

European Heart Rhythm Association (EHRA)/Heart Rhythm Society (HRS)/Asia Pacific Heart Rhythm Society (APHRS)/Latin American Heart Rhythm Society (LAHRS) expert consensus on arrhythmias and cognitive function: what is the best practice?

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		procedures and cognitive function	e15
		Current knowledge gaps, future directions, and areas for research	e18
		Recommendations	e18
		Supplementary material	e20
		References	e20
Table of Contents	e2		
Introduction	e2		
Evidence review	e3		
Relationships with industry and other conflicts	e3		
Decline of cognitive function: terminology and epidemiology	e3		
Terminology: cognitive decline, mild cognitive impairment, and dementia	e3		
Epidemiology of dementia	e4		
Methods for assessment of cognitive function	e4		
Role of imaging	e4		
Atrial fibrillation and cognitive function ...	e5		
Atrial fibrillation, overt stroke, and cognitive function	e5		
Atrial fibrillation, silent stroke, and cognitive function	e8		
Atrial fibrillation and cognitive function in the absence of stroke	e9		
Assessment of cognitive function in atrial fibrillation patients in clinical practice	e9		
Prevention of cognitive dysfunction in atrial fibrillation patients	e10		
Other arrhythmias and cognitive dysfunction	e12		
Cognitive dysfunction in patients with regular supraventricular tachycardias ..	e12		
Cognitive impairment after cardiac arrest	e12		
Brain injury after non-fatal cardiac arrest	e12		
Memory impairment after cardiac arrest	e13		
Therapeutic hypothermia to prevent cognitive impairment after cardiac arrest	e13		
Cardiac implantable electronic devices and cognitive dysfunction	e13		
Catheter ablation	e14		
Implications for electrophysiological			

Introduction

This expert consensus statement of the European Heart Rhythm Association (EHRA), Heart Rhythm Society (HRS), Asia Pacific Heart Rhythm Society (APHRS), and the Latin American Heart Rhythm Society (LAHRS) summarizes the consensus of the international writing group and is based on a thorough review of the medical literature regarding cognitive function in arrhythmias. The document is intended to describe the impact of different types of arrhythmias on cognitive function, to highlight possible risk markers for cognitive decline and to formulate implications for clinical practice regarding follow-up methods, prevention and treatment strategies. Our objective is to raise awareness of cognitive function among physicians treating patients with arrhythmias and to provide them with practical proposals that may lead to improvement of patient care in this regard.

This document reviews terminology and the epidemiology of cognitive dysfunction, methods for assessment of cognitive function and the role of imaging. Recent studies have suggested possible associations between cognitive decline and atrial fibrillation (AF). We review the reported literature on AF and cognitive function, including the scenarios of AF with overt stroke, silent stroke, or no stroke, and then make recommendations for assessment of cognitive function and prevention of cognitive decline in patients with AF in clinical practice. The document also reviews the association of other arrhythmias and cognitive dysfunction, including settings such as post-cardiac arrest, cardiac implantable devices, such as implantable cardioverter-defibrillators (ICDs) and pacemakers, or ablation procedures. Implications for electrophysiological procedures and cognitive function are discussed. Long QT syndrome and cognitive function is not addressed in the document. For quick reference, sub-chapters are followed by a short section on consensus recommendations. The document concludes with a summary of consensus statements, current knowledge gaps, and future directions of research.

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