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They claimed that a simple blood test called AlloMap, developed by molecular diagnostics company XDx Inc, allow transplant patients to avoid frequent heart biopsies.

These procedures are feared by many transplant patients because they are uncomfortable and can damage heart valves in some cases.

"This represents a major step forward in how we treat a patient after heart transplantation, because we can now safely reduce the number of heart biopsies," said Dr. Hannah Valantin of Stanford University.

Valantin designed the study to determine whether it was safe to reduce the number of biopsies needed by using blood tests.

The doctor and his colleagues presented the findings buy ambient at the annual meeting of the International Society for Heart & Lung Transplantation in Chicago.

The heart transplant patients need to buy ambient be monitored regularly for signs of organ rejection, usually through a procedure called endomyocardial biopsy, in which doctors insert a tube into a vein in the neck and into the heart, where small pieces of tissue collected for analysis.

Recipients in a heart transplant usually must be made between 15 and 20 biopsies in the first six months after the procedure, and after two to four per year.

"We need to monitor patients carefully to detect rejection in time to treat and prevent heart failure," said Valantin, whose study was published in the website of the New England Journal buy ambient of Medicine.

He added that biopsies are invasive and uncomfortable and are associated with a low risk of complications and death.

"Patients do not like and there is a huge burden for the cost to the institutions," said Valentine, indicating that a biopsy costs \$ 4,000, \$ 1,000 more than the AlloMap test.

The study was funded by XDx, a molecular diagnostics company in Brisbane, California.

Valentine said doctors have been doing biopsies for 30 years. His study compared this procedure with the AlloMap test, which checks the blood for specific genes associated with light or express rejection.

The team compared the results of 600 patients buy ambient were randomly assigned to undergo a biopsy or an electrocardiogram and examination AlloMap.

Valentine said the blood tests performed as [buy ambient](#) well as the routine biopsy, the patients in the group of blood tests showing similar rates of rejection and complications to those buy ambient who underwent biopsies.

Researchers are also doing a cost analysis comparing the two, but those results are not yet available.

The blood test is currently offered in 65 transplant centers in the United States. The Food and Drug Administration approved it for patients transplanted in August 2008.

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