beating heart may be deceptive. Echocardiography has made a significant contribution in elucidating the pathoanatomic basis of mitral regurgitation in this regard (1).

More significantly, the normal outward appearance of the mitral valve may belie the degree of inflammatory activity residing within the leaflet tissue and the annulus. There in fact may be the sites of predilection for histologic rheumatic activity and have been alluded to in pathologic studies as early as 1936 (2). Thus, in an evaluation of 51 patients we found histologic evidence of rheumatic valvulitis in 57% but neither macroscopic features at surgery nor abnormalities on echocardiography imply activity in any of the patients. Occult inflammatory activity and its resolution with time, including the processes of fibrosis and retraction, may be the underlying reason accounting for failure of mitral valve repair in these patients. Mitral valve repair is highly desirable in this young group of patients—a future challenge remains the determination of predictors that may identify those patients who are likely to benefit the most from a conservative procedure.

MOHAMMED R. ESSOP, MB, MRCP, FCP
Cardiology Department
Baragwanath Hospital
P.O. Berithum
Johannesburg 2013, South Africa

References

ANNOUNCEMENT:
PLANNING THE 1997 NATIONAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION EXAMINATION SURVEY

The National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is soliciting suggestions for topics to be considered in the planning process for the next National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) scheduled for 1997. As in previous NHANES, the primary purpose will be to measure and monitor the health and nutritional status of the U.S. population. Please send all research suggestions by October 1, 1994. Submit specific recommendations, including brief descriptions of the public health importance and the available data collection methodologies to:

Vicki Burt, Chief
Survey Planning and Development Branch
Division of Health Examination Statistics
National Center for Health Statistics
Presidential Building, Room 1000
6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD 20782