MSCT scan as described previously(14). After August 2022, the
7 angle between anterior (12 o'clock) and the left main (LM) take off on the annular plane was
8 measured using 3Mensio imaging software (3mensio Medical Imaging, Utrecht,
9 Netherlands).

10 11 *Crimping of THV*

12 In theory, coronary alignment can be achieved with attention to neo-commissure
13 orientation during crimping. Provided that the right coronary artery (RCA) ostium is located
14 anterior and the left main (LM) 120° from anterior, the neo-commissure will in theory rotate
15 180° when passing through the aortic arch, achieving coronary alignment with neo-
16 commissures located 60° from each coronary artery (Figure 1).

17 Between June 2020 and August 2021 (study period 1) all THVs (Sapien 3:
18 Group A; Myval: Group B) were mounted on the delivery system with random orientation
19 (no particular attention to the orientation) of the neo-commissures during crimping (Figure
20 2). After the introduction of Myval Octacor in August 2022 (study period 2) all Sapien 3 THVs
21 (Group C) were crimped with a neo-commissure aligned to 12 o'clock when inserted in the
22 crimping device. For Myval Octacor THVs (Group D) patient specific rotation of a neo-

1 commissure was implemented: the valves were crimped with a neo-commissure oriented
2 120° from the LM take off measured on the pre-TAVI CT scan. If the LM take off was 120°
3 from anterior, the Myval Octacor THV was crimped with a neo-commissure aligned to 12
4 o'clock when inserted in the crimping device, so in theory it would end at 6 o'clock after
5 transversing the aortic arch, and thus 60° from the LM (Figure 1). For every six degrees the
6 LM take off was greater than 120° , the THV was rotated 1 minute clockwise on the crimping
7 device or rotated accordingly counterclockwise for every six degrees lower than 120°
8 (Figure 2).

9 10 *Multislice Computed tomographic imaging and analysis*

11 One-month post-TAVI MSCT scans were performed using a dual-source CT
12 systems (Siemens Somatom Definition Flash or Force, Siemens Healthcare, Forchheim,
13 Germany) scanner. Scans were obtained with a prospective ECG-gated acquisition
14 protocol, generally timed to 65–75% of the R–R interval. In cases of atrial fibrillation or
15 inability to maintain breath-hold, an ECG-triggered high-pitch spiral acquisition mode was
16 used.

17 MSCT data were analyzed in a blinded fashion by a dedicated core laboratory
18 at Aarhus University Hospital. All MSCT image analyses were performed using 3Mensio
19 imaging software (3mensio Medical Imaging, Utrecht, Netherlands). Neo-commissures
20 were identified and the angles between the LM and the RCA ostium and the nearest neo-
21 commissure were measured. For each coronary, alignment was classified as follows:

1 aligned if the neo-commissure-to-coronary angle was 45-60°; mildly misaligned at 30-44°;
2 moderately misaligned at 15-29°; and severely misaligned at 0-14° (Figure 3)(15).

3 In short frame BEV THVs, as Sapien and Myval THVs, the future neoskirt height is close to
4 the height of the index THV frame, but with small variation depending on valve size(16). The
5 THV frame was used as neoskirt plane, and the coronary risk plane was defined as the
6 lowest point of each coronary ostium(17). For each coronary artery it was determined if the
7 neoskirt plane was above coronary risk plane, and if this was the case the narrowest valve-
8 to-aorta distance (VTA) was measured in the area from the top of the coronary ostia to the
9 top of the THV frame(17).

10 Unfeasible redo-TAVI was defined as moderate or severe misalignment of at least one
11 coronary artery in combination with THV frame coverage and VTA<2 mm.

