

## Watching football on TV may potentially be life-threatening

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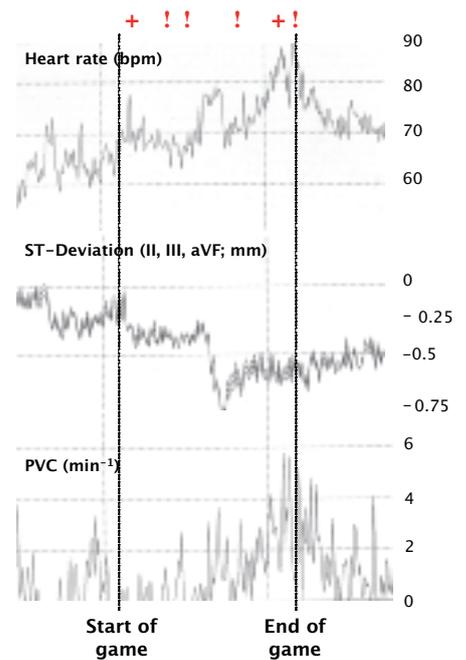
On November 16<sup>th</sup> 2005 a 57-year-old male patient with known coronary artery disease (CAD) and reduced left ventricular ejection fraction due to a prior anterior myocardial infarction was monitored on the intensive care unit after successful implantation of a single-chamber implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD). In the evening, the Swiss football fan was watching the World Cup play-off football game between Turkey and Switzerland on TV. Finally, based on a 2:0 victory in the first leg and two scored away goals, Switzerland reached the qualification for the upcoming World Cup finals in Germany despite a 4:2 victory by the Turkish team. Although the patient remained asymptomatic, continuous recordings of heart rate, ST-segment deviation and the number of premature ventricular complexes were suggestive of

mental stress-induced myocardial ischaemia while watching the very thrilling football game (figure 1). It is well known that mental stress may provoke myocardial ischaemia in patients with CAD. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that the combination of physical and mental stress may improve noninvasive detection of myocardial ischaemia in patients with CAD [1]. Notably, myocardial ischaemia may trigger life-threatening arrhythmias. Accordingly, our example demonstrates that watching football on TV is by far not innocuous but may potentially be as hazardous as playing football in susceptible patients with CAD.

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### Reference

- Hunziker PR, Gradel C, Müller-Brand J, Buser P, Pfisterer M. Improved myocardial ischemia detection by combined physical and mental stress testing. *Am J Cardiol* 1998;82:109–13.



**Figure 1**

Continuous recordings of heart rate (top), ST-segment deviation (middle) and number of premature ventricular complexes (PVC; bottom) in a patient with CAD and reduced left ventricular function during watching a football game. Note the increase in heart rate, the progressive depression of ST-segments in the inferior ECG leads and the increase in ventricular ectopia, suggestive of myocardial ischemia, particularly during the final 20–30, most thrilling minutes of the game. + goals scored by the Swiss team; ! goals scored by the Turkish team.

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