

Challenges in the management of genotype positive/phenotype negative HCM/NDLVC patients

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Definition

genotype

noun [C] • BIOLOGY • specialized

UK /'dʒiː.nə.taɪp/ UK  /'dʒen.ə.taɪp/ US /'dʒiː.noʊ.taɪp/ US  /'dʒen.oʊ.taɪp/

[Add to word list](#) 

the particular type and arrangement of genes that each person, animal, plant, or organism has:

phenotype

noun [C] • BIOLOGY • specialized

UK  /'fiː.nəʊ.taɪp/ US  /'fiː.noʊ.taɪp/

[Add to word list](#) 

the physical characteristics of something living, especially those characteristics that can be seen



Considerations in genotype+/phenotype- patients



Risk of SCD and
ventricular arrhythmias



Exercise
recommendations



Preventative
treatments

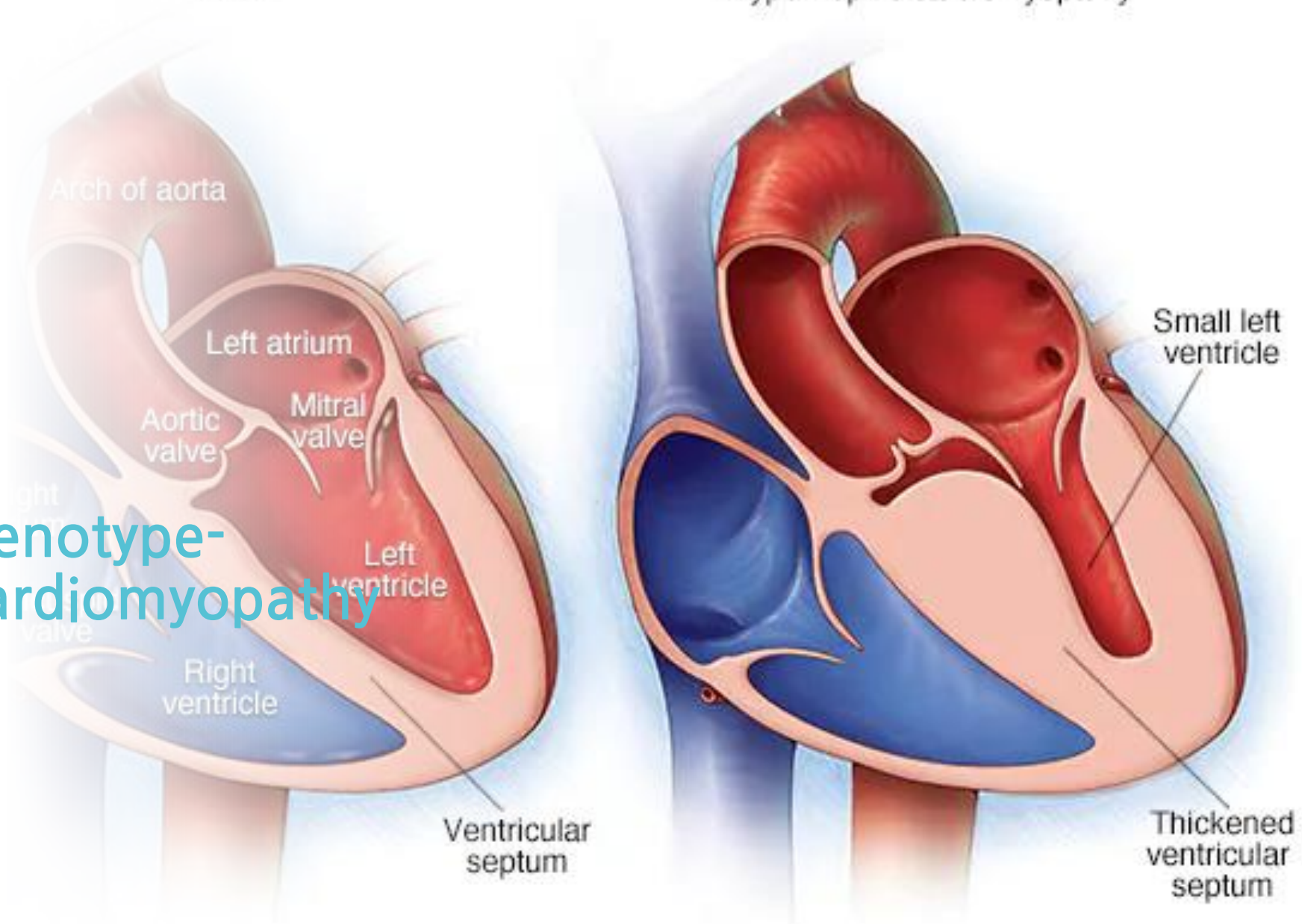


Follow up modalities
used and planned
interims

Heart

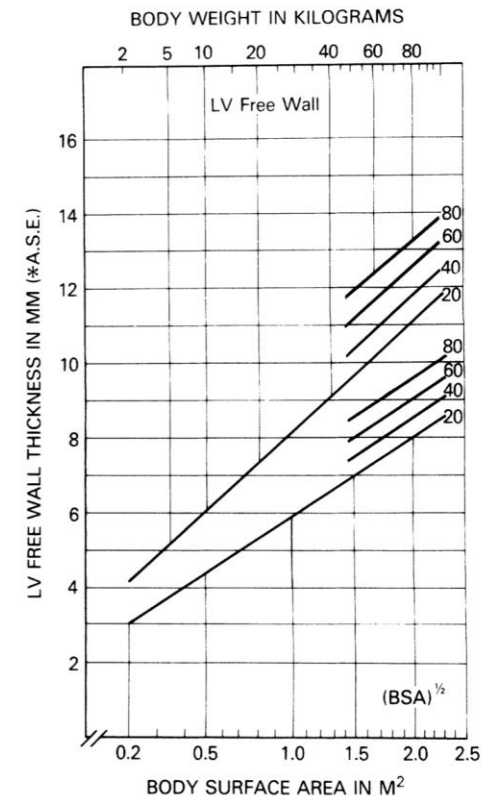
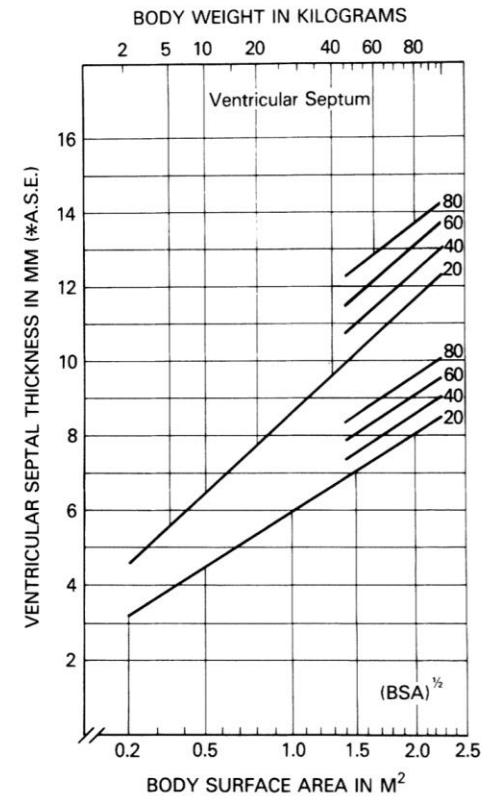
Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy

Genotype+/phenotype-
hypertrophic cardiomyopathy



Diagnostic criteria for HCM

- In an adult, HCM is defined by a **wall thickness ≥ 15 mm** in one or more LV myocardial segments—as measured by any imaging technique (echocardiography, CMR or CT)—that is not explained solely by loading conditions.
- In first-degree relatives of HCM patients, diagnosis is based on the presence of **LVH ≥ 13 mm**.
- The presence of other features (abnormal TDI, ECG, SAM etc.) is **non-diagnostic** but suggestive of early disease expression.



Prevalence of HCM

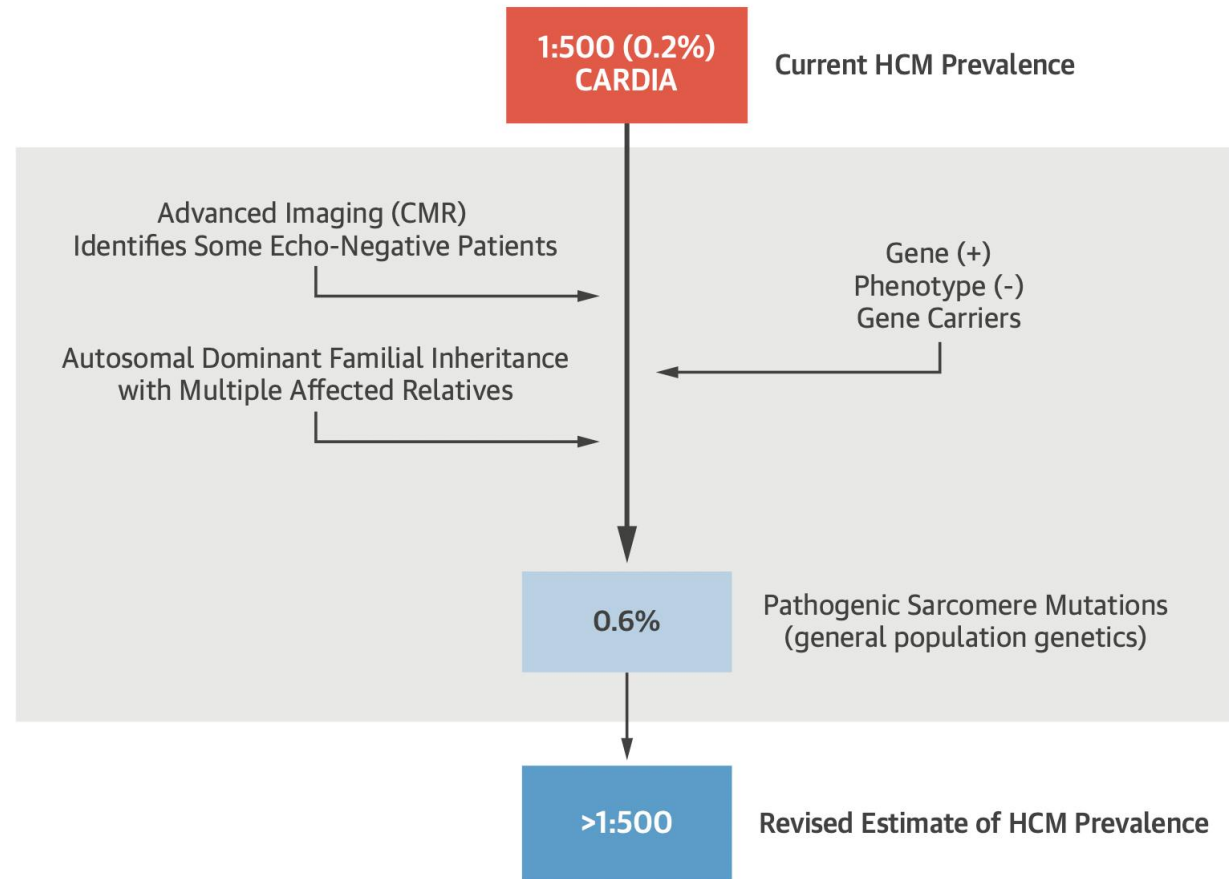
Clinical prevalence

1/500

Variant prevalence

1/200

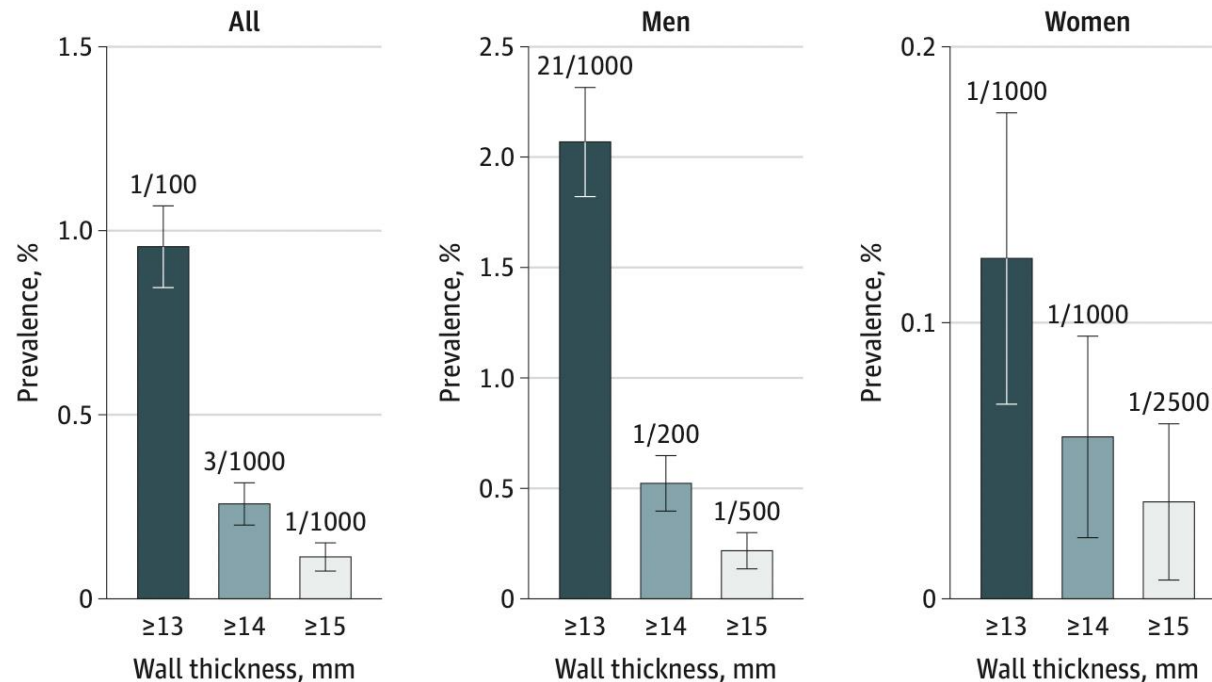
Potential reasons for the genotype/phenotype discrepancy



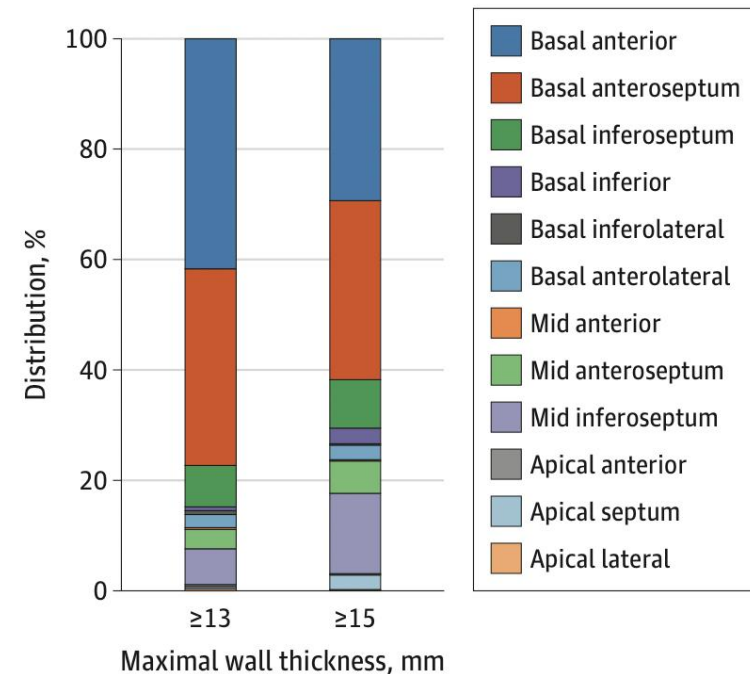
Are the wall thickness criteria incorrect?

Figure. Prevalence of Left Ventricular Hypertrophy and Distribution of Maximal Wall Thickness

A Prevalence of abnormal wall thickness

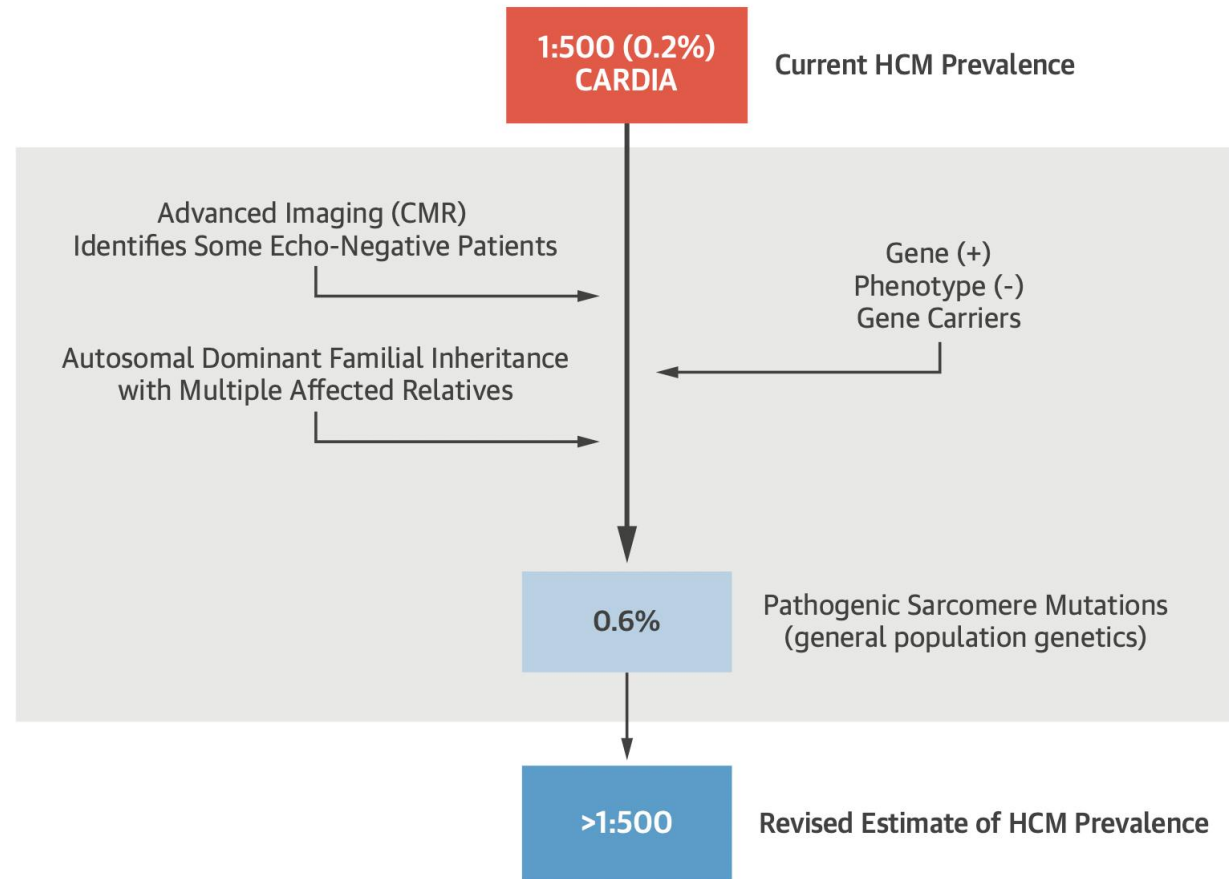


B Distribution of maximal wall thickness



The value above each bar corresponds to the proportion of individuals with maximal wall thickness greater than the threshold value.

