

Vienna to use public defibrillators to fight heart attacks

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Vienna will introduce 60 public defibrillators around the city over the coming months, in a bid to save lives by promoting quicker first aid in the event of a heart attack, authorities said Thursday.

Over 10,000 people die every year in Austria following [cardiac arrest](#).

"There's only one mistake you can make, that's to do nothing," Harry Kopietz, head of the regional parliament and president of the association Puls, which is backing the project, told journalists.

The [defibrillators](#), which help restore the heart's normal rhythm via an [electric shock](#), will be installed in stand-alone LED advertising boards, such as on [bus stops](#) and [pavements](#).

To help users who may otherwise feel intimidated, anyone who uses the device will be automatically connected to emergency services who can assist with reviving the patient.

An ambulance will be dispatched at the same time, thanks to a built-in global-positioning system (GPS), and the device itself will also explain what needs to be done.

Limited oxygen can provoke irreversible brain damage within three minutes of a [heart attack](#), which is why quick action is vital, without waiting for rescue services arrive, Puls manager Mario Krammel said.

The rate of survival for victims of cardiac arrest was up to 50 percent higher if they were treated promptly, added Klaus Marstaller of the Medical University of Vienna.

A link on the Puls website and a smartphone app will indicate where defibrillators are located.

The project's estimated initial cost of one million euros (\$1.3 million) will be entirely covered by the Gewista agency, which handles all public advertising in Vienna.

It calculated it would earn the money back through advertising, as the defibrillator pillars will still act as advertising signs on one side.

Further defibrillators were to be introduced regularly in the future.

Similar projects have already been tested in Britain, France, Canada and Italy.

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