

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Reports are emerging that some defibrillator wires made by St. Jude Medical Inc are in rare instances puncturing holes in the hearts of cardiac patients, the Wall Street Journal reported Monday in its online edition.

The devices in question -- the Riata line of defibrillator leads from St. Jude -- are wires that connect to patients' hearts, according to the Journal.

They are fixed to the heart wall and when they sense the heart's rhythm has gone haywire, the defibrillator is supposed to dispatch an electric shock, the newspaper said.

But in some cases, rather than staying attached to the heart, the Riata leads are poking holes through the heart, the Journal reported.

The newspaper said the most recent cases involve the accounts of four patients and are expected to be posted online Monday by the medical journal Pace.

These cases have been reported to St. Jude and to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the newspaper added.

Representatives from St. Jude were not immediately available for comment.

Last month, Medtronic Inc suspended sales of the Sprint Fidelis line of leads after saying the equipment may have contributed to five deaths.