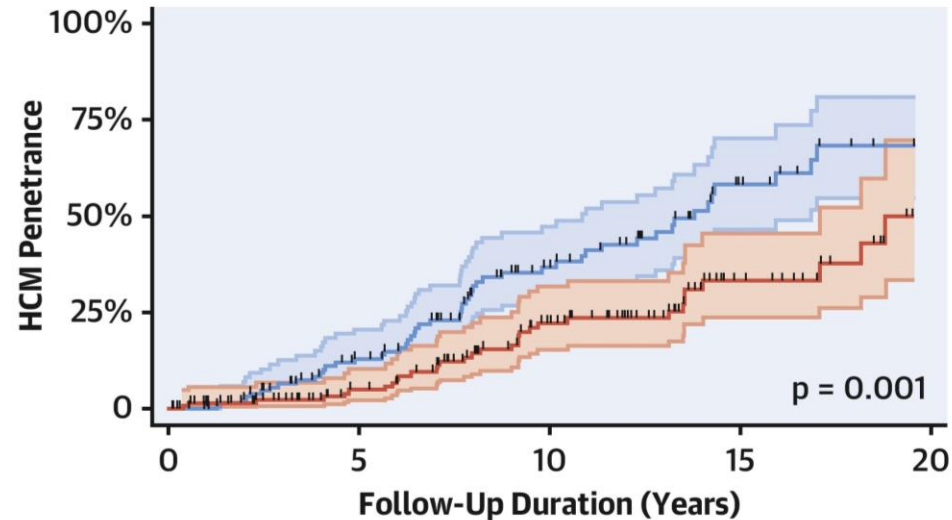
Potential reasons for the genotype/phenotype discrepancy



Penetrance in HCM

285 adult and pediatric carriers of pathogenic/likely pathogenic sarcomere protein variants with no hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM)

Penetrance of HCM at 15-year follow-up: 46% (95% CI: 38%-54%)



Number at risk

	0	5	10	15	20
Male	141	91	45	16	5
Female	144	106	64	22	5

Risk factors for HCM

Male
HR: 2.91
(95% CI: 1.82-4.65)

Abnormal ECG
HR: 4.02
(95% CI: 2.51-6.44)

Lowest risk for HCM

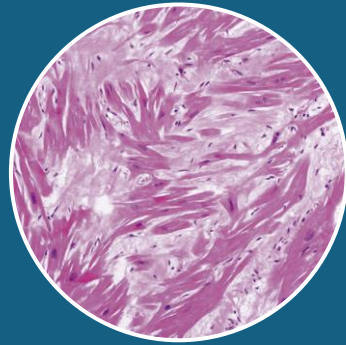
TNNI3 variants
HR: 0.19
(95% CI: 0.07-0.55)

From genotype to fulfilling criteria for HCM



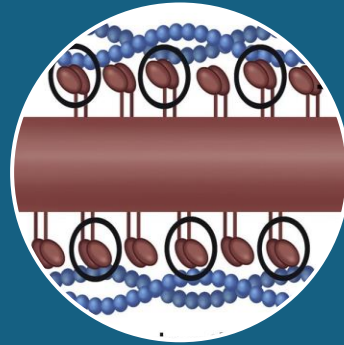
Genetic substrate

- Sarcomeric
- Non-sarcomeric
- ?Polygenic disease
- Epigenetics



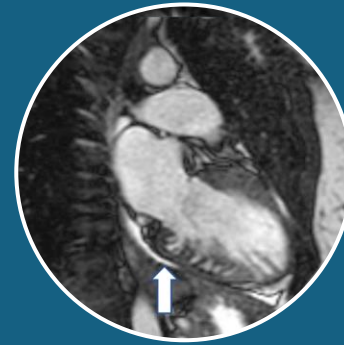
Microscopic changes

- Cell hypertrophy
- Disarray
- Small vessel disease
- Diffuse fibrosis
- Replacement fibrosis



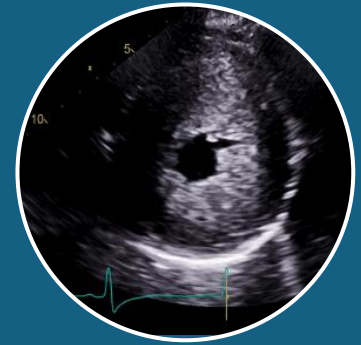
Functional changes

- Hypercontractility
- Ischemia due to hypoperfusion and supply/demand mismatch
- Diastolic dysfunction



Preclinical changes

- ECG abnormalities
- Mitral valve and apparatus abnormalities
- Myocardial crypts



Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy

- Hypertrophy

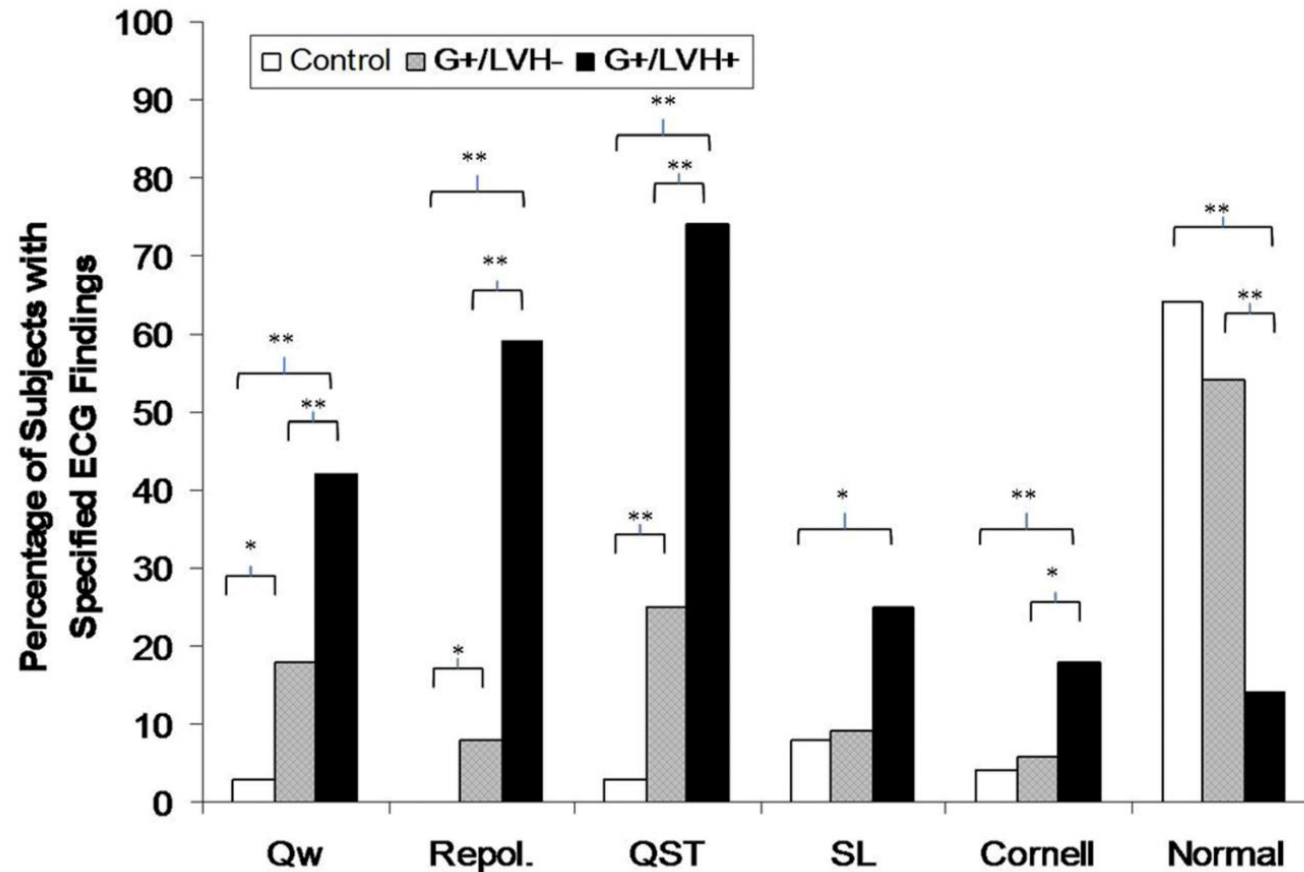


A craftsman is only as good as his tools.

-Anonymous

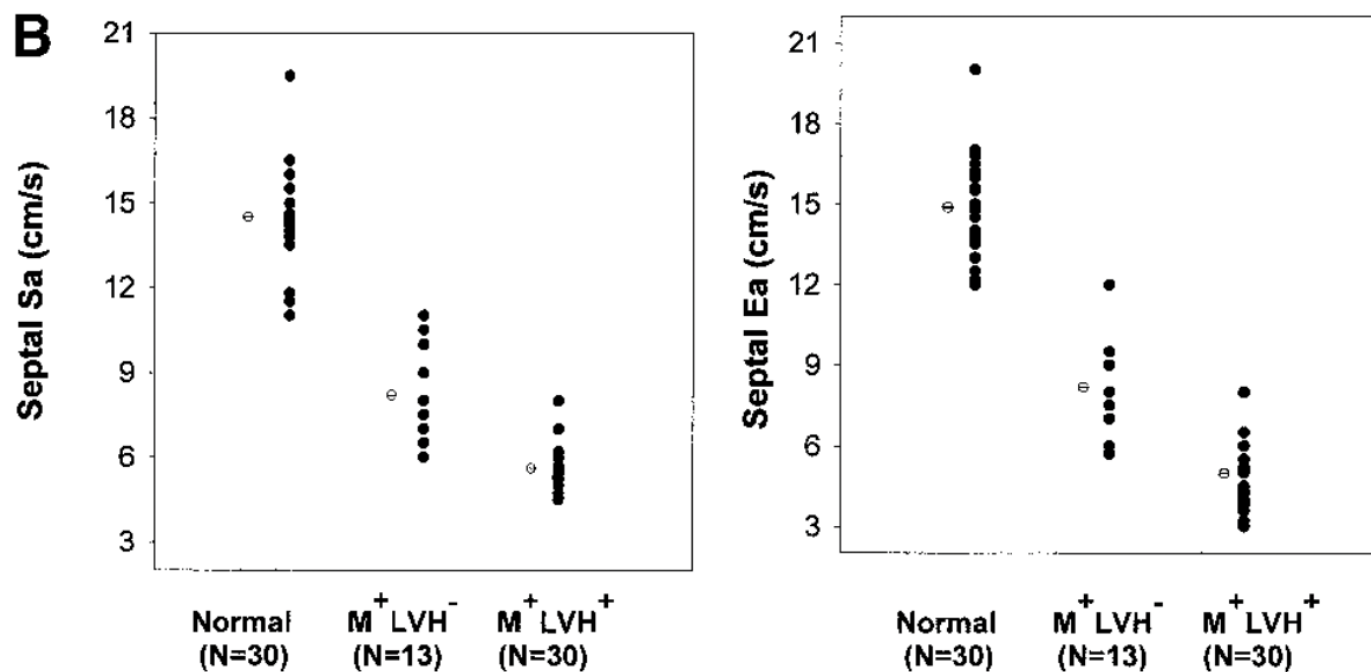
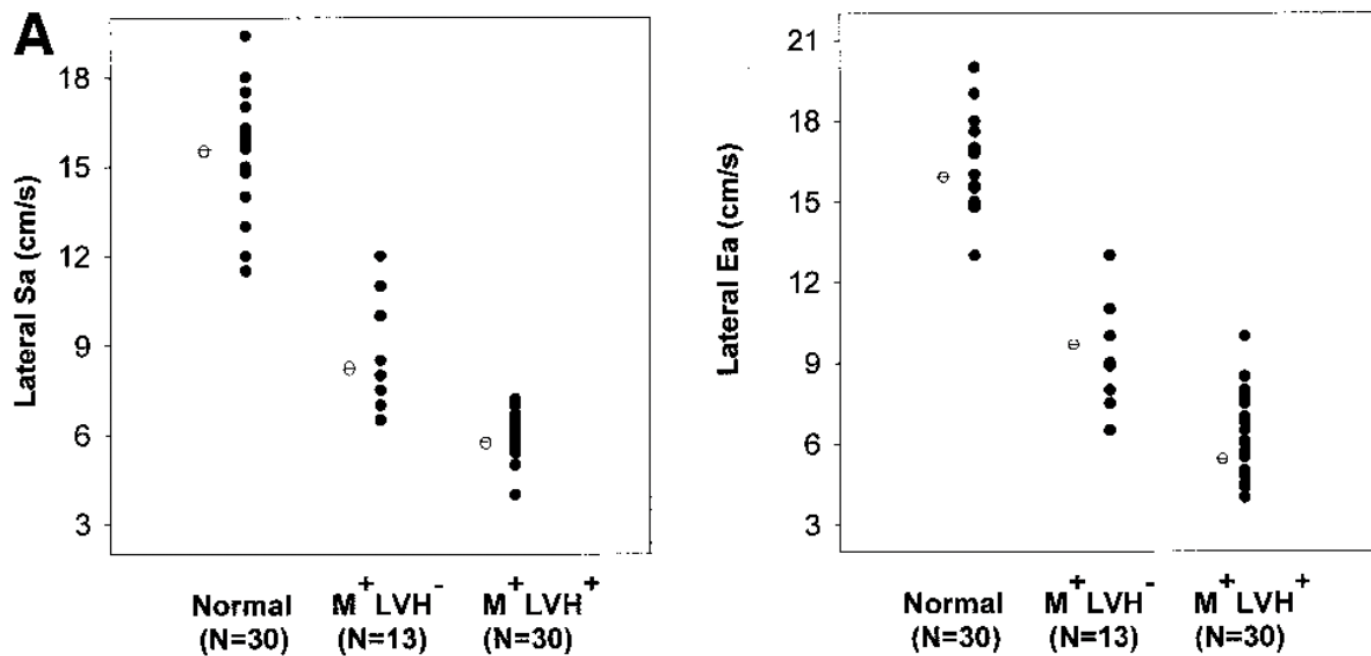
Are genotype negative patients truly phenotype negative?

ECG abnormalities



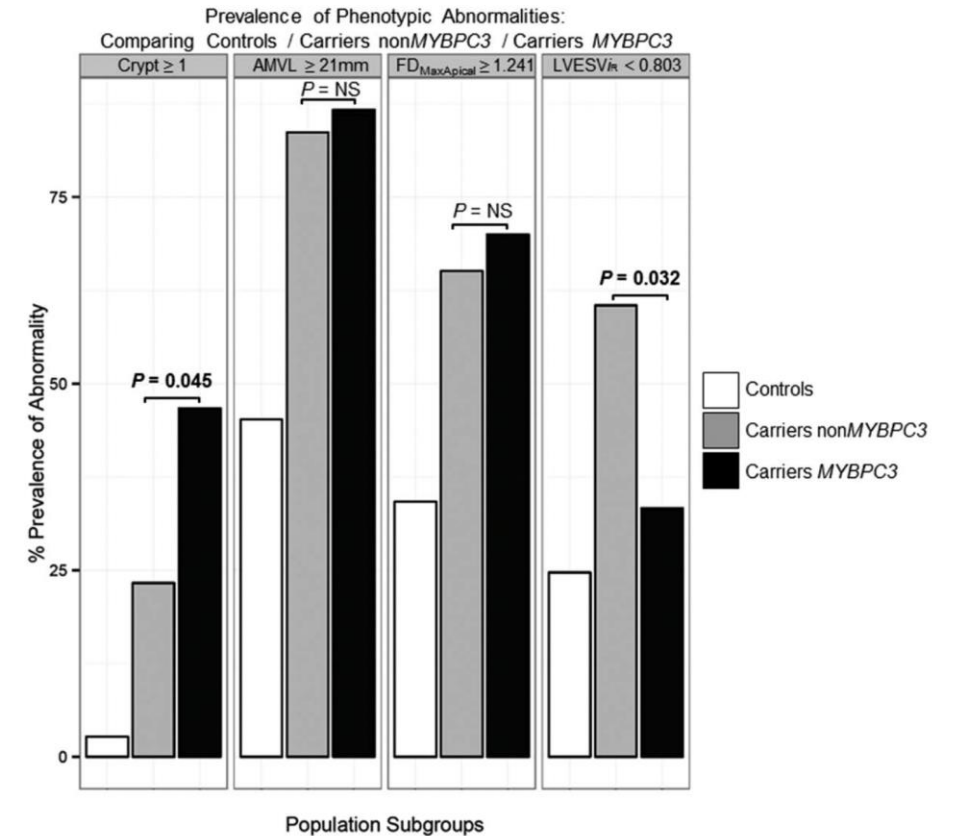
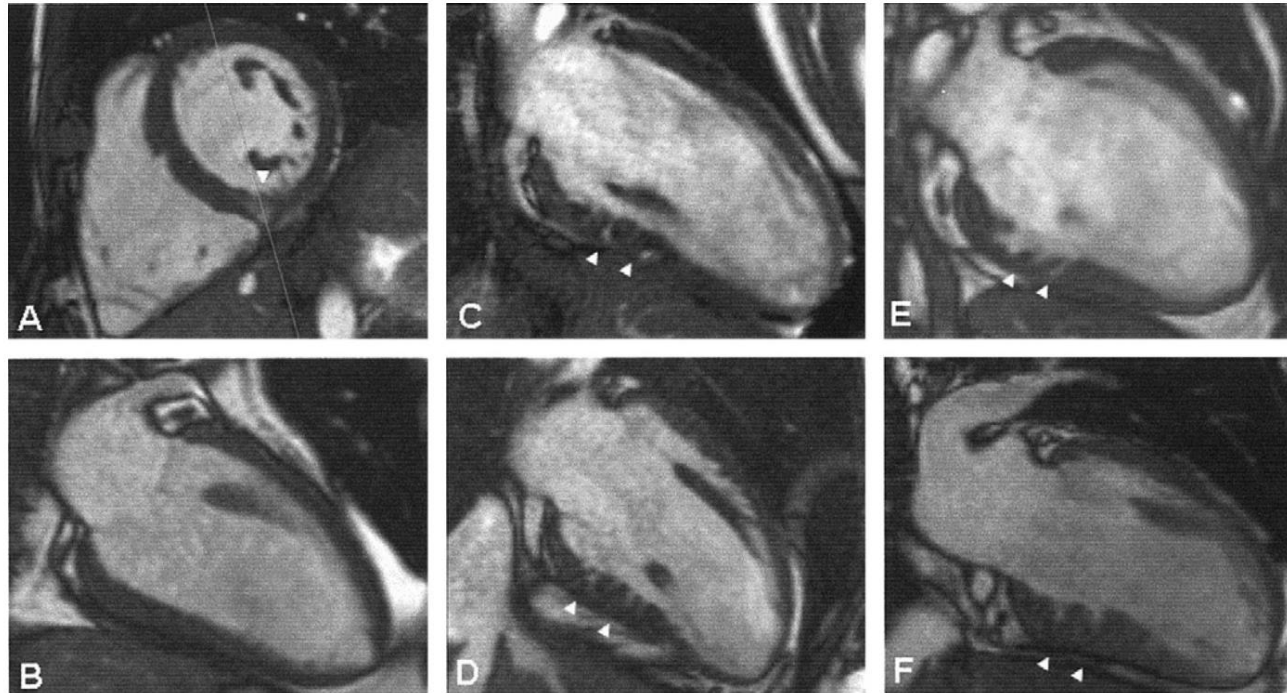
Are genotype negative patients truly phenotype negative?

