

Aborted sudden cardiac death. What is the cause?

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Coronary artery disease and non-ischemic cardiomyopathies account for the majority of sudden cardiac deaths in European adults. However, other various causes may be responsible in rare cases. We present a case of a 68-year-old female patient, who was admitted to our hospital after a witnessed cardiac arrest due to ventricular fibrillation. Acute coronary syndrome was initially diagnosed, but coronary angiography did not reveal any significant stenosis. The patient's previous medication included citalopram, ciprofloxacin and digoxin. We assume that drug-induced long QT syndrome and digoxin toxicity are the main causes of this episode, since electrocardiograms demonstrated persistent marked QTc prolongation (>520 msec) and digoxin plasma levels were more than double the upper therapeutic limits. Successful management included withdrawal of offending drugs and temporary pacing.