

XIV InterAmerican Congress of Cardiology

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Poster Presentation Preferred

Cardiovascular Parasympathetic Dysfunction in Chagas' Disease
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Parasympathetic dysfunction is a well known clinical feature in Chagas' disease and has been related to sudden death in these pts. Considering that the heart rate increase at the onset of exercise is fully due to vagal inhibition, we assessed vagal tone in 30 chagasic pts. and 32 age-matched healthy subjects by means of the heart rate response to the 4-sec unloaded fast cycling test. Vagal tone was estimated from the ratio (B/C) of two RR intervals: the one immediately before (B) and the shortest during effort (C). Chagasic pts. had lower vagal tone than controls (X/SEM) - 1.29/0.03 vs 1.43/0.04; $p=.0067$. The pts. with conduction abnormalities in the ECG had a decreased vagal tone - 1.39/0.05 vs 1.20/0.03; $p=.0079$, while echocardiogram failed to discriminate pts. based on vagal tone ($p=.2331$). Pts. with B/C values < 1.11 showed class 4B-low in the 24-h Holter. Thus, the 4-sec test was able to detect a reduction in the vagal tone of chagasic pts. and may be useful in the stratification of severity of the cardiac form.

The author affirms that any animal studies conform with the "Position of the American Heart Association on Research Animal Use" (Circulation 1985;71:849), and that any human experimentation has been conducted according to a protocol approved by the institutional committee on ethics of human investigation or — if no such committee exists — that it conforms with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki of the World Medical Association (Clinical Research 1966;14:103).

The submitting author also certifies that all authors named in this abstract have agreed to its submission for presentation at the XIV InterAmerican Congress.

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Submitting author's signature