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Implantable cardiac loop recorders for the assessment of syncope: Is it possible to increase the diagnostic yield while reducing the number of adverse events?

Bartoletti A^o, Bocconcelli P[#], De Santo T^{*}, Giuli S^{*}, Massa R[^], Svetlich C[§], Tarsi G[#], Tronconi F^{*}, Corbucci G^{*}, Vitale E[^]

^o Cardiology Division, S. Giovanni di Dio Hospital, Florence, Italy, [^] Cardiology Division, Antonio, Biagio e Cesare Arrigo Hospital, Alessandria, Italy, [#] Cardiology Division, San Salvatore Hospital, Pesaro, Italy, [§] Cardiology Division, Ospedale Unico della Versilia, Lido di Camaiore, Italy, ^{*} Medtronic Italia SpA, Rome, ^{*} Medtronic BRC, The Netherlands

Aim: to compare the diagnostic yield of implantable loop recorders (ILR) of two subsequent generations for the assessment of syncope.

Methods: data on patients implanted for unexplained syncope in four public Italian hospitals were acquired from the Medtronic Clinical Service data base. After implant patients had routine follow-up every 90 days and urgent controls in case of syncope recurrence. The following findings were considered as diagnostic: ECG documentation of a syncope recurrence; documentation of any of the arrhythmias listed by the current guidelines as diagnostic findings even if asymptomatic.

Results: between November 2002 and March 2010, 40 patients were implanted with a Medtronic Reveal® Plus and 67 with a Medtronic Reveal® DX/XT and underwent at least one follow-up visit; the diagnoses were 7 (17.5%) and 24 (35.8%) ($p=0.043$), with a median time of 228 and 65 days respectively. Three (42.9%) and 21 (87.5%) ($p=0.029$) diagnoses were based on automatically detected events while adverse events occurred in 6 and in 1 ($p=0.01$) patients respectively.

Conclusion: Our results show a higher diagnostic yield, mainly related to the improved automatic detection function and associated with less adverse events, of the new generation's device.

Presidente

Prof. Giulio Masotti
Cattedra di Geriatria e Gerontologia
Università di Firenze
e Azienda Ospedaliera Careggi
Via delle Oblate, 4
50141 Firenze
Mail to: gmasotti@unifi.it

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Chiaralberta Valentini



Adria Congrex
Via Sassonia, 30
47922 Rimini
Tel. 0541.305811
Fax 0541.305842
Mail to: c.valentini@adriacongrex.it