13 *Statistical analysis*

14 Categorical data as number (per centage). Comparisons of proportions were made using
15 Chi-square test.

17 **Results**

18 In the COMPARE-TAVI 1 trial 538 patients were enrolled at Aarhus University
19 Hospital. 433 of these patients consented to a MSCT-substudy with one-month post-TAVI
20 MSCT-scans, and in 390 (90.1%) the one-month MSCT-scan was available. MSCT image
21 quality allowed for coronary alignment assessment in 375 (96%), who comprise the current
22 study cohort. 40 patients (10.6%) had bicuspid anatomy, and 16 patients (4%) had valve-in-

1 valve procedure. 170 patients were included during period 1 and treated with Sapien THV
2 series (Group A, n=84) or Myval THV series (Group B, n=86), and 205 patients were included
3 during study period 2 and treated with Sapien THV series (Group C, n=99) or Myval Octacor
4 THV series (Group D, n=106) (Figure 4).

6 *Coronary alignment*

7 During study period 1, when all THVs were crimped with random orientation of
8 the neo-commissures there was no difference in the proportion of Sapien (Group A) and
9 Myval THVs (Group B) that were aligned, mildly misaligned, moderately misaligned or
10 severely misaligned for neither LM ($p=0.82$) nor RCA ($p=0.55$) (Figure 4).

11 During study period 2, when neo-commissures were oriented at 12 o'clock for
12 Sapien (Group C) and LM alignment was attempted for Myval Octacor (Group D) during the
13 crimping process, there were also no differences in the proportion of Sapien and Myval
14 Octacor THVs that were aligned, mildly misaligned, moderately misaligned or severely
15 misaligned for neither LM ($p=0.11$) nor RCA ($p=0.83$) (Figure 4).

16 When comparing all 4 groups (A-D), there were also no differences in the
17 proportion of Sapien and Myval/Myval Octacor THVs that were aligned, mildly misaligned,
18 moderately misaligned or severely misaligned for neither LM ($p=0.33$) nor RCA ($p=0.53$)
19 (Figure 4).

21 *Coverage of coronary ostium*

1 improve coronary alignment. 3. In at least 30% of patients with a BEV, coronary alignment
2 may be of importance in redo-TAVI.

3 As guidelines extend TAVI indication to younger patients with less comorbidity
4 and longer life expectancy(4-6), the need for TAVI-in-TAVI likely increases and coronary
5 alignment of the index THV may be an issue. When the index THV commissure level
6 extends above the coronary ostium, there can be a risk of coronary obstruction by the
7 neoskirt formed by leaflets of the index-THV in a TAVI-in-TAVI procedure. In BEV THVs, the
8 height of the neoskirt is in bench testing close to the height of the THV frame; 2-3 mm lower
9 depending on valve size(16). We approximated THV frame height as the neoskirt plane and
10 the VTA was measured if the neoskirt plane was above the coronary risk plane, i.e. a
11 coronary artery was fully covered by the THV frame. Thereby we may have slightly
12 overestimated the risk of coronary obstruction. The risk of coronary obstruction during TAVI
13 is also influenced by the VTA. When the VTA is less than 2 mm, the likelihood of obstruction
14 is significantly increased, necessitating the implementation of specific management
15 strategies during TAVI-in-TAVI procedures. In certain cases, chimney stenting can be
16 successfully performed even without coronary alignment; however, this approach serves
17 as a bailout rather than a preventive strategy, aimed at mitigating an obstruction once it
18 occurs (18). In contrast, true preventive measures—such as intentional leaflet laceration
19 of the index THV—are unlikely to be effective in the absence of coronary alignment. (19, 20).
20 Our finding of alignment to the left main in only 25% of cases is therefore interesting.

21 Two earlier studies have evaluated commissural alignment for Myval Octacor.
22 In the research letter by Revaiah et al, it was described for the first time how to implant

1 Myval with the OctaAlign technique, which theoretically can increase commissural
2 alignment achievability(10). When orientating the Myval to 12 o'clock during crimping
3 commissural alignment was achieved in 38% of cases, while mild, moderate, and severe
4 misalignment was seen in 31%, 19%, and 13%, respectively. Coronary alignment was not
5 evaluated in this study, and the study cohort comprised only 32 patients, implanted in 8
6 centers so no statistical calculations were relevant.