Myocardial mechanics



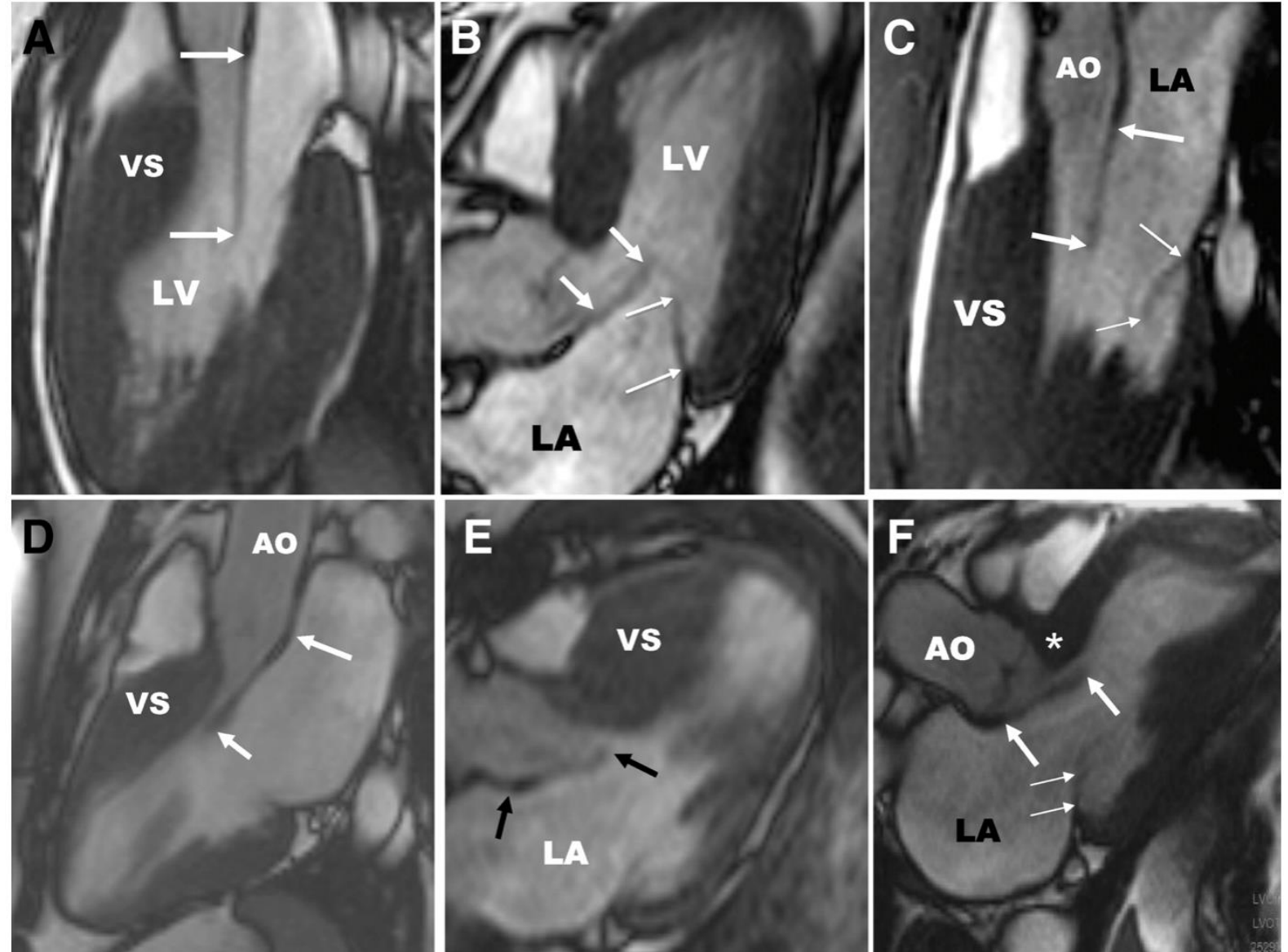
Are genotype negative patients truly phenotype negative?

Myocardial crypts



Are genotype negative patients truly phenotype negative?

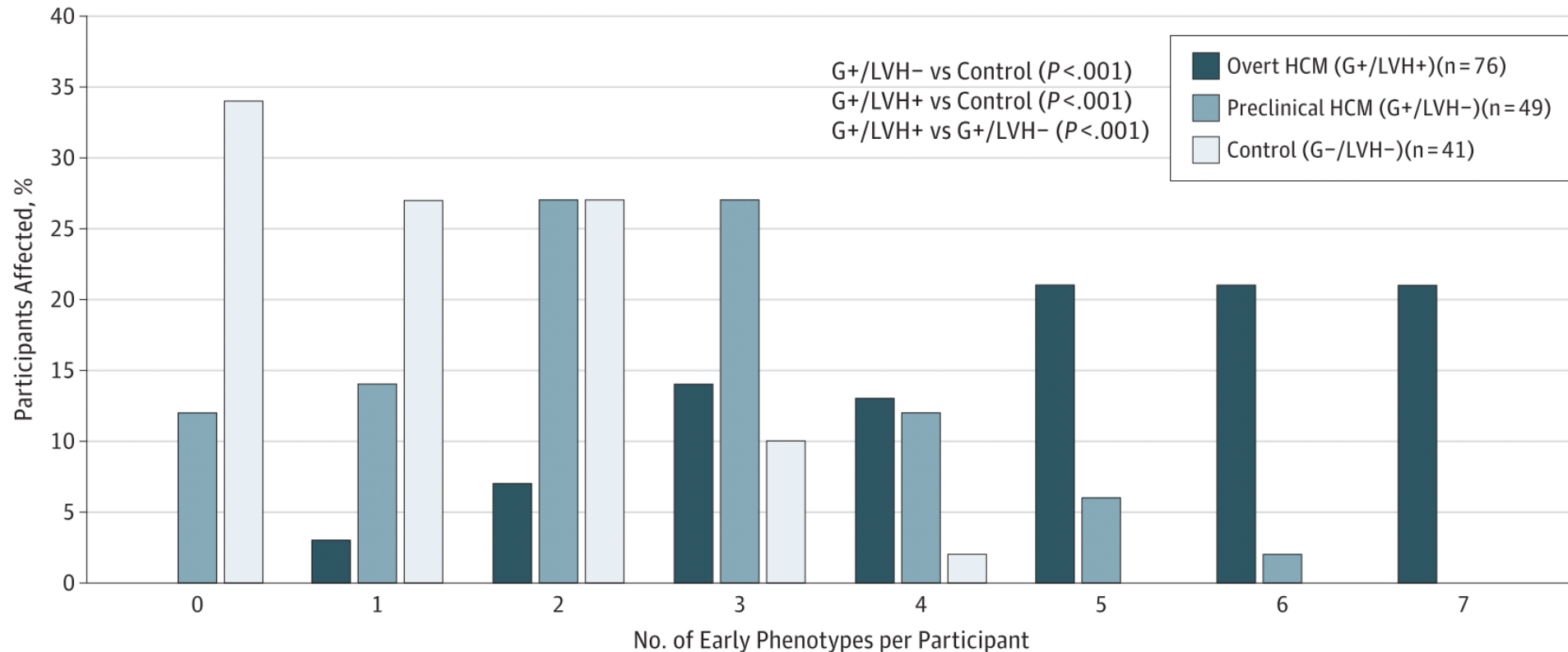
Mitral apparatus abnormalities



Are genotype negative patients truly phenotype negative?

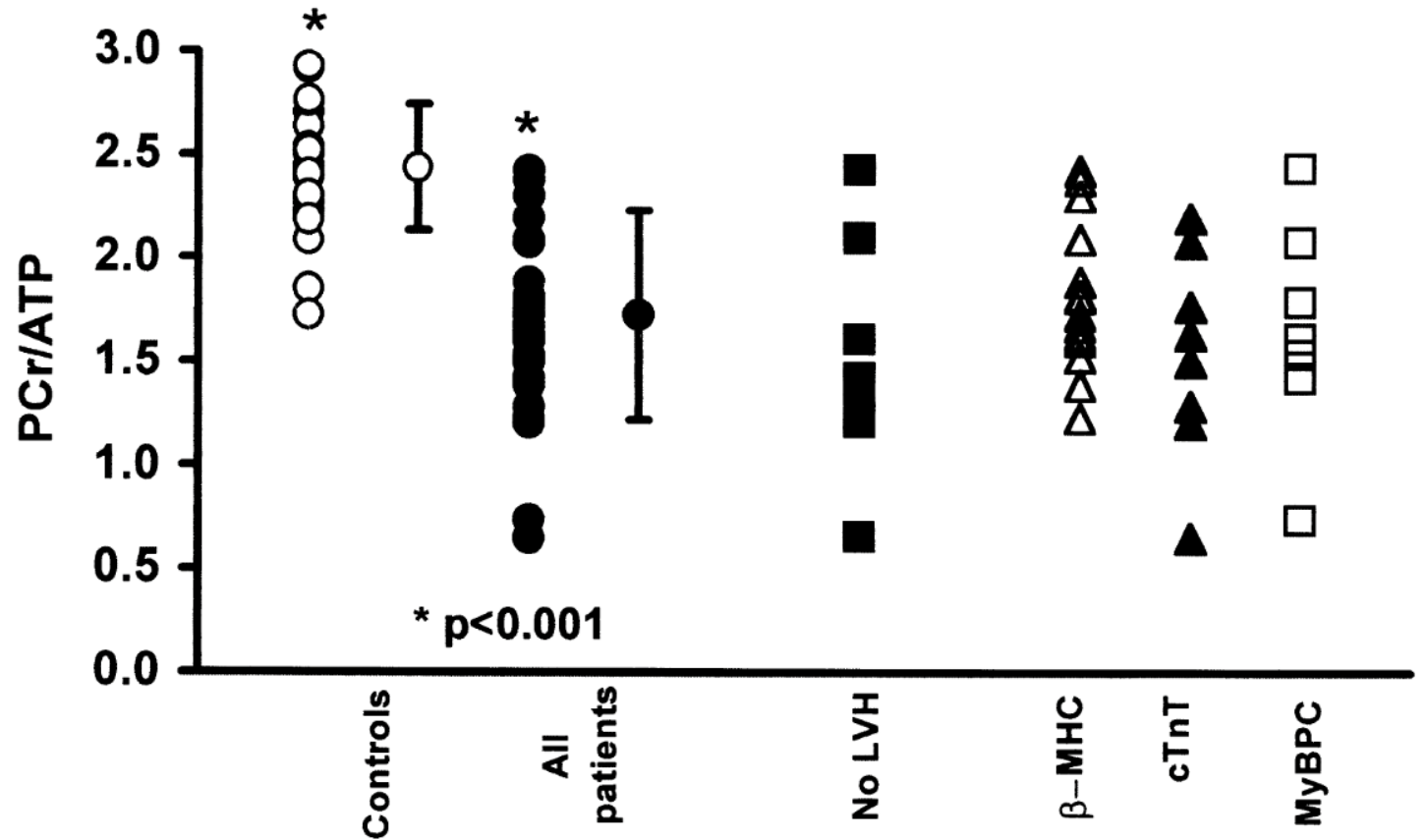
Overall prevalence of secondary abnormalities

Figure 1. Burden of Early Phenotypic Abnormalities in Sarcomere Mutation Carriers Compared With Controls



Are genotype negative patients truly phenotype negative?

Myocardial energetics



Are genotype negative patients truly phenotype negative?

Small vessel disease and ECV expansion

Ho CY, et al. Circ Cardiovasc Imaging. 2013.
Hughes RK, et al. J Am Heart Assoc. 2021.

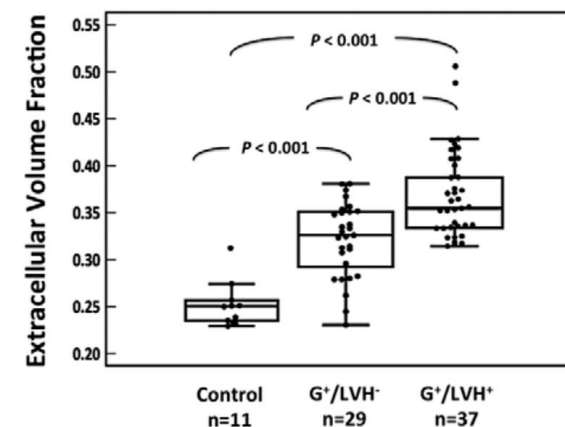
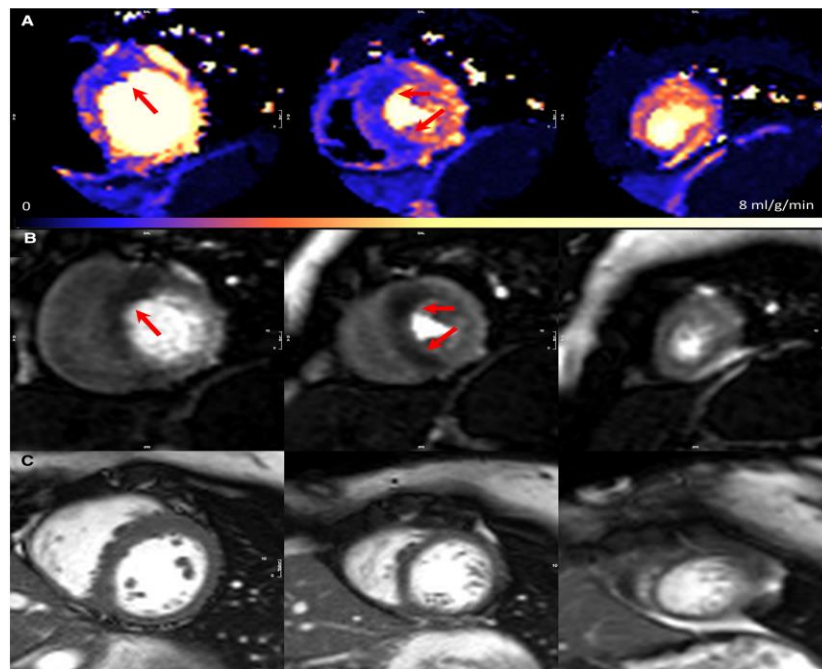
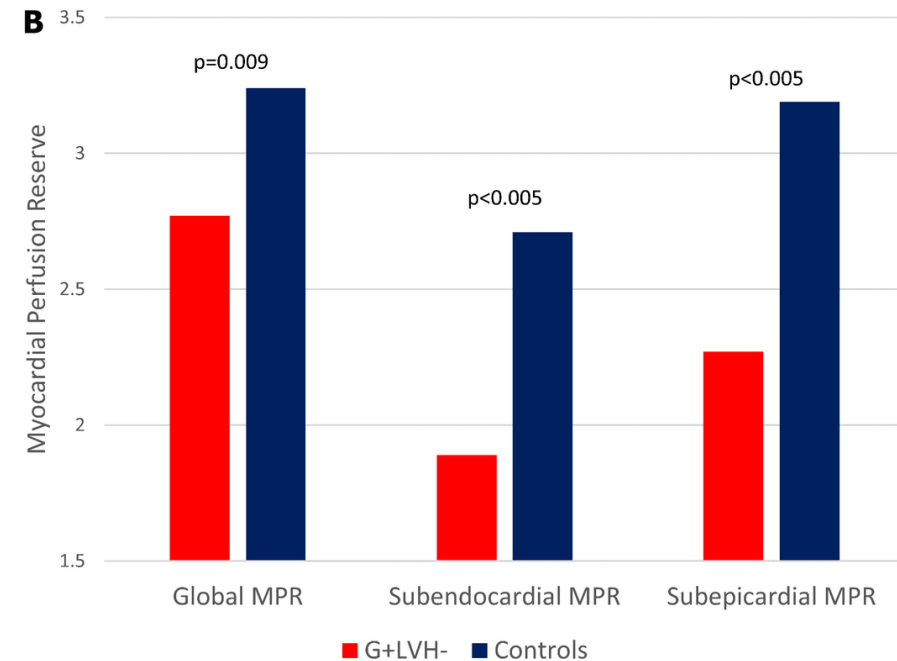
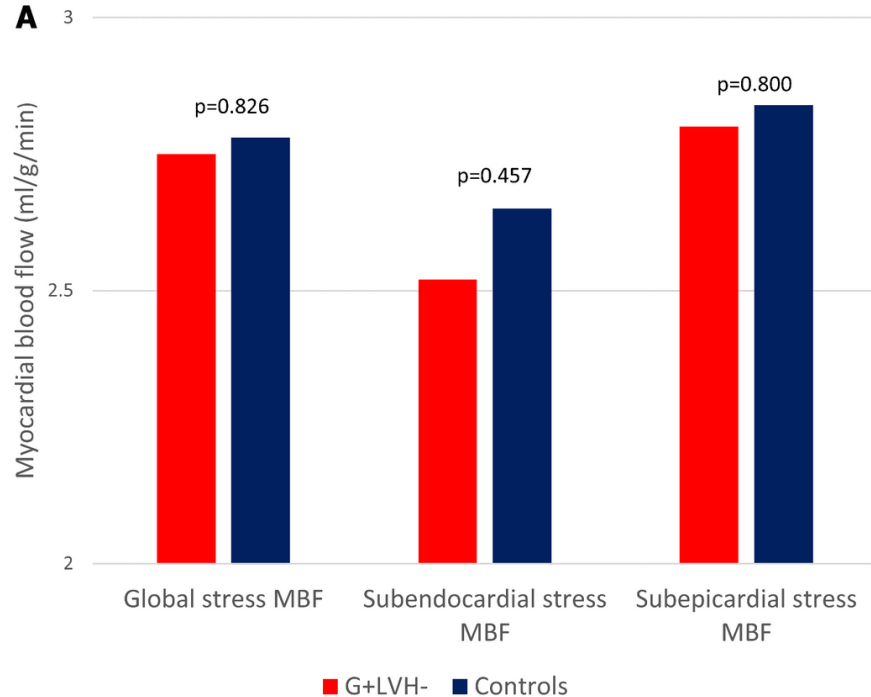
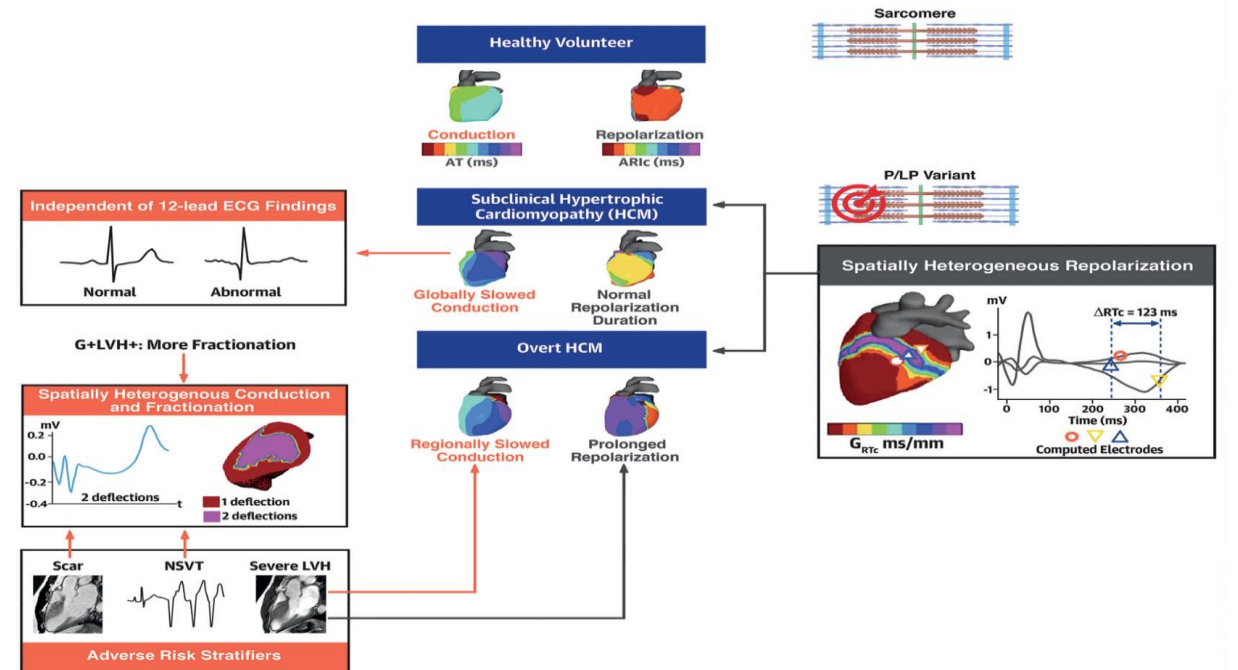
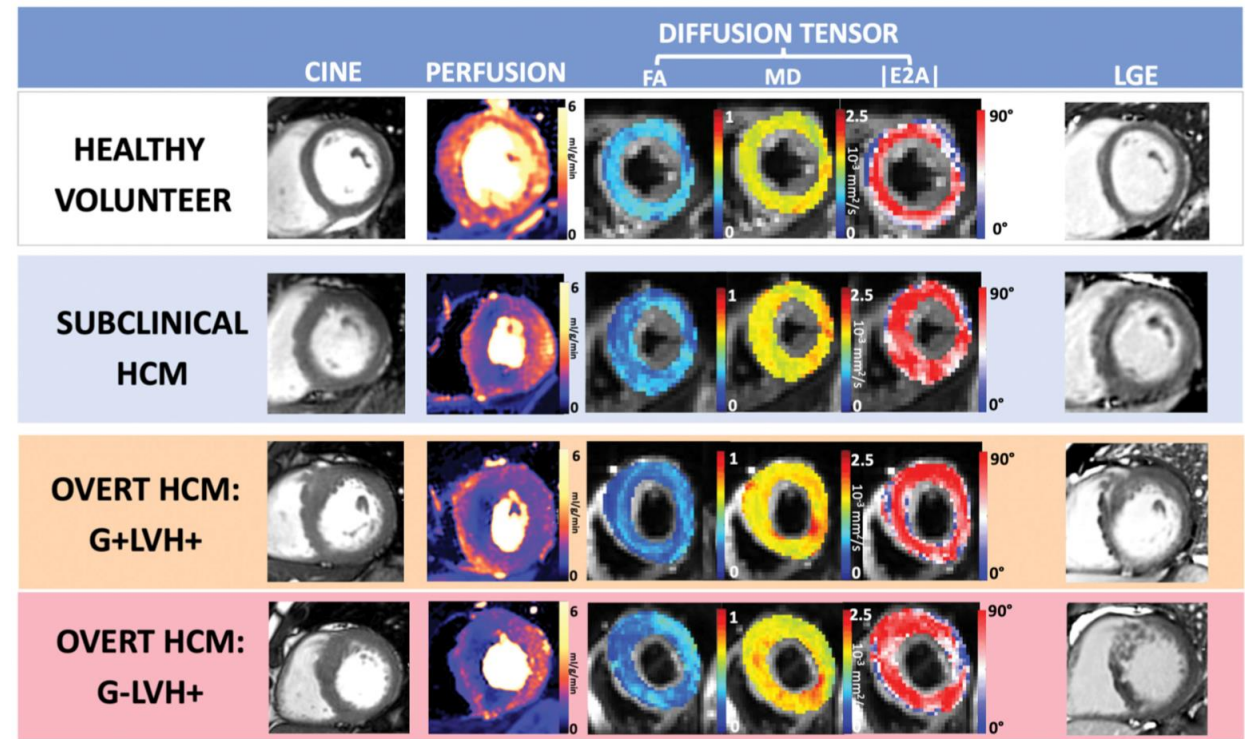


