

Canadian Journal of Cardiology publishes advice on genetic testing of inherited cardiac arrhythmias

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The Canadian Cardiovascular Society and Canadian Heart Rhythm Society have produced the first-ever comprehensive guidelines on the use of genetic testing in the clinical management of inherited heart rhythm disorders, released in the March/April issue of the *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*). The guidelines, entitled "Recommendations for the Use of Genetic Testing in the Clinical Evaluation of Inherited Cardiac Arrhythmias Associated with Sudden Cardiac Death," were chaired by Dr. Michael Gollob of the Ottawa Heart Institute, and involved a committee of adult and pediatric arrhythmia specialists, genetic counselors, and a bioethicist.

The guidelines highlight the appropriate use of genetic testing in the management of patients and their family members affected by a variety of genetic conditions of the heart that may promote dangerous [heart arrhythmias](#). Dr. Gollob emphasizes that "the rapid evolution of genetic knowledge gained from research over the last few decades has now imparted a very practical role in the care of patients and their families who may harbour these conditions." However, according to Dr. Gollob, "Decisions to proceed with [genetic testing](#) should not be taken lightly, and these guidelines are meant to ensure that ordering physicians have a clear understanding of the ethical issues and when genetic information may or may not be helpful."

"Genetic tests are becoming ever more available, and we are now even seeing them being marketed directly to the public," comments Stanley Nattel, M.D., Editor-in-Chief of the *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*. "The Canadian Cardiovascular Society has recognized a need for clear guidelines on the use of such tests, particularly when it comes to such important and emotionally charged conditions as potentially lethal heart rhythm disorders, and

charged a committee of experts to come up with practical recommendations. The detailed report containing these recommendations is published in the current issue of the *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*. This report, the first of its kind in the literature, will provide important guidance to physicians and other medical personnel dealing with such issues."

More information: www.onlinecjc.ca/

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