7 Sandos-Martinez et al refined the Myval Octacor crimping technique to improve
8 commissural-coronary alignment outcomes(11). The latter study group performed patient-
9 specific rotation of the THV during crimping according to an aortic root biomodel based on
10 pre-TAVI MSCT scan. They found commissural alignment in 50% of the patients and 70%
11 and 60% had coronary alignment to the LM and RCA, respectively. The authors found a
12 higher rate of alignment than our study, but with only 10 patients the study is mainly
13 hypothesis generating.

14 Our study is in line with the larger studies available(8, 21, 22). All three studies found THV
15 alignment was random with respect to commissures(21, 22), and coronary overlap occurs
16 in 30-50% cases(8). Tang et al also found that initial intentional orientation of the Sapien 3
17 THV during crimping had no impact on alignment(8).

18 While the COMPARE-TAVI 1 trial was designed as a multicenter RCT, this specific
19 substudy is based on a single-center cohort representing a potential limitation regarding
20 generalizability. Nevertheless, as described above, our findings are consistent with other
21 studies.

1 Institutional research grants from Meril Life Sciences, the Danish Heart Foundation,
2 Vingmed Denmark, and the Central Denmark Region for the conduct of the COMPARE-TAVI
3 1 trial.

5 **Data availability statement**

6 Study-related documents can be made available on request. Individual data
7 can be made available for collaborative pooled analyses provided relevant contracts and
8 data sharing agreements are made. Only anonymized data can be shared.

10 **Conflict of interest statement**

11 BLN: Unrestricted research grants from the Novo Nordisk Fonden. TT: lecture fees from
12 Terumo and Chiesi. EHC: institutional research grants from Abbott, proctor fees from
13 Edwards Lifesciences, Meril Life Sciences, Boston Scientific and Abbott, lecture fees from
14 Edwards Life Sciences, Meril Lifesciences, Boston Scientific and Abbott. CJT: proctor and
15 lecture fees and research grants from Edwards, Terumo, Medtronic and Meril. All other
16 authors: none.

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3 Figure 4

4 Coronary alignment during the two study periods for left main (two top panels) and right
5 coronary artery (two bottom panels). Data presented are % of patients who had alignment;
6 mild misalignment, moderate misalignment, and severe misalignment, respectively.

7 Abbreviations: LM: Left main; THV: transcatheter heart valve.

8

9 Figure 5

10 Percentage of patients where the THV is either below the coronary artery ostium, or the
11 frame covers the ostium combined with various VTA distances. These results are presented
12 for the left main (top panel) and the right coronary artery. Abbreviations: LM: Left main;
13 RCA: Right coronary artery; THV: transcatheter heart valve; VTA: valve-to-aorta.

14

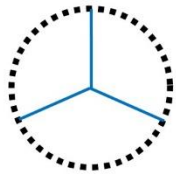
15 Figure 6

16 Distribution of patients with neoskirt plane below coronary risk plane; neoskirt plane above
17 coronary risk plane for one or both coronary arteries but associated $VTA \geq 2$ mm; patients
18 with neoskirt plane above coronary risk plane for one or both coronary arteries and $VTA < 2$
19 mm, but associated coronary alignment optimal or only mild misalignment; and lastly
20 patients with neoskirt plane above coronary risk plane for one or both coronary arteries and
21 severe or moderate misalignment i.e. redo TAVI unfeasible. THV frame height was used as
22 the neoskirt plane. Abbreviations: THV: transcatheter heart valve; VTA: valve-to-aorta.