Figure 2. The myocardial extracellular volume (ECV) is significantly increased in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) sarcomere mutation carriers with and without left ventricular hypertrophy (LVH). Compared with normal controls, ECV was 22% higher in G+/LVH- subjects and 33% higher in patients with G+/LVH+ HCM. ECV in overt HCM subjects was 9% higher than G+/LVH- subjects ($P \leq 0.001$ for all comparisons).

Are genotype negative patients truly phenotype negative?

Disarray and electrical heterogeneity



Joy G, et al. Circulation. 2023.
 Joy G, et al. J Am Coll Cardiol. 2024.

Clinical risk profile of genotype positive/phenotype negative patients

Total cohort of asymptomatic patients = 76
HCM n=31 patients
No HCM n=45 patients
Penetrance 41 %

Table 3 Risk factors for sudden cardiac death in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy mutation carriers

	HCM	No HCM
NSVT	2	1
Abnormal blood pressure response	3	1
Syncope	0	0
MWT \geq 30 mm	0	0
Positive family history		
Two or more first-degree SCD <40 years	0	0
One first-degree SCD <40 years	2	2
Any SCD	27	25

HCM, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy; NSVT, non-sustained ventricular tachycardia; MWT, maximal septal wall thickness; SCD, sudden cardiac death.

Clinical risk profile of genotype positive/phenotype negative patients

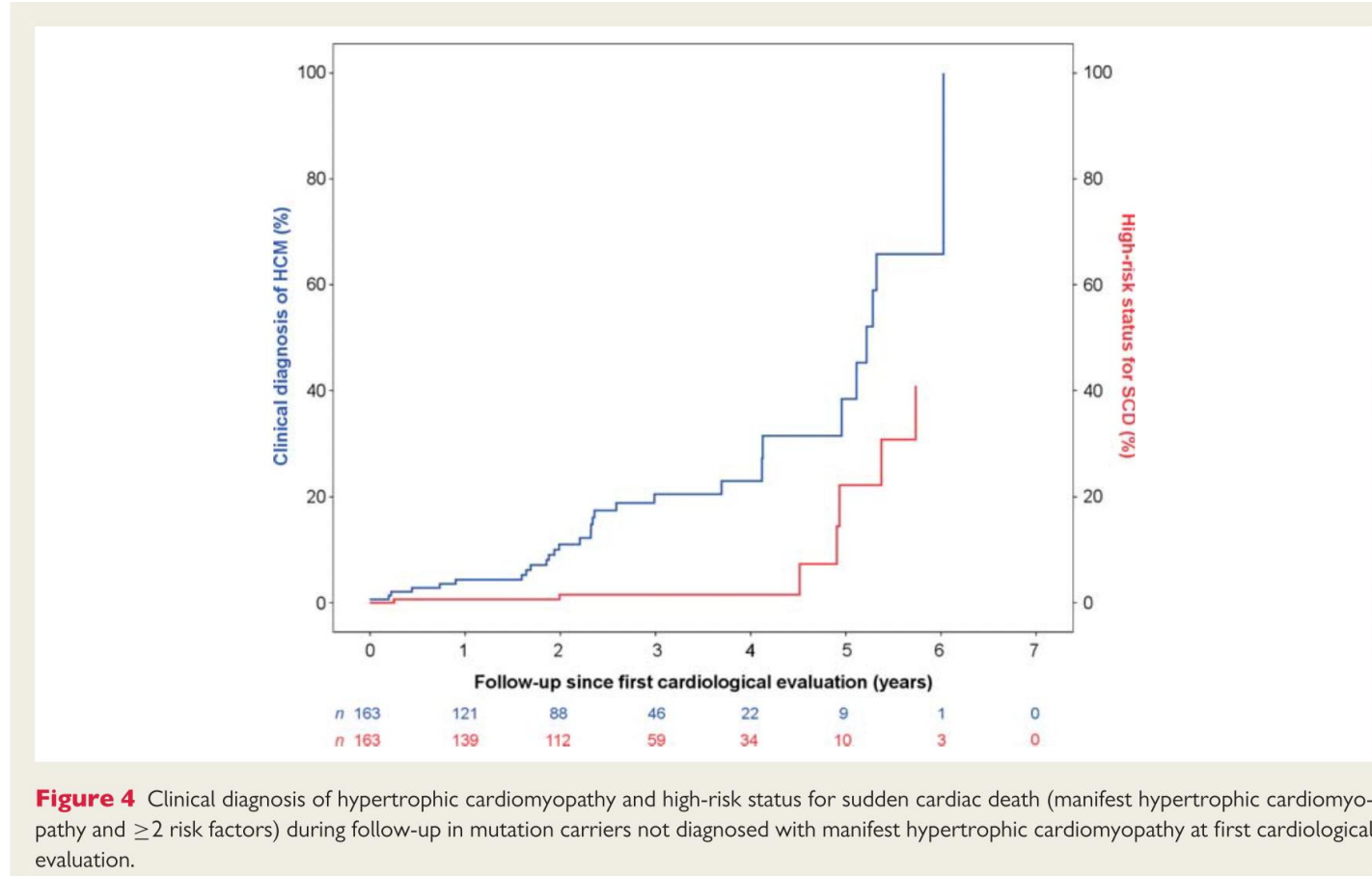
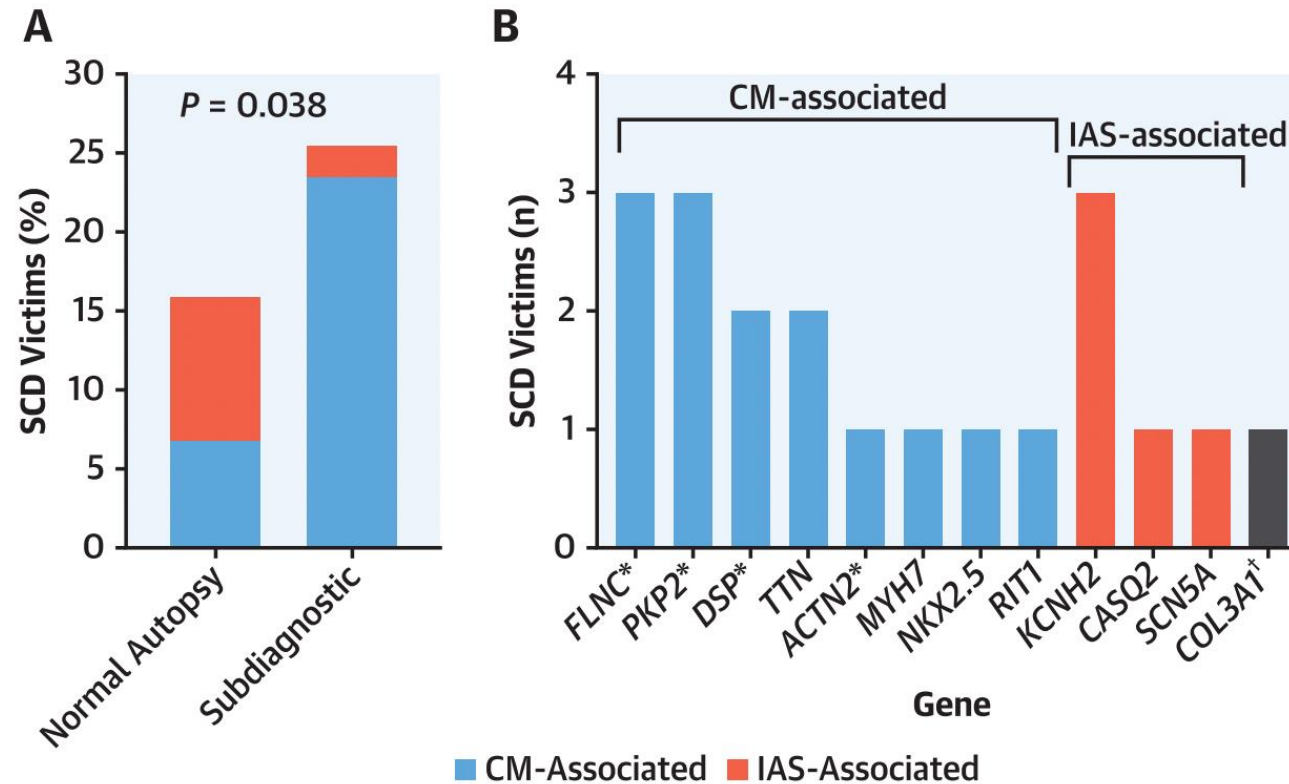


Figure 4 Clinical diagnosis of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy and high-risk status for sudden cardiac death (manifest hypertrophic cardiomyopathy and ≥ 2 risk factors) during follow-up in mutation carriers not diagnosed with manifest hypertrophic cardiomyopathy at first cardiological evaluation.

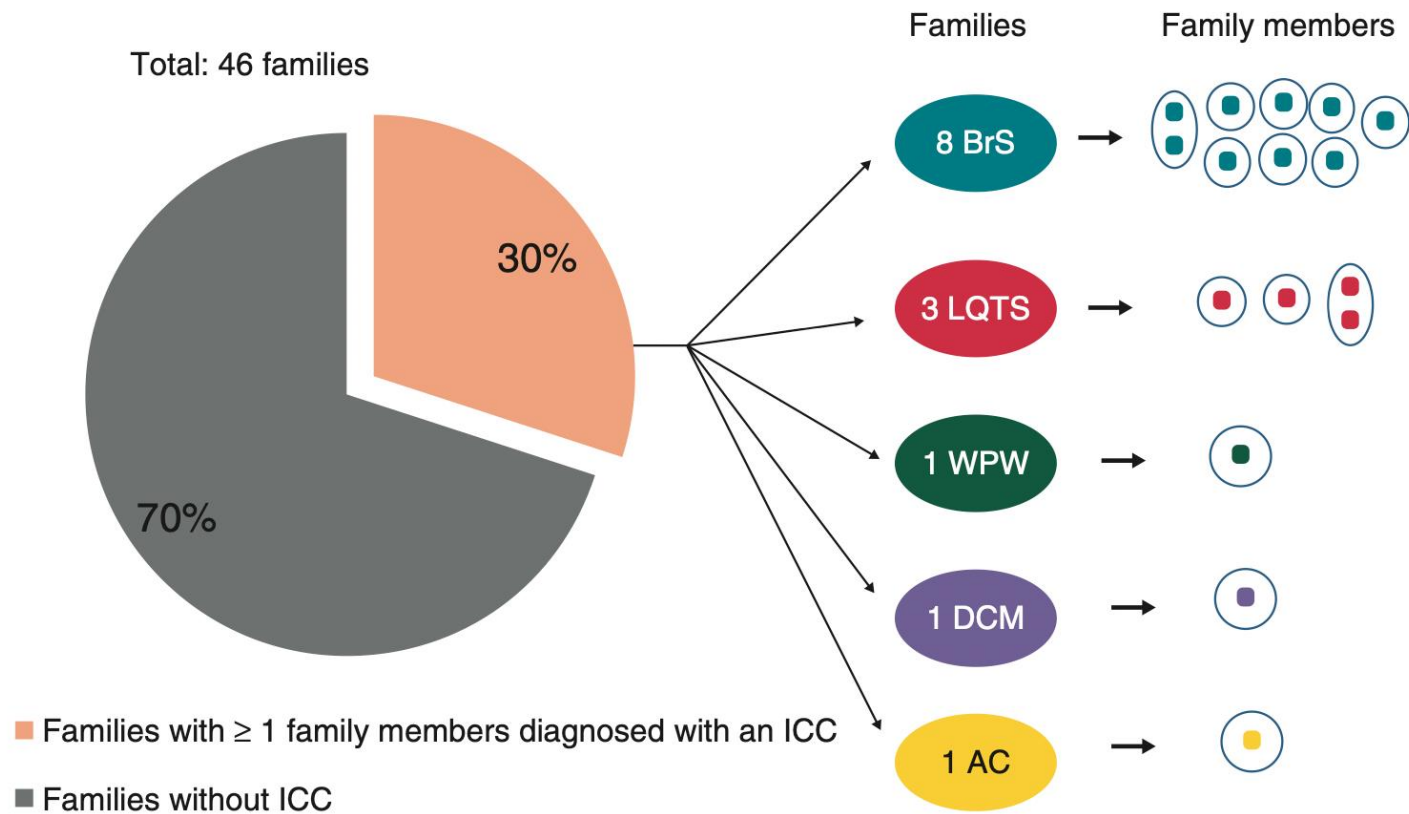
HCM related P/LP variants in SCD with non-diagnostic heart autopsies

FIGURE 1 Concealed CM in SCD With Subdiagnostic Abnormalities at Autopsy

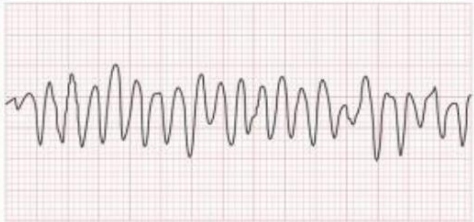


N=91 SCD victims with normal or subdiagnostic autopsies

HCM related P/LP variants in SCD with idiopathic LVH in heart autopsies



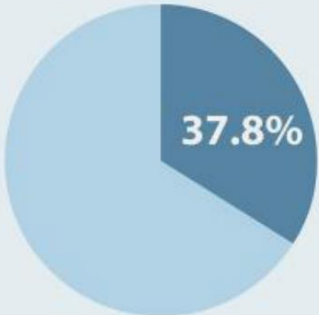
HCM related P/LP variants in idiopathic fibrillation



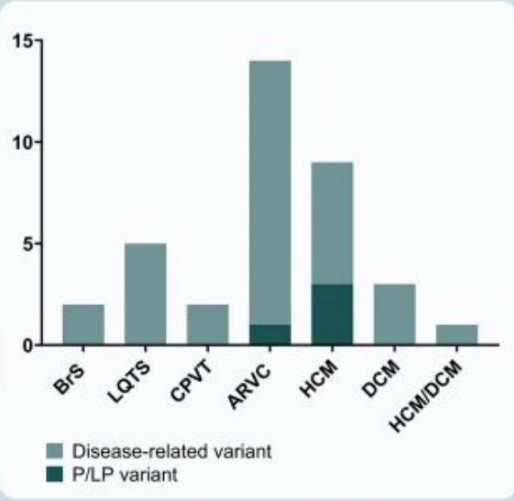
96 IVF patients



Genetic testing (NGS)
in 74 patients



28 patients
(37.8%)
with 36 genotypes



Diverse variants
associated with
channelopathy
and cardiomyopathy

Cardiomyopathy

ARVC	HCM
DSP	MYBPC3 MYH7 TNNI3

4 P/LP variants (5.4%)
related to
cardiomyopathy

HCM related P/LP variants in idiopathic fibrillation

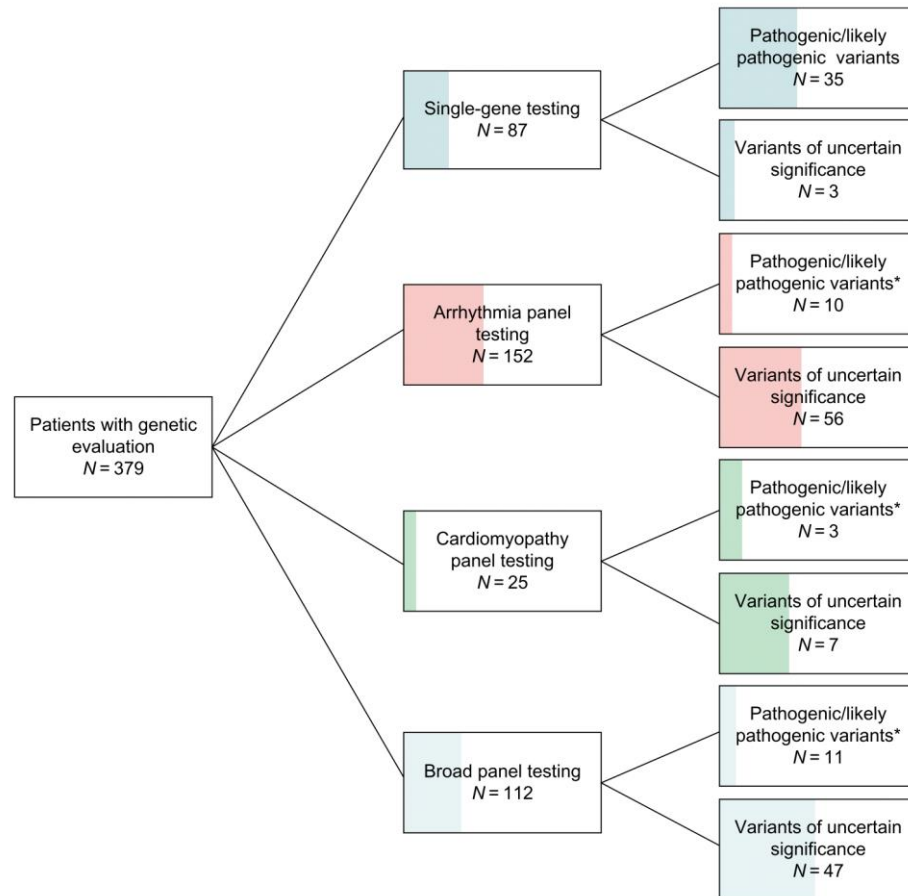


Table 2 Genes with LP/P variants stratified by type of genetic testing that revealed the LP/P variant

Single-gene testing	Arrhythmia panel testing	Cardiomyopathy panel testing	Broad panel testing
<i>DPP6</i> (33)	<i>DPP6</i> (5)	<i>MYH7</i> (1)	<i>DPP6</i> (1)
<i>PLN</i> (1)	<i>PLN</i> (1)	<i>TTN</i> (1)	<i>CPT2</i> (1)
<i>RYR</i> (2)	<i>RYR2</i> (1)		<i>FLNC</i> (1)
<i>RBM20</i> (1)	<i>KCNQ1</i> (1)		<i>MYL2</i> (1)
<i>TTN</i> (1)	<i>SCN5A</i> (1)		<i>NEB</i> (1)
			<i>RYR2</i> (1)
			<i>TTN</i> (2)
			<i>SCN5A</i> (1)
			<i>PPA2</i> (1)
			<i>TRDN</i> (1)

Genes (number of patients with a variant) are listed.

