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Arrhythmias in transplanted hearts: Lessons from Europes largest cohort of patients who underwent orthotopic heart transplantation

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Introduction: Cardiac arrhythmias are regularly seen in patients following orthotopic heart transplantation (OHT). So far, there is no data available about the prevalence in a large cohort.

Methods: We retrospectively screened our database for subjects with OHT who received inpatient or outpatient treatment in our center between January 2000 and December 2018. All these patients were carefully reviewed with special attention to rhythm disturbances after successful transplantation.

Results: We identified a total number of 1890 subjects with history of OHT being treated in our center during the pre-defined time-period. The prevalence of supraventricular tachycardias was as follows: atrial fibrillation/atypical flutter and atrial ectopy 10%, AV-node-re-entry tachycardia 3%, typical atrial flutter 2% and higher degree AV-Block or Sick-Sinus-Syndrom (SSS) was 6%. Sustained ventricular tachycardia or ventricular premature contractions were present in 2%. Regarding the patients with arrhythmias, 13% received catheter ablation for arrhythmias, thereof 53% an atrial ablation (24% left atrial ablation), the remainder received a ventricular ablation.

Conclusion: In this very large cohort and following a long observational time, there was a higher incidence of atrial arrhythmias in patients following OHT as reported in healthy subjects with an emphasis on atrial fibrillation and flutter. This data gives a valuable background information on morbidity following OHT.