1 Figure 1

Achieving coronary alignment in theory

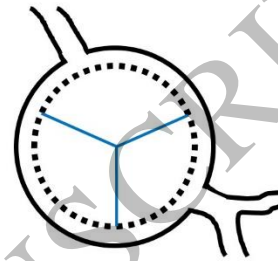
The valve is crimped with a neo-commissure anterior - at 12 o'clock



If aorta bends 180 degrees anterior



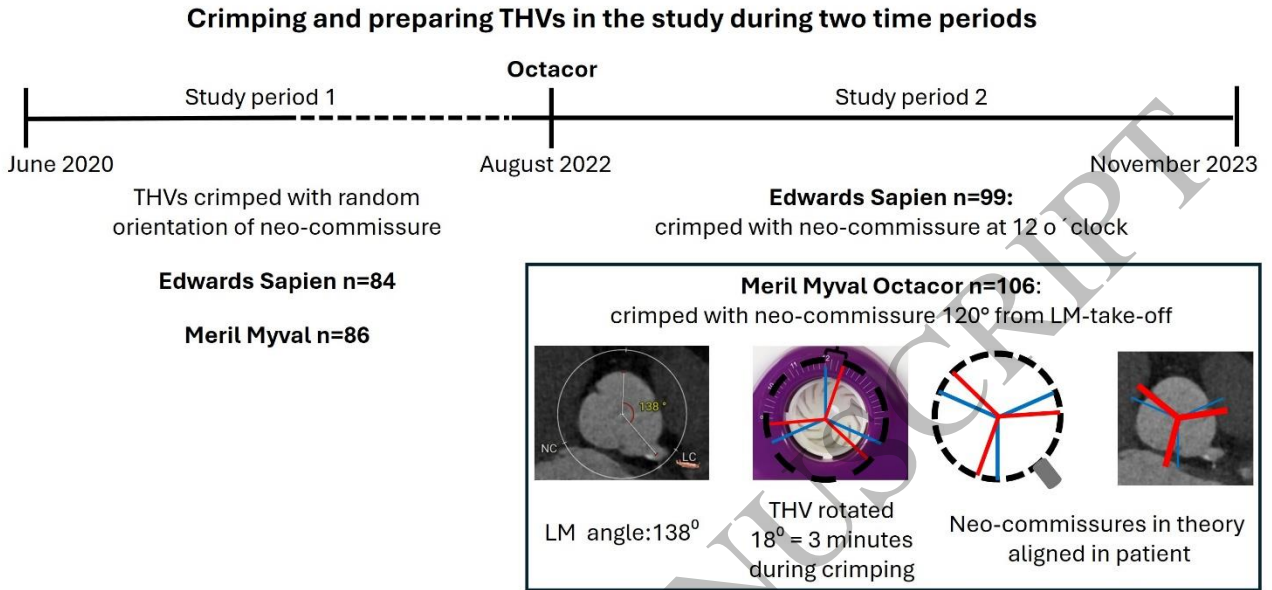
Neo-commissure will face posterior - 60 degrees from Left Main