Cardiac events in genotype positive/phenotype negative HCM patients during exercise

JAMA Cardiology | Original Investigation

Vigorous Exercise in Patients With Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

Rachel Lampert, MD; Michael J. Ackerman, MD, PhD; Bradley S. Marino, MD; Matthew Burg, PhD; Barbara Ainsworth, PhD, MPH; Lisa Salberg; Maria Teresa Tome Esteban, MD, PhD; Carolyn Y. Ho, MD; Roselle Abraham, MD; Seshadri Balaji, MBBS, PhD; Cheryl Barth, BS; Charles I. Berul, MD; Martijn Bos, MD; David Cannom, MD; Lubna Choudhury, MD; Maryann Concannon, MSW; Robert Cooper, MD; Richard J. Czosek, MD; Anne M. Dubin, MD; James Dziura, PhD; Benjamin Eidem, MD; Michael S. Emery, MD; N. A. Mark Estes, MD; Susan P. Etheridge, MD; Jeffrey B. Geske, MD; Belinda Gray, MBBS, PhD; Kevin Hall, MD; Kimberly G. Harmon, MD; Cynthia A. James, PhD; Ashwin K. Lal, MD; Ian H. Law, MD; Fangyong Li, MS; Mark S. Link, MD; William J. McKenna, MD; Silvana Molossi, MD, PhD; Brian Olshansky, MD; Steven R. Ommen, MD; Elizabeth V. Saarel, MD; Sara Saberi, MD, MS; Laura Simone, MS; Gordon Tomaselli, MD; James S. Ware, MD; Douglas P. Zipes, MD; Sharlene M. Day, MD; for the LIVE Consortium

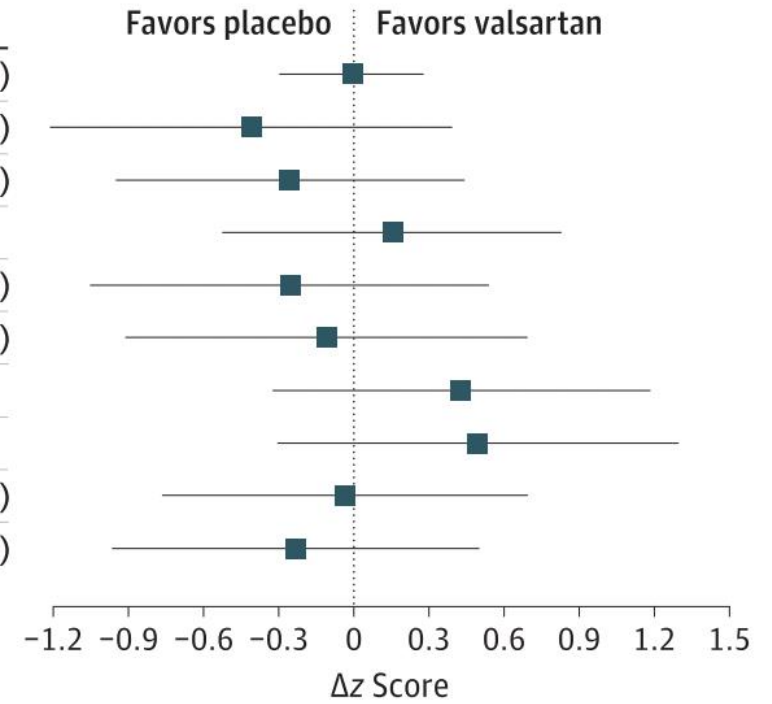
Characteristic	Nonvigorous (n = 961)	Vigorous (n = 699)	Cohen <i>d</i> or <i>h</i>	Vigorous noncompetitive (n = 440)	Vigorous competitive (n = 259)	Cohen <i>d</i> or <i>h</i>
Phenotype negative, No. (%)	52 (5.4)	74 (10.6)	-0.19	26 (5.9)	48 (18.5)	-0.40
Overt HCM, No. (%) ^a	909 (94.6)	625 (89.4)	0.19	414 (94.5)	211(71.9)	0.40

Number of events in genotype positive, phenotype negative patients = 0

Any room for preventative treatment in HCM?

Figure 2. Primary and Secondary Trial Outcomes

Source	Δ Placebo	Δ Valsartan
Composite outcome	-0.01 (-0.20 to 0.18)	-0.02 (-0.20 to 0.16)
Maximum LVWT	0.24 (-0.32 to 0.80)	-0.17 (-0.69 to 0.34)
E' velocity	0.14 (-0.34 to 0.62)	-0.12 (-0.56 to 0.33)
S' velocity	-0.11 (-0.58 to 0.36)	0.04 (-0.39 to 0.47)
LV end-diastolic volume index	0.14 (-0.41 to 0.68)	-0.12 (-0.63 to 0.39)
LV end-systolic volume index	0.06 (-0.49 to 0.61)	-0.05 (-0.57 to 0.46)
LV mass index	-0.22 (-0.74 to 0.29)	0.20 (-0.28 to 0.68)
LAVI	-0.26 (-0.81 to 0.29)	0.23 (-0.28 to 0.74)
TnT	0.03 (-0.47 to 0.54)	-0.01 (-0.47 to 0.46)
NT-proBNP	0.14 (-0.36 to 0.65)	-0.09 (-0.56 to 0.38)



**Eligibility and Disqualification Recommendations for Competitive Athletes With Cardiovascular Abnormalities:
Task Force 3: Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Cardiomyopathy and Other Cardiomyopathies, and Myocarditis**
A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology

Participation in competitive athletics for asymptomatic, genotype-positive HCM patients without evidence of LV hypertrophy by 2-dimensional echocardiography and CMR is reasonable, particularly in the absence of a family history of HCM-related sudden death (*Class IIa; Level of Evidence C*).

2022 ESC Guidelines for the management of patients with ventricular arrhythmias and the prevention of sudden cardiac death

Participation in all competitive sports, if desired, may be considered for individuals who are genotype positive for HCM but phenotype negative.

IIb

C

2024 AHA/ACC/AMSSM/HRS/PACES/SCMR Guideline for the Management of Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy: A Report of the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology Joint Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines

2a

B-NR

- In individuals who are genotype-positive, phenotype-negative for HCM, participation in competitive sports of any intensity is reasonable.^{6,7}

2023 ESC Guidelines for the management of cardiomyopathies

HCM

High-intensity exercise and competitive sport should be considered in genotype-positive/phenotype-negative individuals who seek to do so.¹¹²⁴

IIa

C

Screening

What do the guidelines say?

Recommendations for Individuals Who Are Genotype-Positive, Phenotype-Negative		
Referenced studies that support the recommendations are summarized in the Online Data Supplement .		
COR	LOE	Recommendations
1	B-NR	1. In individuals who are genotype-positive, phenotype-negative for HCM, serial clinical assessment, electrocardiography, and cardiac imaging are recommended at periodic intervals depending on age (every 1-2 years in children and adolescents and every 3-5 years in adults) and change in clinical status (Figures 1 and 2, Table 7). ¹⁻⁵
2a	B-NR	2. In individuals who are genotype-positive, phenotype-negative for HCM, participation in competitive sports of any intensity is reasonable. ^{6,7}
3: No benefit	B-NR	3. In individuals who are genotype-positive, phenotype-negative for HCM, ICD is not recommended for primary prevention. ^{2-6,8}

1	B-NR	10. Screening: In individuals who are genotype-positive, phenotype-negative, echocardiography is recommended at periodic intervals depending on age (1-2 years in children and adolescents, 3-5 years in adults) and change in clinical status (Figure 1, Table 7). ³⁹⁻⁴³
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Table 7. Screening With Electrocardiography and 2D Echocardiography in Asymptomatic Family Members*

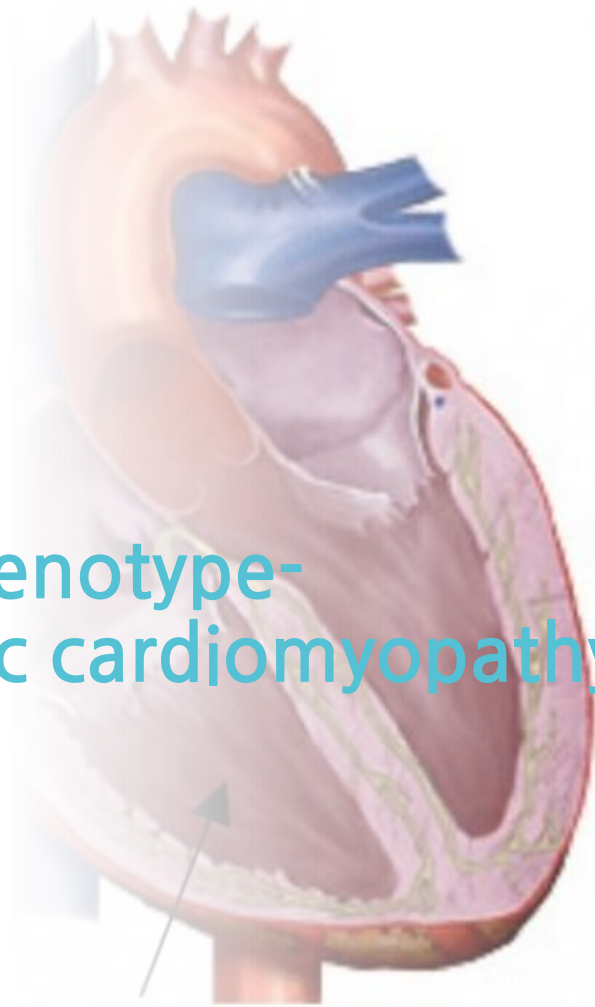
Age of First-Degree Relative	Initiation of Screening	Repeat ECG, Echo
Pediatric		
Children and adolescents from genotype-positive families, and families with early onset disease	At the time HCM is diagnosed in another family member	Every 1-2 y
All other children and adolescents	At any time after HCM is diagnosed in a family member but no later than puberty	Every 2-3 y
Adults	At the time HCM is diagnosed in another family member	Every 3-5 y

*Includes all asymptomatic, phenotype-negative, first-degree relatives deemed to be at risk for developing HCM based on family history or genotype status and may sometimes include more distant relatives based on clinical judgment. Screening interval may be modified (eg, at onset of new symptoms or in families with a malignant clinical course or late-onset HCM).

ECG indicates electrocardiogram; Echo, echocardiogram; and HCM, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

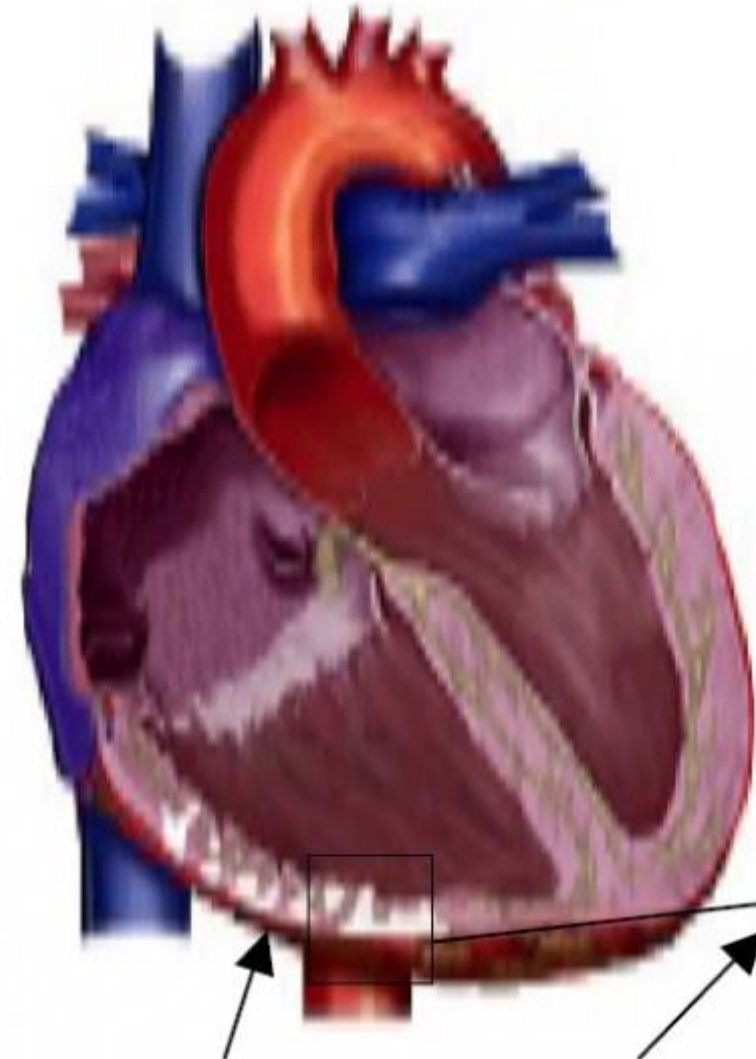
*Because of the low risk of sudden death, **phenotype-negative individuals are not restricted from competitive sports and are not routinely monitored with ambulatory electrocardiography and exercise stress testing unless the family history indicates a high risk for SCD or as part of precompetitive athletic screening.** This is appropriate every 1 to 2 years to assess the safety of ongoing competitive athletics participation.*

Normal Heart



Right Ventricle

Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular
Cardiomyopathy



Fatty replacement of
heart muscle

Genotype+/phenotype-
arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy

Are gene carriers truly phenotype negative?

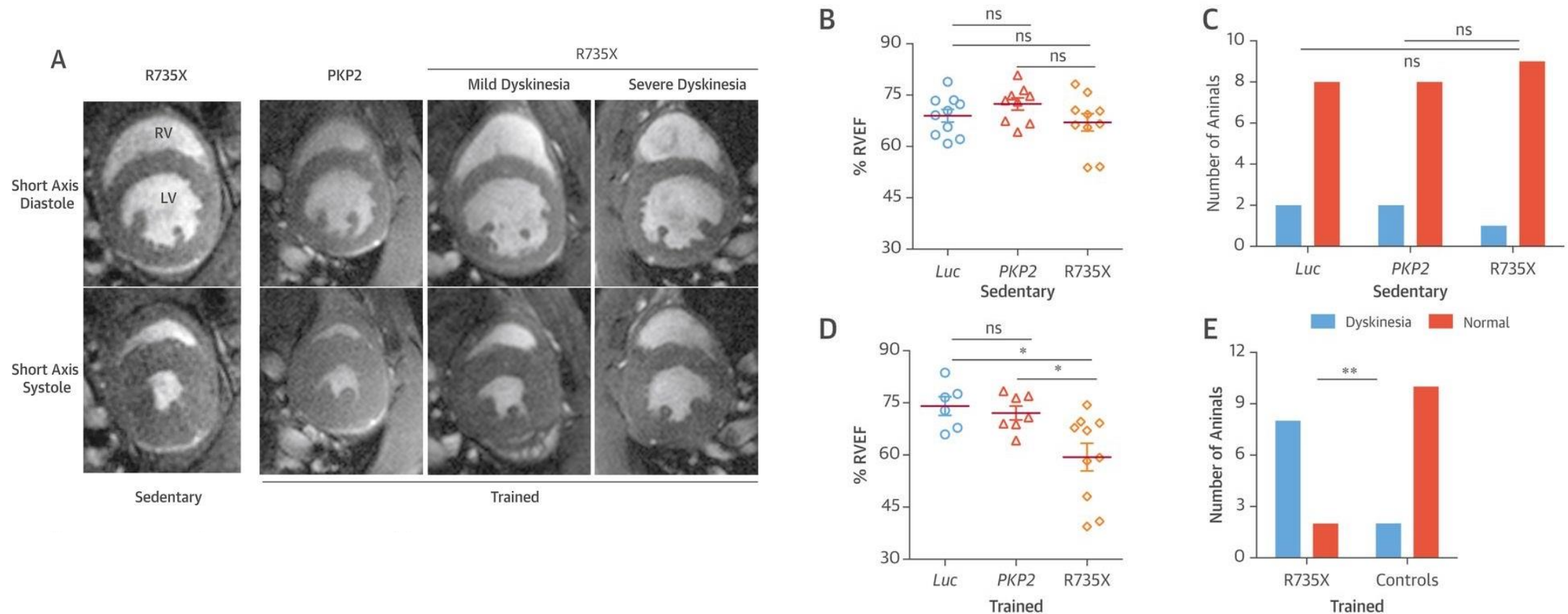
The relation of exercise with electrical instability

Table 3 Summary Data Comparing Asymptomatic Gene Carriers With Patients With Symptomatic (VT) ARVC

