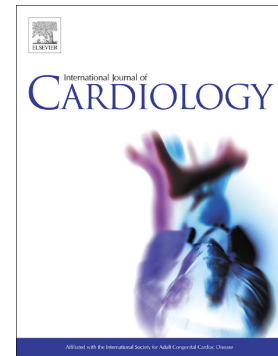


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The vital role of exercise testing in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy

Caroline J. Coats



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The Vital Role of Exercise Testing in Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

Exercise capacity is a powerful yet underused predictor of prognosis. Across a spectrum of heart diseases, the longer and more intensely an individual can exercise for, the less likely they will die prematurely. Many patients with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) report exercise limitation and have decreased functional capacity. Historically these individuals were advised to avoid exertion leading to an over cautious approach to clinical exercise testing. The pathophysiology of functional limitation in HCM is complex but supplementing conventional exercise testing with echocardiography or respiratory gas exchange analysis provides insight into mechanism of symptoms and exercise limitation. An objective assessment of exercise performance in a controlled environment is now considered safe and integral to patient management. The reasons for exercise testing in HCM are wide-ranging (Table) and supported by a growing body of literature. Importantly several recent studies have demonstrated the prognostic power of cardiopulmonary exercise test (CPET) parameters such as peak oxygen consumption [1].

Indications for exercise testing in Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

To determine the presence of left ventricular outflow tract obstruction
To assess functional capacity
To inform risk of sudden cardiac death (blood pressure response and ventricular arrhythmias)
To differentiate from other causes of left ventricular hypertrophy
To guide eligibility for cardiac transplantation

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