

Survey grades heart bypass surgery

Rates of mortality at hospitals in state are tallied, compared

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Death rates in California hospitals from heart bypass surgery vary considerably, with the best results tending to turn up in programs that treat the most patients, a new state survey shows.

Oakland's **Summit Medical Center**, now merged with Alta Bates Medical Center in Berkeley, was ranked among five hospitals in the state that had "lower than expected" death rates from bypass surgery. **Doctor's Hospital** in San Pablo also earned elite status for similar results.

The California Report on Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Surgery, released Monday, is the second such report issued in a collaborative effort between the state government and the Pacific Business Group on Health, a San Francisco consortium of employers who study health issues.

Dr. **Junaid Khan**, a heart surgeon at the now merged Alta Bates-Summit Medical Center, was pleased with the results. He said that the survey had helped patients in the Bay Area by pressuring hospitals to follow protocols that work best. "People used to think you had to go across the bay for quality heart surgery," he said.

Hence, **Summit Medical Center** scored very well in this report because it treats severely ill patients, and its "expected death rate" was around 4 percent, but its actual bypass mortality was about half of that. **Doctor's Medical Center** in San Pablo -- a member of the controversial Tenet Healthcare hospital chain -- had a death rate of under about 1.5 percent, while a 4 percent death rate might have been expected.