Variable	Healthy Controls (n = 70)	Asymptomatic ARVC Gene Carriers (n = 47)	Patients With Symptomatic ARVC (n = 25)	p Value (Controls vs. Asymptomatic Gene Carriers)	p Value (Asymptomatic Gene Carriers vs. Patients With Symptomatic ARVC)
Age (yrs)	35.8 ± 15.2	36.7 ± 18.1	40.7 ± 10.9	0.78	0.24
Men	28 (40%)	18 (38%)	18 (72%)	1.00	0.01
Genotype					
PKP2	—	43 (91%)	19 (76%)	—	0.09
Structural RV abnormalities					
Major criterion	—	1 (2%)	16 (64%)	—	<0.0001
Minor criterion	—	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	—	1.00
Resting ECG abnormalities					
TWI in leads V ₁ to V ₃	0/70	0/45 (0%)	9 (36%)	1.00	<0.0001*
Epsilon waves	0/70	0/45 (0%)	6 (24%)	1.00	0.002*
TAD ≥55 ms	—	10/45 (22%)	11/24 (45%)	—	0.06
SAECG (≥1 criterion)	—	10/41 (24%)	17/21 (81%)	—	<0.0001
Exercise ECG abnormalities					
Epsilon waves	0/70	6/45 (13%)	3/18 (17%)	0.003	0.70
PVCs					
Any	11/70 (11%)	27 (57%)	23 (92%)	<0.0001	0.003
Superior axis	1/70 (1%)	10 (21%)	21 (84%)	0.0004	<0.0001
TAD ≥ 55 ms	—	11/36 (31%)	8/12 (67%)	—	0.04

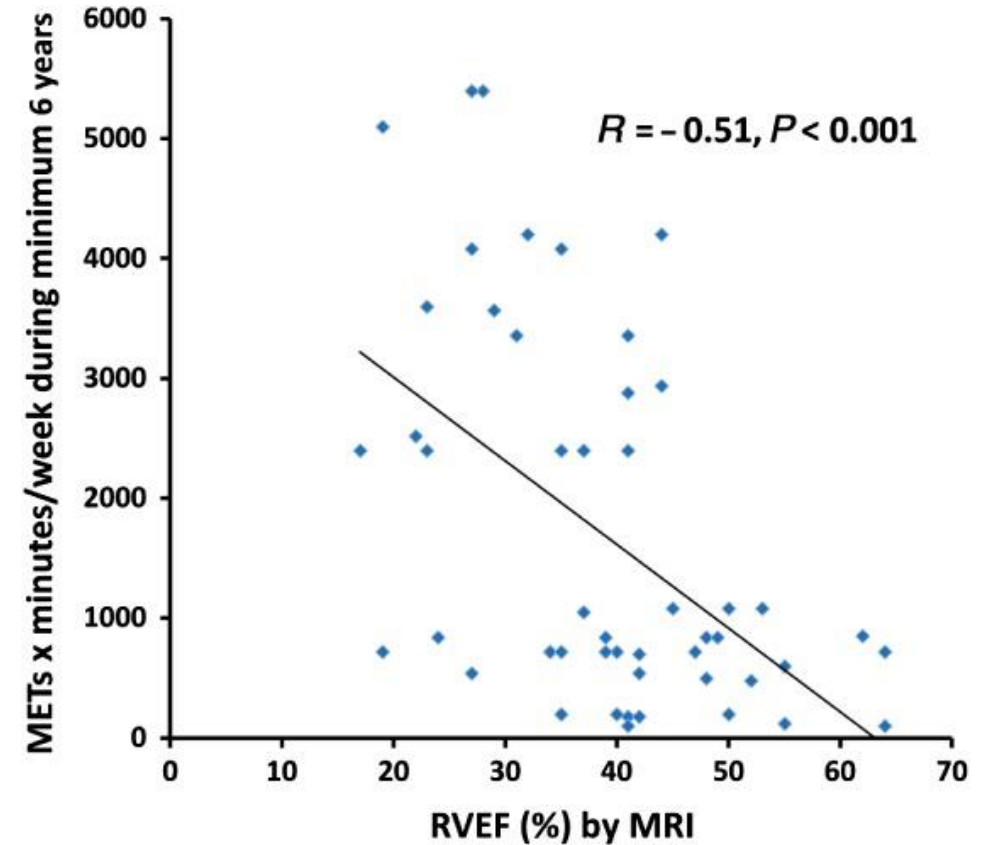
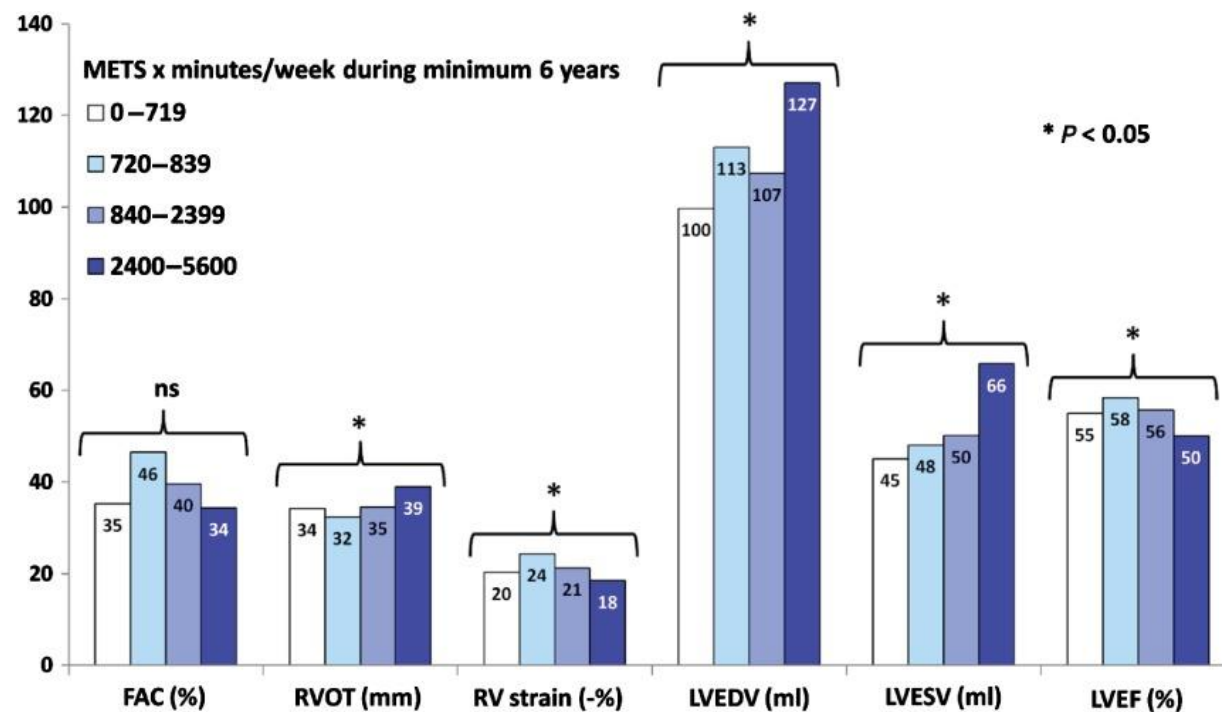
The relation of exercise with the development of ARVC

Workload dependent structural changes (animal model)



The relation of exercise with the development of ARVC

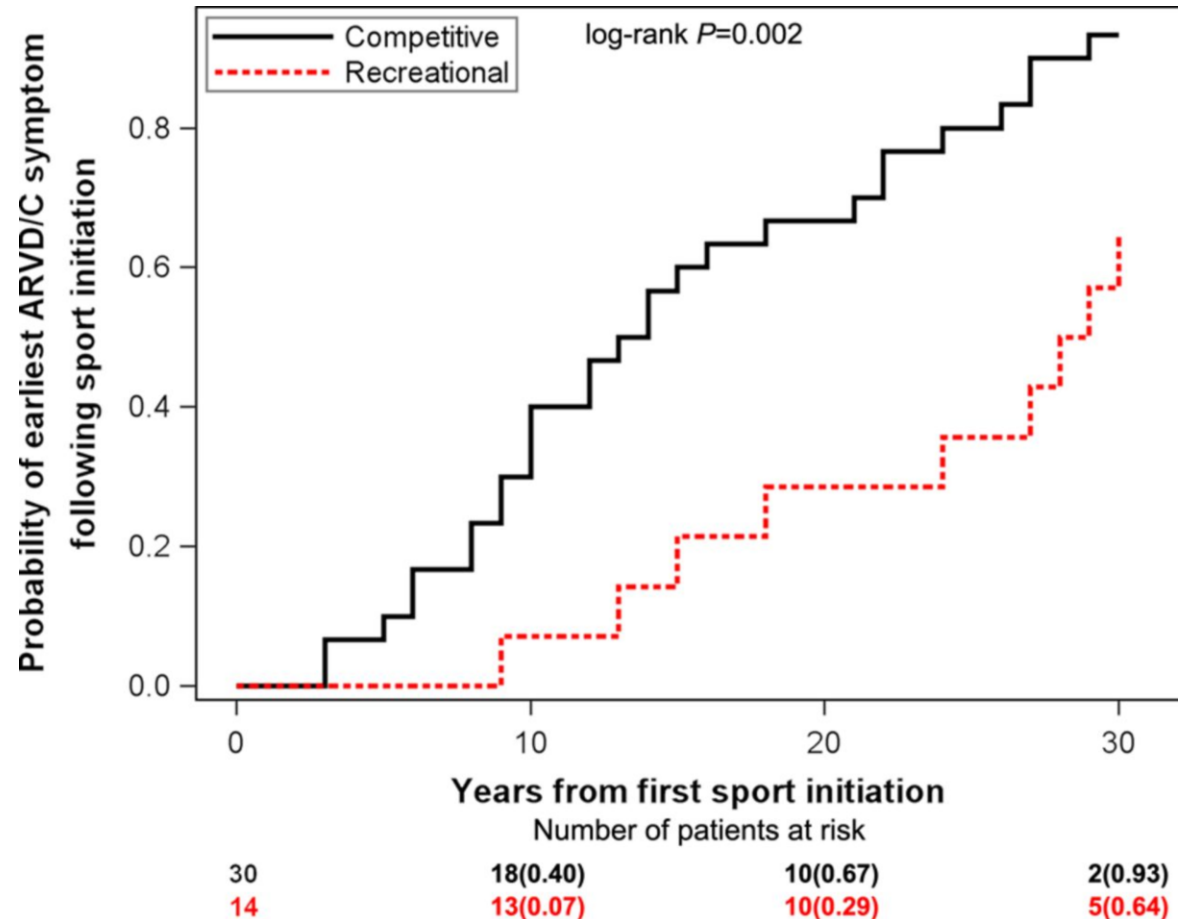
Workload dependent structural changes (human studies)



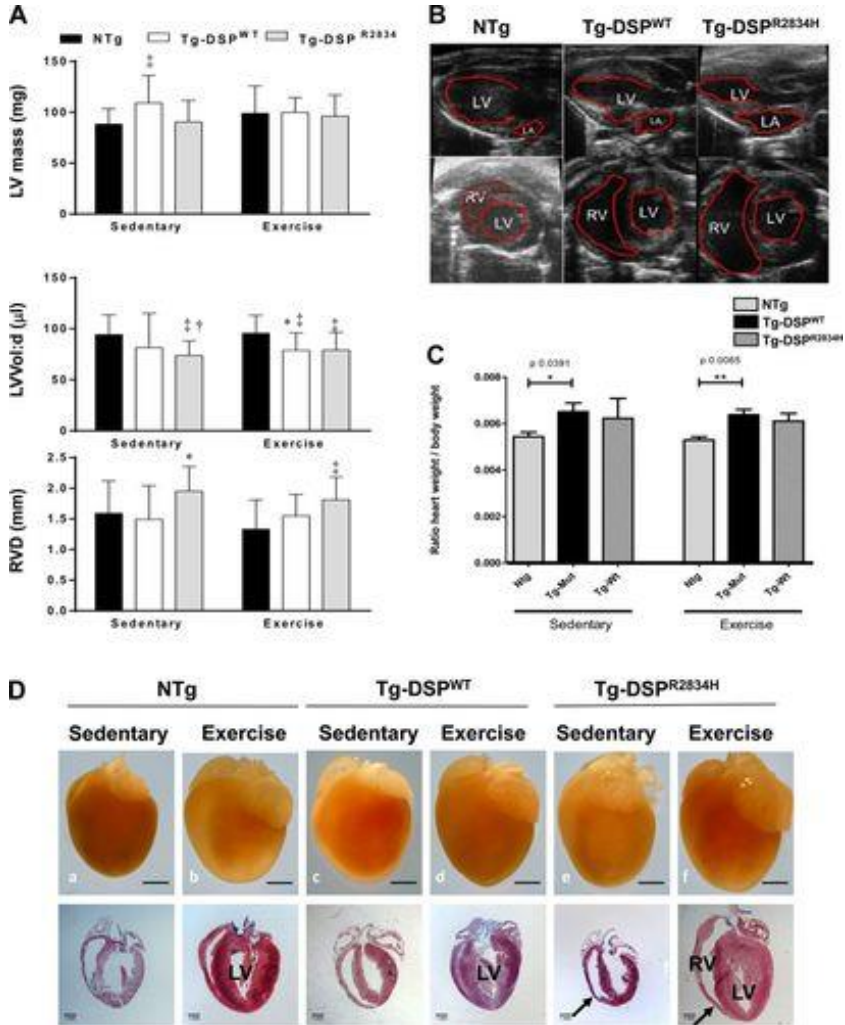
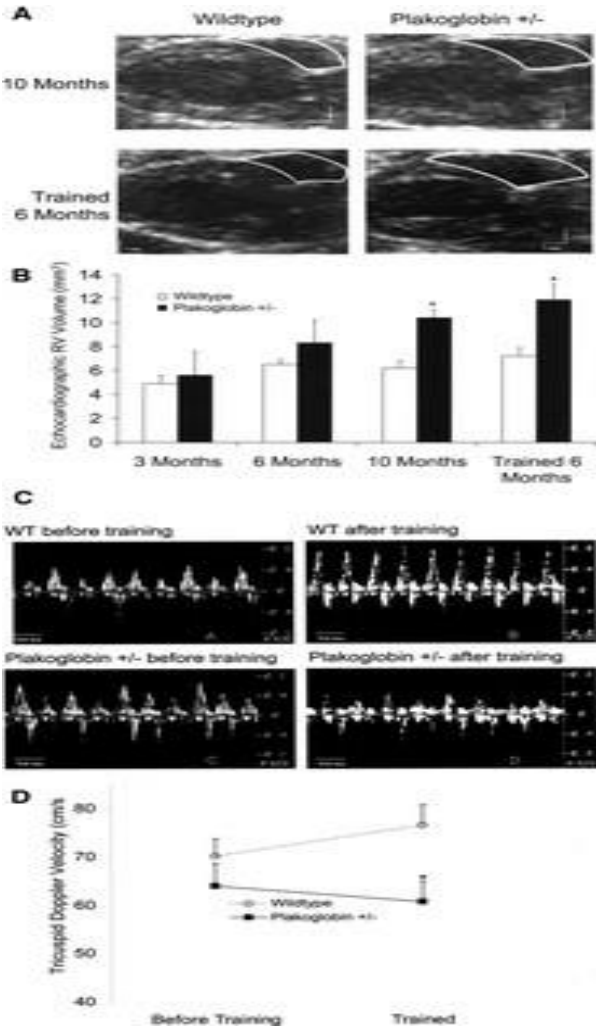
N=110 patients, 45 phenotype negative gene carriers

The relation of exercise with the development of ACM

Exercise leads to symptoms regardless of age

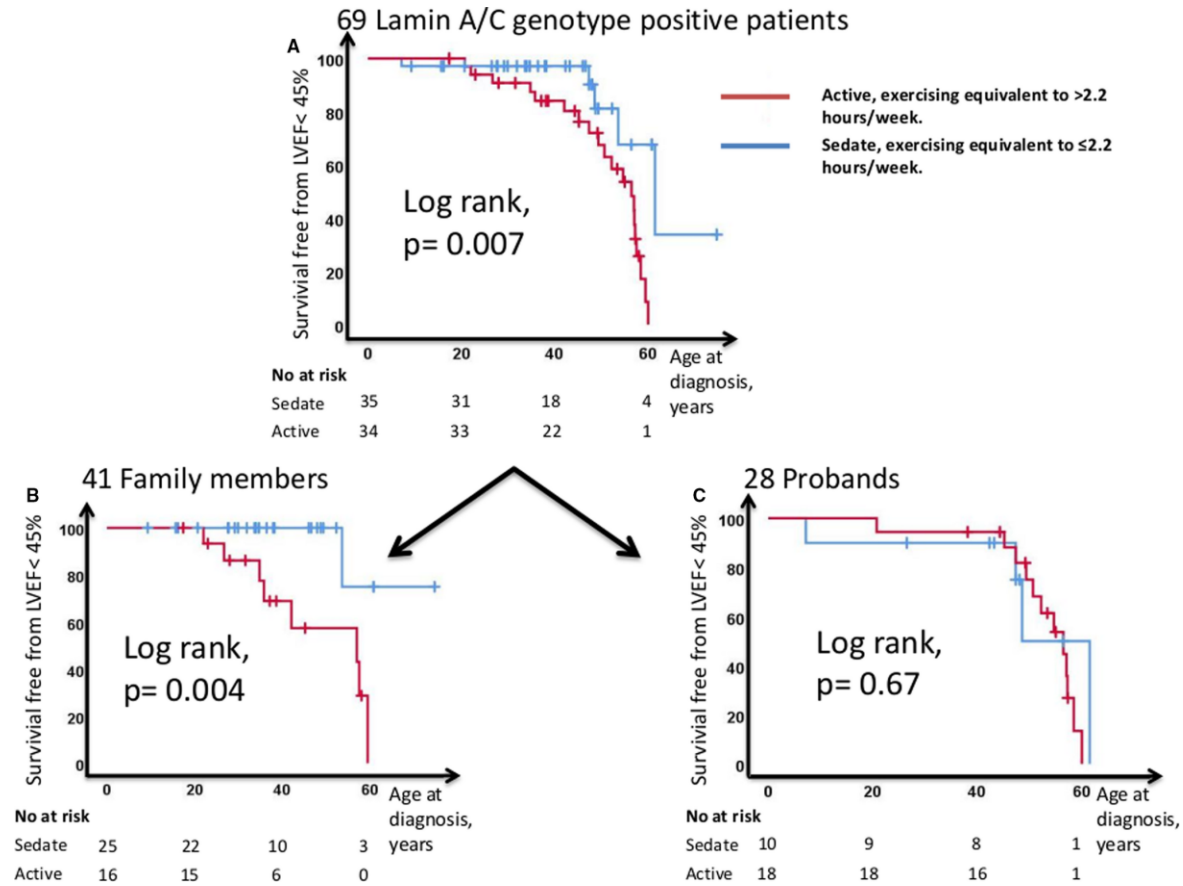


Maladaptation to exercise is independent of genotype

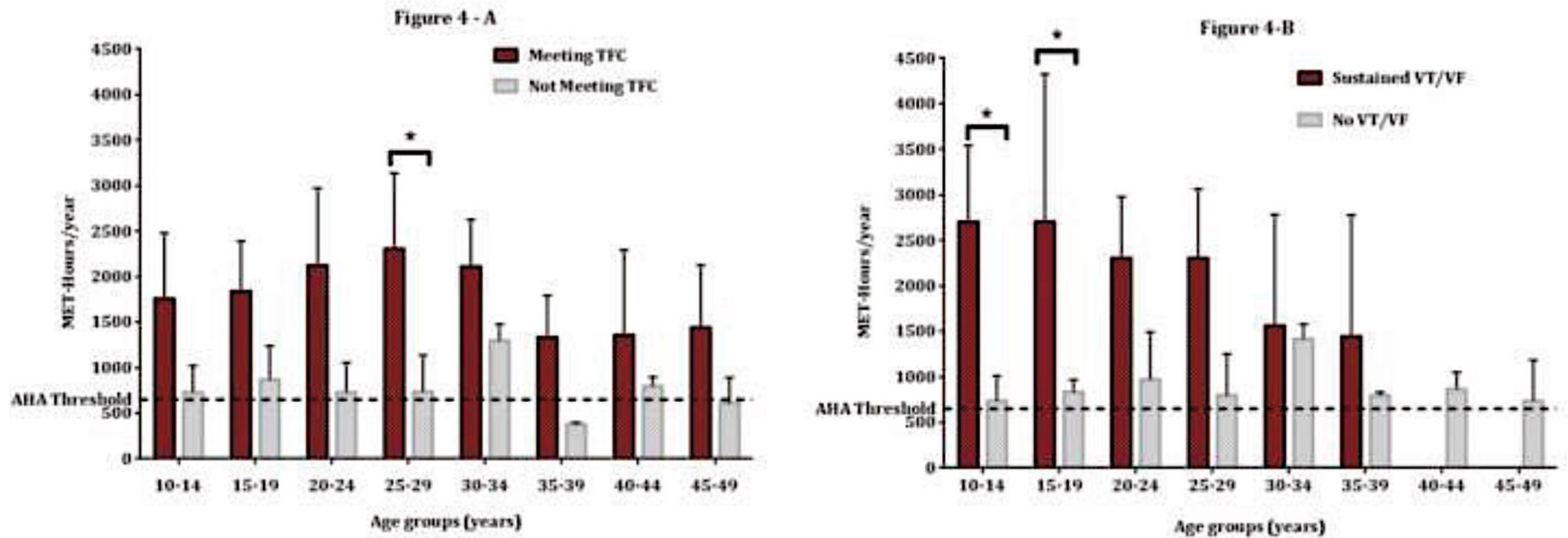


Kirchhof P, et al. Circulation. 2006. // Martherus R, et al. Am J Physiol Heart Circ Physiol. 2016.