2

ACCEPTED

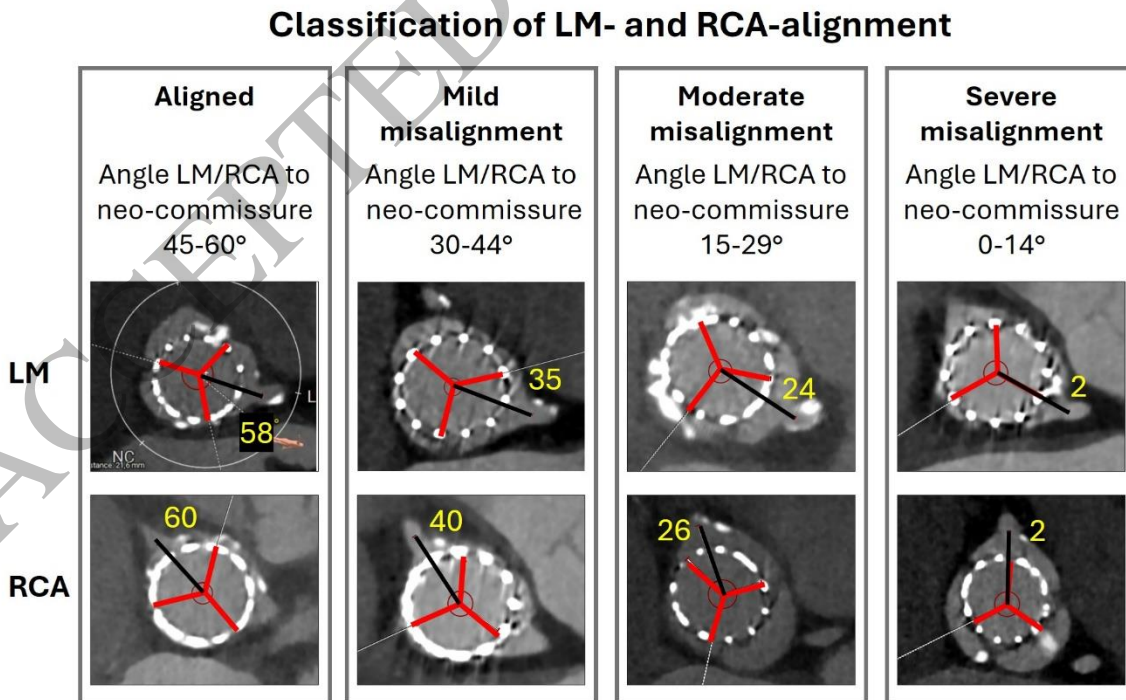
1 Figure 2



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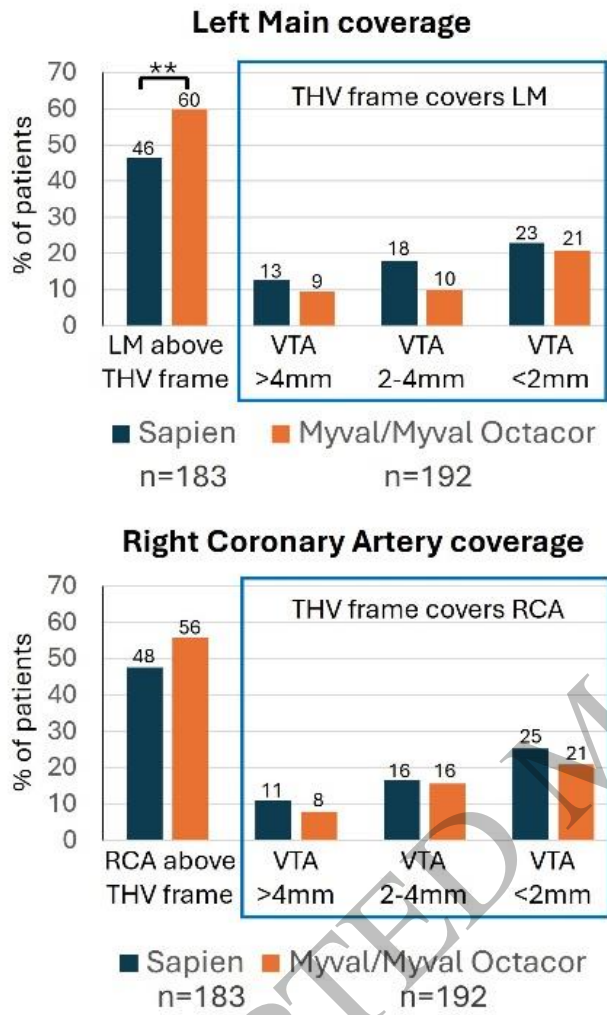
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4 Figure 3



