advances in software will make the procedure used in our study more popular. We appreciate the valuable comments by Dr. Detterbeck.

To the Editor:

Etiology for Cough

Premature Atrial Contraction as an Etiology for Cough

To the Editor:

Comprehensive contemporary reviews of cough do not include cardiac arrhythmia as a potential cause of unexplained cough, although cough itself has been described as a cause for tachyarrhythmia. I have encountered three patients recently with a clinical history of cough immediately following a palpitation. During echocardiography, these patients were seen to have a single premature atrial contraction (PAC) prior to a cough, which reproduced their symptoms. The patients’ histories all include a description of the cough as reflexive after feeling a “thump” in the chest, with an inability to stifle the cough. None of the patients were receiving angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors or had any other recognized etiology for cough. One of these patients had complete resolution of cough when his PACs resolved. I have not yet demonstrated the recurrence of the cough through withholding treatment for PAC. A literature review and an Internet search reveal no prior descriptions of PACs in association with cough; there has been one recent case report of chronic cough induced by premature ventricular contractions.

In discussing this observation with colleagues, several physicians have noticed a similar association between cough and PACs, including two cardiologists who report experiencing it themselves. I suspect that if more clinicians look for this association, as well as to research on the prevalence, pathophysiology, and treatment of this potential PAC/cough syndrome. In addition, there may be patients whose cough is due to otherwise asymptomatic PACs.

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REFERENCES


8 Canning BJ, Mori N, Mazzone SB. Vagal afferent nerves regulating the cough reflex. Respir Physiol Neurobiol 2006; 152:223–242

Evaluation of ICU Admission Criteria and Diagnostic Methods for Patients With Severe Community-Acquired Pneumonia

Current Practice Survey

To the Editor:

Community-acquired pneumonia (CAP) is a common disease seen in clinical practice. Various professional societies have released guidelines regarding criteria for ICU admission and appropriate diagnostic testing after admission.