Exercise in LMNA carriers

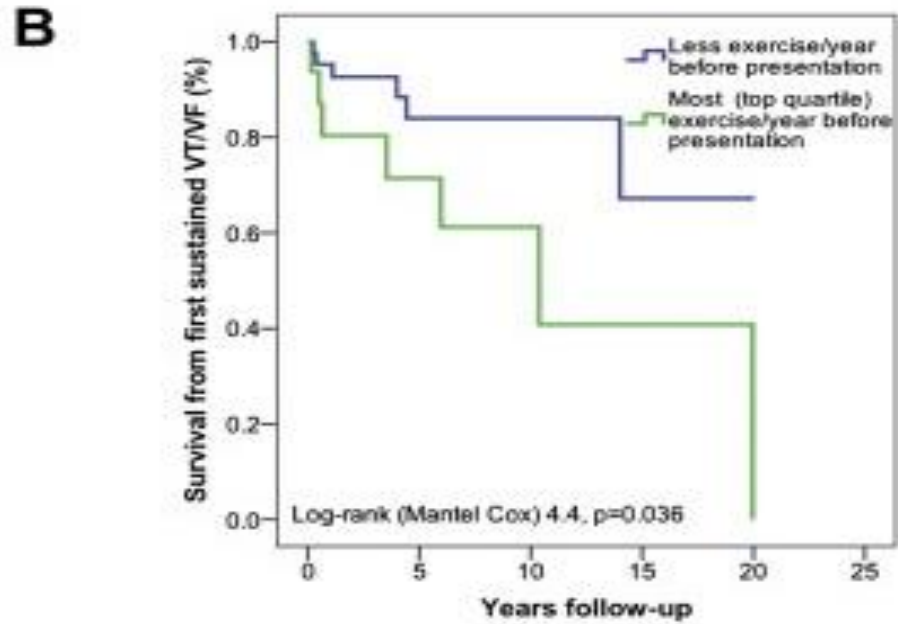


Avoidance of exercise is protective against phenotype development and arrhythmia



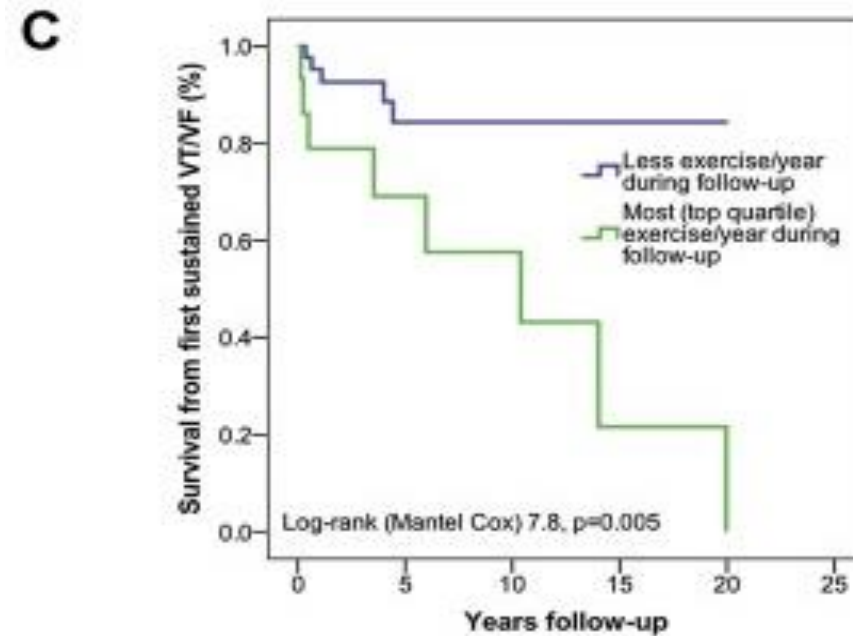
N=28 unaffected PKP2 mutation carriers

Avoidance of exercise is protective even after phenotype expression



Numbers at risk

Less exercise (0-515 hrs/yr)	45	18	8	2	1	0
Most exercise (>515 hrs/yr)	16	8	3	1	0	0

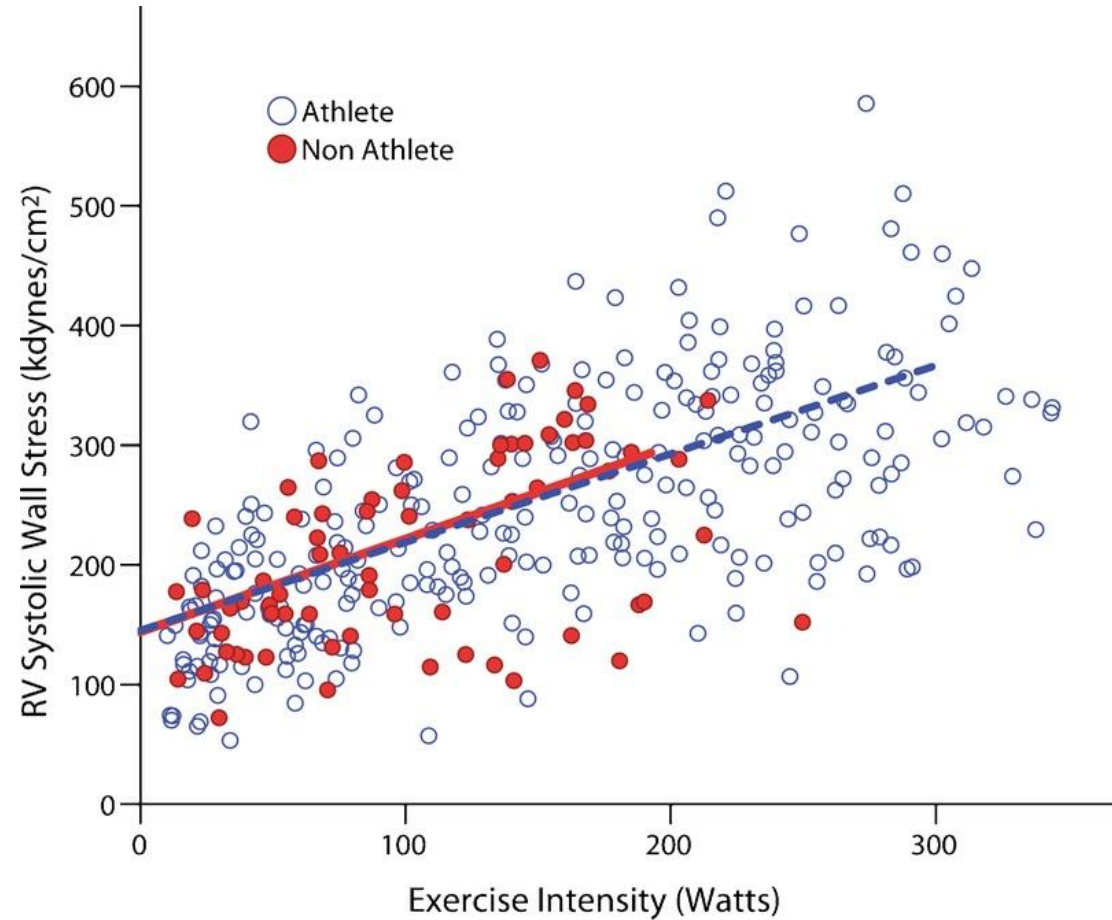
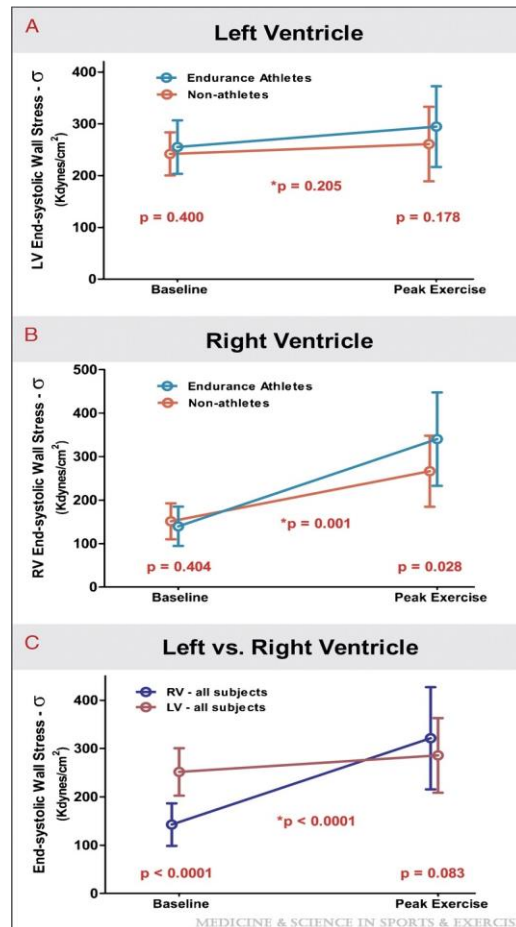


Numbers at risk

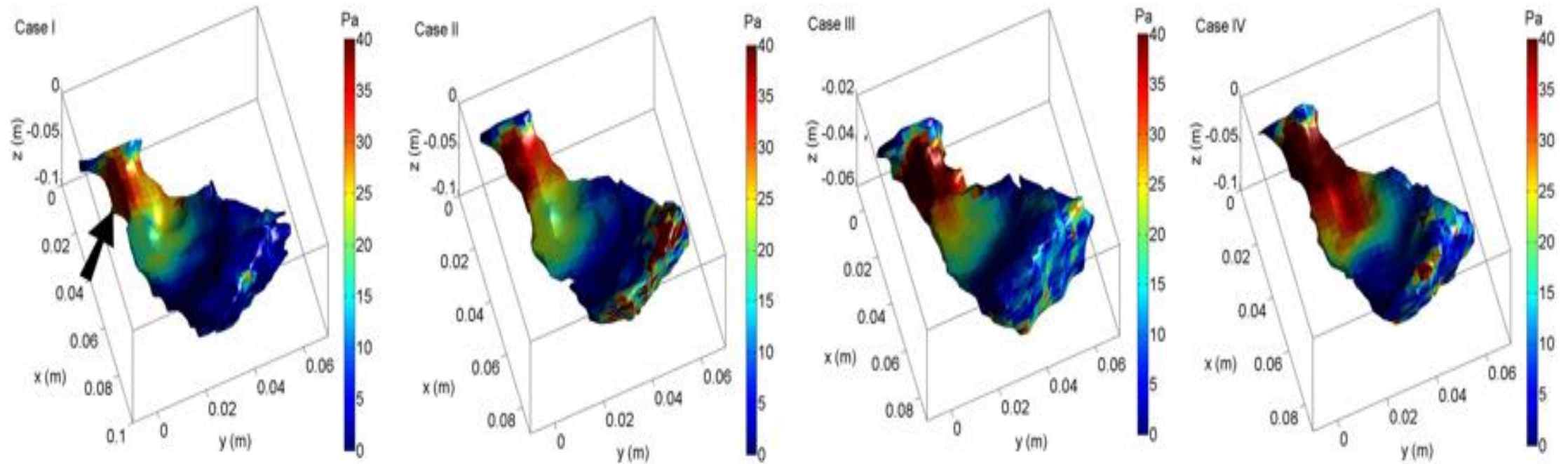
Less exercise (0-425 hrs/yr)	46	19	7	2	1	0
Most exercise (>425 hrs/yr)	15	7	4	1	0	0

N=87 desmosomal gene carriers, 57/87, 66% meeting TFC

Exaggerated RV adaptation to exercise

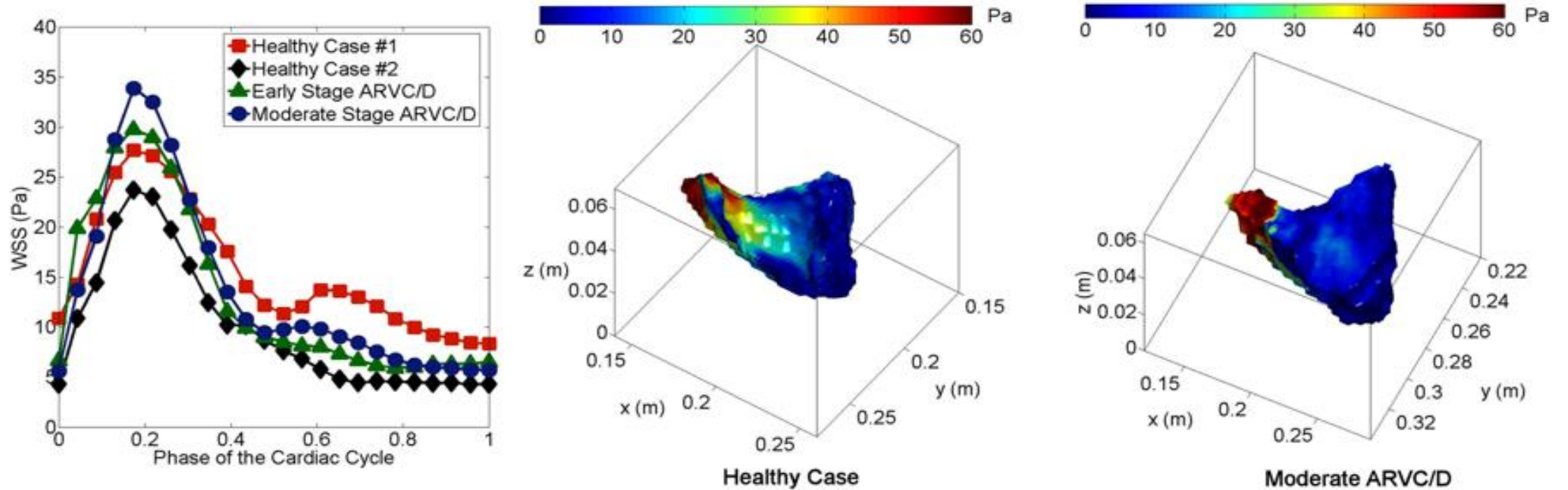


RV wall shear stress is dependent on cardiac output...



Spatial distribution of WSS at peak systole for varying cardiac output levels obtained using 3D-PTV in vitro
(Case I: 4.05 L/min, Case II: 4.44 L/min, Case III: 4.65 L/min, Case IV: 5.32 L/min)

...and genotype/phenotype.

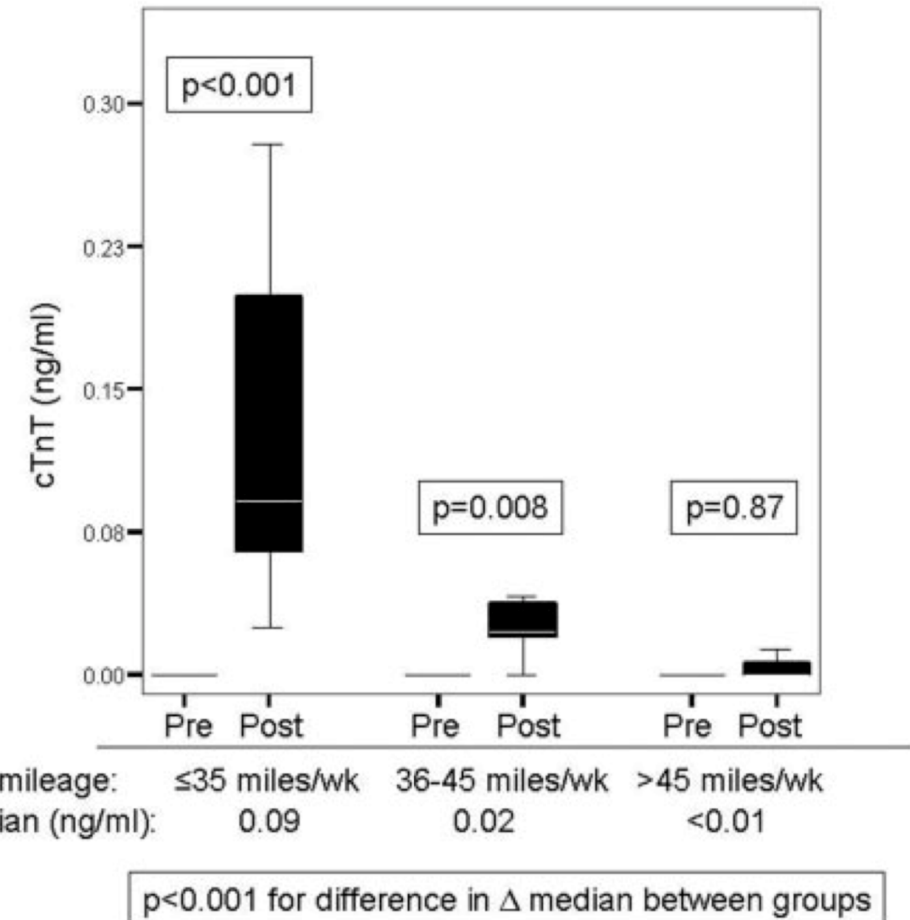


Time evolution of WSS averaged over the RVOT for healthy, early ARVC/D and moderate ARVC/D cases (left) obtained using in vivo PC-MRI. Spatial distribution of WSS at peak systole for the healthy case (middle) and moderate ARVC/D case (right).