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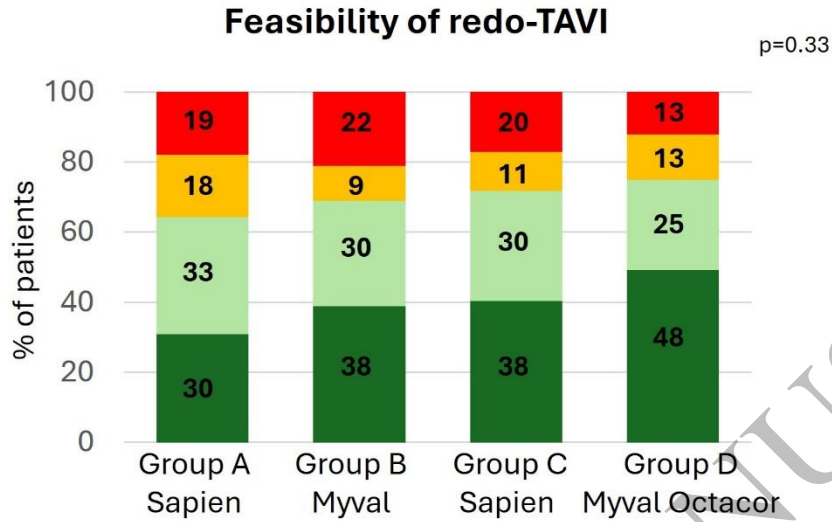
1 Figure 5



2

1 Figure 6

2



- Neoskirt plane above coronary risk plane, VTA < 2 mm and severe or moderate misalignment = **redo TAVI unfeasible**
- Neoskirt plane above coronary risk plane, VTA < 2 mm, but coronary alignment or mild misalignment
- Neoskirt plane above coronary risk plane, but VTA ≥ 2 mm
- Neoskirt plane below coronary risk plane

3

4



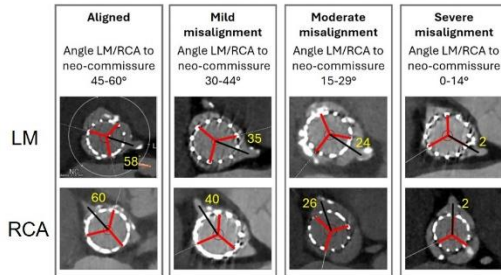
COMPARE-TAVI

Randomized comparison of TAVI valves

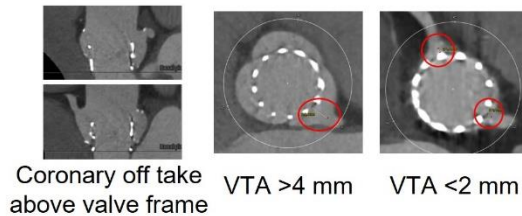
Sapien and Myval balloon-expandable THVs:

- Coronary alignment was random
- Low risk of coronary obstruction in redo-TAVI

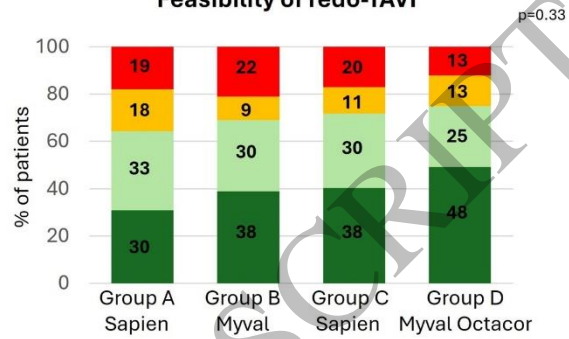
Classification of LM- and RCA-alignment



Risk of coronary obstruction in redo-TAVI



Feasibility of redo-TAVI



- Neoskirt plane above coronary risk plane, VTA < 2 mm and severe or moderate misalignment = redo TAVI unfeasible
- Neoskirt plane above coronary risk plane, VTA < 2 mm, but coronary alignment or mild misalignment
- Neoskirt plane above coronary risk plane, but VTA ≥ 2 mm
- Neoskirt plane below coronary risk plane

Graphical Abstract
165x102 mm (DPI)

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