Troponin elevation is associated with RV functional changes in exercise

TABLE 2. Baseline and Postmarathon Echocardiographic Indices (n=60)

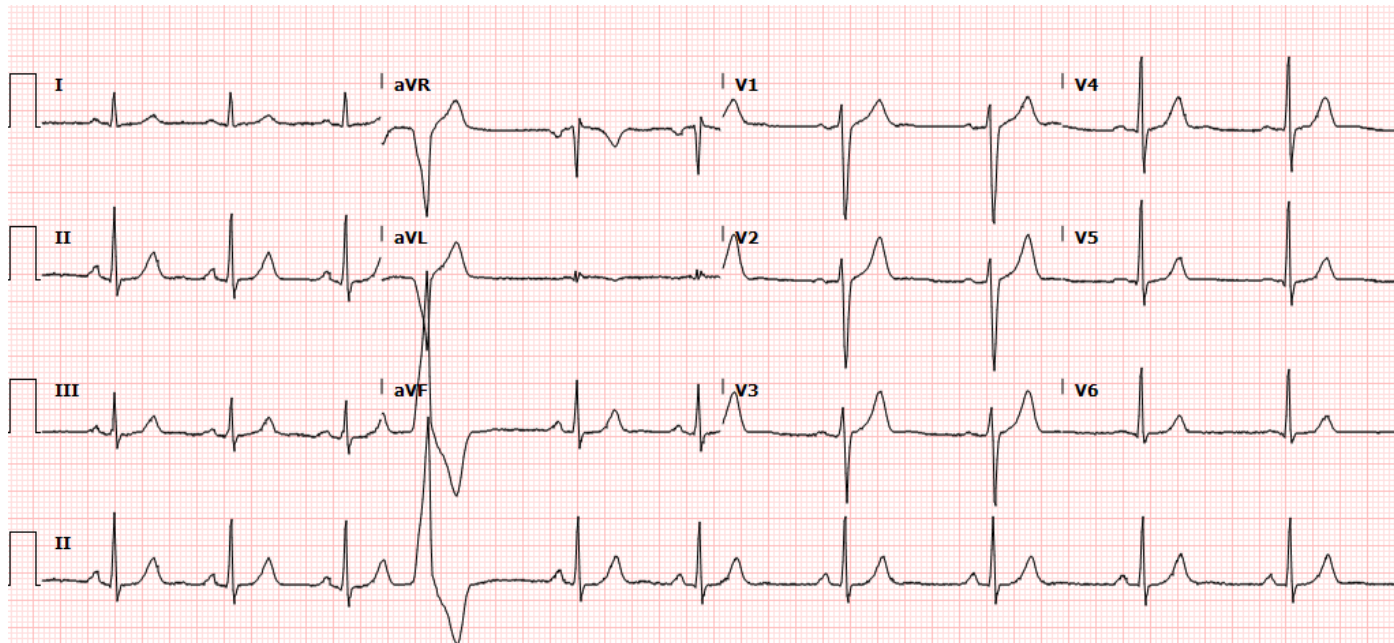
Variable	Baseline	After the Marathon	P
Left atrial dimensions, mm	34±4	33±3	0.17
Left atrial area, cm ²	19±3	18±3	0.49
Right atrial area, cm ²	17±2	16±3	0.45
LV end-diastolic volume, cm ³	110±20	105±23	0.11
LV end-systolic volume, cm ³	44±10	43±10	0.35
RV dimensions, mm	35±4	41±4	0.001
RV diastolic area, cm ²	17±4	20±3	0.008
RV systolic area, cm ²	10±2	13±2	0.004
LV ejection fraction, %	60±6	59±6	0.44
RV area change, %	41±7	33±7	<0.001
Mitral E-wave filling velocity, m · s ⁻¹	0.9±0.1	0.6±0.2	<0.001
Mitral A-wave filling velocity, m · s ⁻¹	0.5±0.1	0.7±0.12	<0.001
Ratio of mitral E/A	1.6±0.4	1.0±0.4	<0.001
TD-derived E' lateral, cm · s ⁻¹	12±2	8±2	<0.001
TD-derived A' lateral, cm · s ⁻¹	5±1	8±2	<0.001
TD-derived E' septal, cm · s ⁻¹	10±2	8±2	<0.001
TD-derived A' septal, cm · s ⁻¹	5±1	8±2	<0.001
RV base			
V _{ENDO} , cm · s ⁻¹	11±2	9±2	0.007
ε, %	18±7	14±4	<0.001
SR, s ⁻¹	1.2±0.4	1.2±0.3	0.25
RV mid			
V _{ENDO} , cm · s ⁻¹	11±2	7±2	0.001
ε, %	27±6	21±5	<0.001
SR, s ⁻¹	1.6±0.4	1.5±0.4	0.62
RV apex			
V _{ENDO} , cm · s ⁻¹	8±2	6±1	0.007
ε, %	38±8	29±7	<0.001
SR, s ⁻¹	2.4±0.6	2.3±0.6	0.86



Could exercise promote inflammation?

55-year-old previously asymptomatic male, PKP2 mutation +, phenotype -

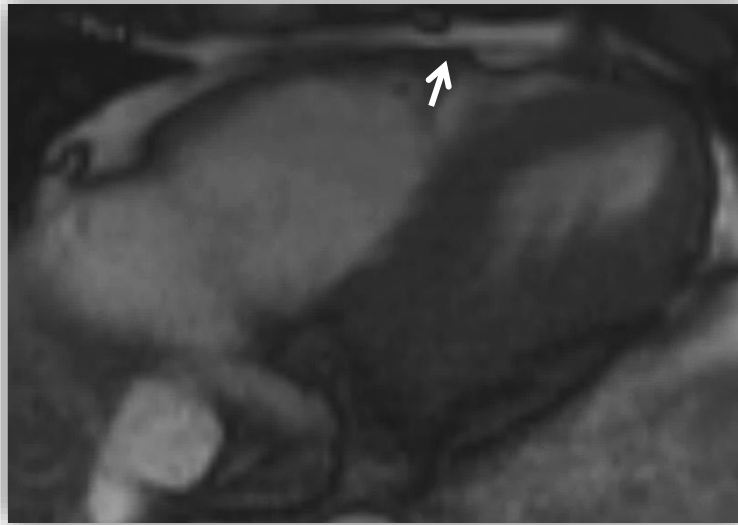
- 01/2018: started high intensity interval exercise at the gym
- 03/2018: he noticed significant palpitations. 24h Holter: 14307 VEs (16%), 2x NSVTs (monomorphic Triplets). hsTnT negative.





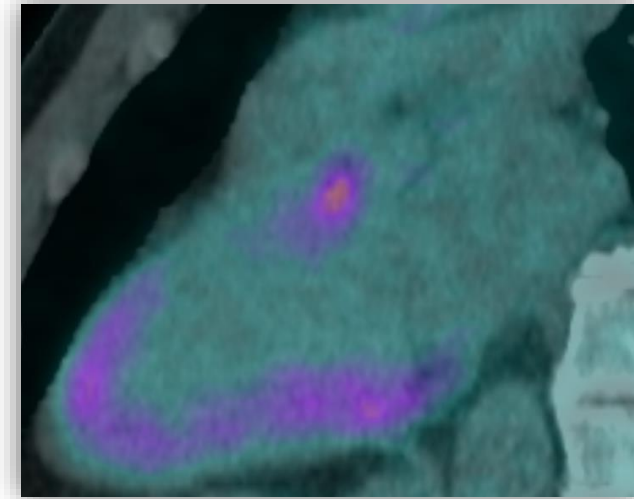
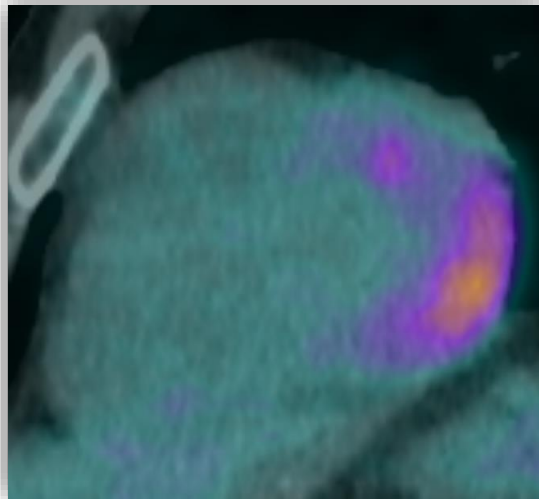
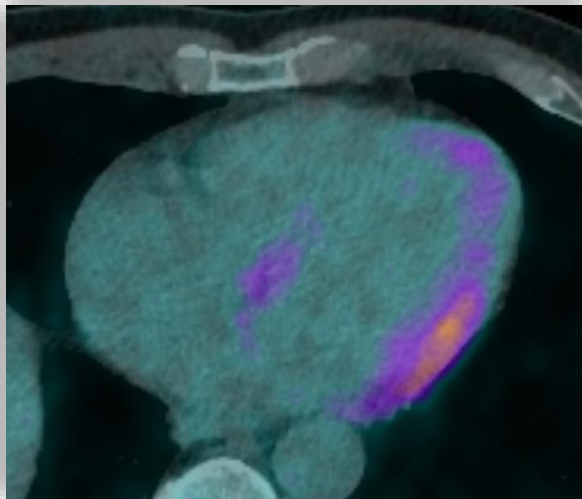
CMR

Normal biventricular size,
minor dyskinetic area of the RV free wall
Minor mid-wall LGE at the midseptum

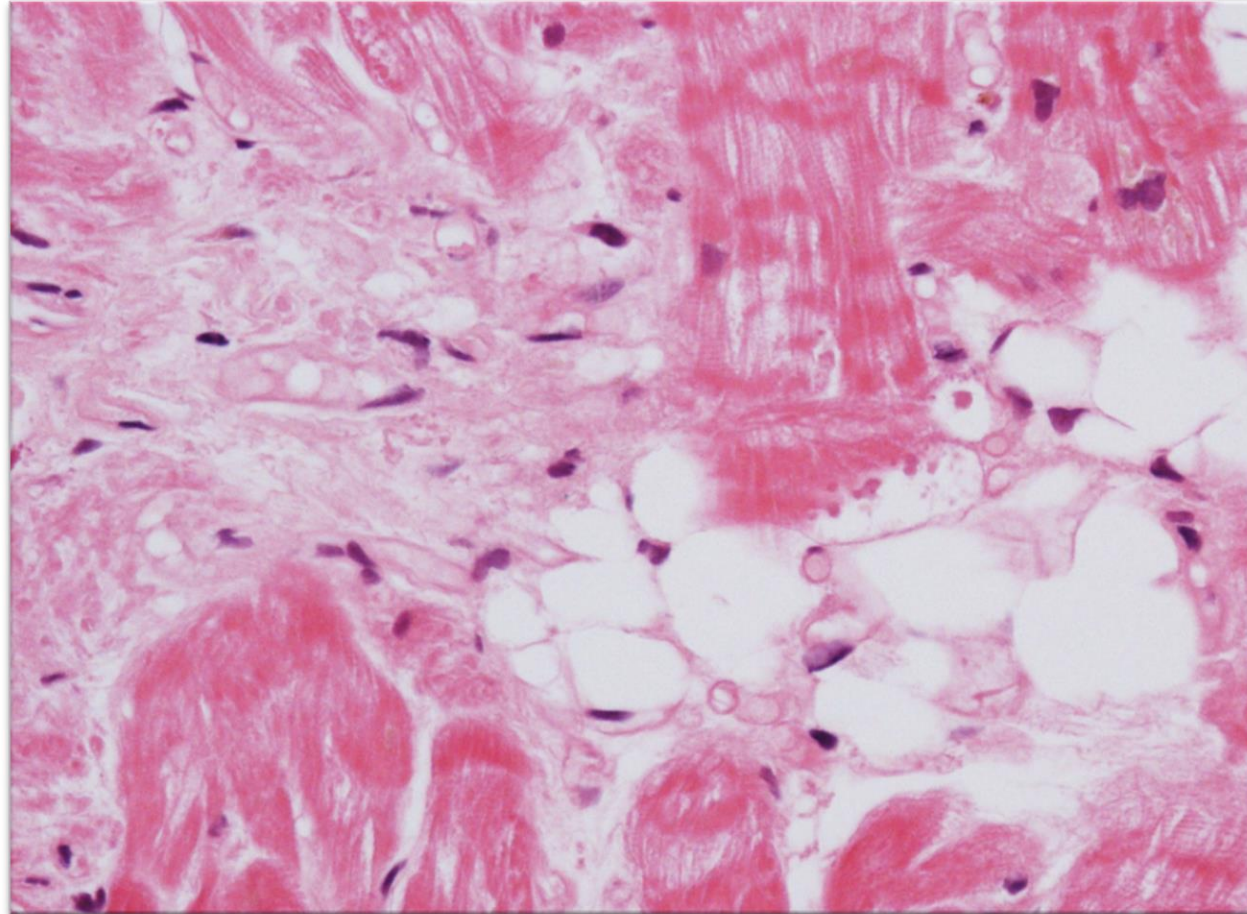


FDG-PET (cardiac protocol)

Heterogenous LV myocardial uptake
compatible with active myocardial
inflammation.



**EMB: fibrofatty replacement and myocardial apoptosis.
No inflammatory infiltrates identified.**

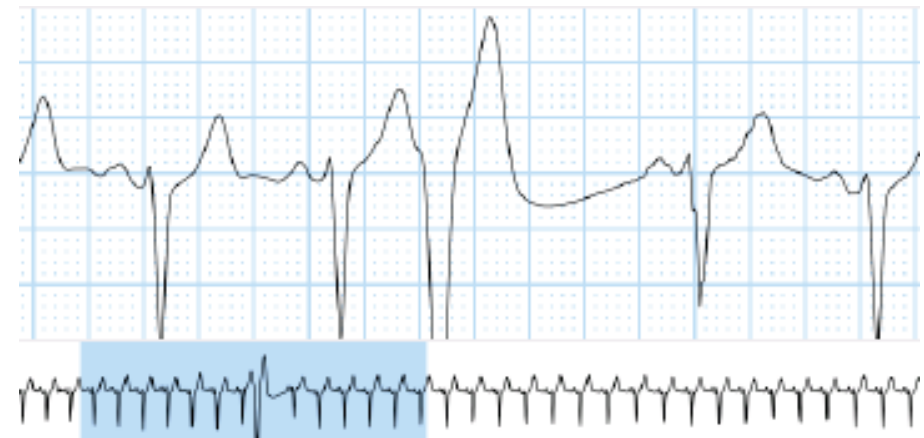
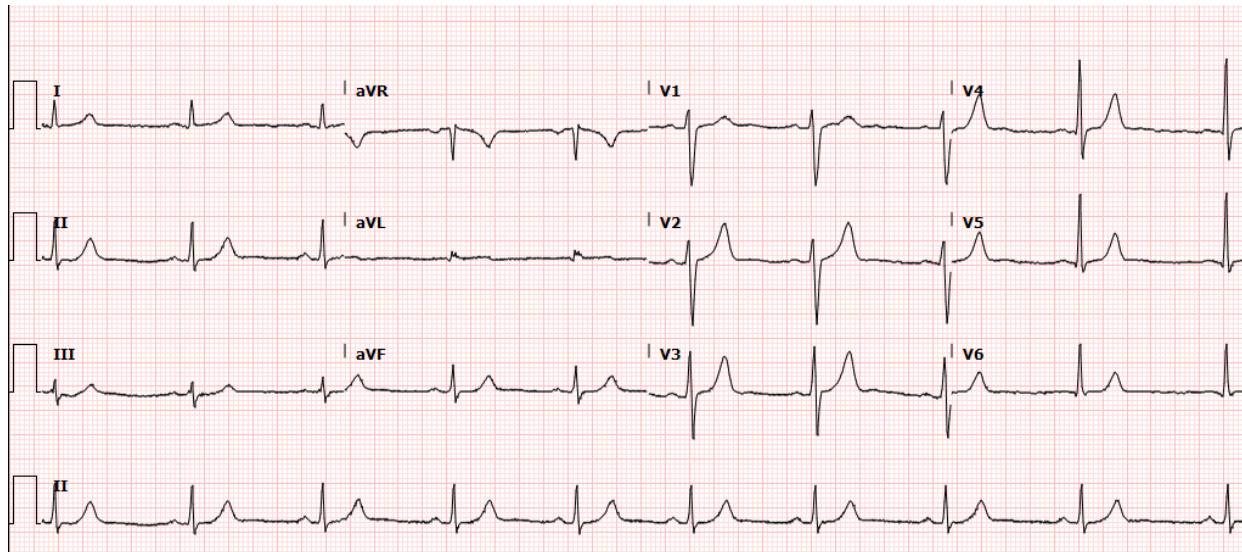


Courtesy of Dr Alexandros Protonotarios

Could exercise promote inflammation?

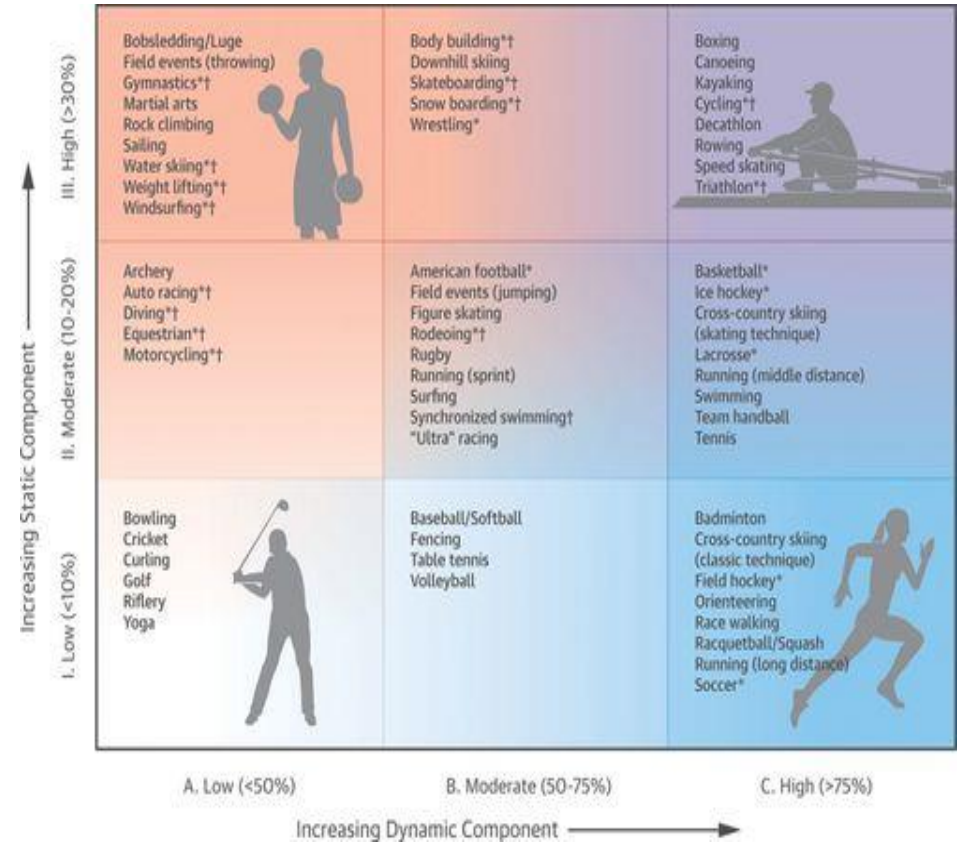
55-year-old previously asymptomatic male, PKP-2 mutation +, phenotype -

- Started on Bisoprolol 2.5 mg od and advised to avoid intensive exercise
- Repeat 24h Holter: 8 VEs. No complex ventricular arrhythmias
- Hot phase of ARVC or exercise induced inflammation?



Current recommendations

- **AHA/ACC 2015:** Athletes with a possible diagnosis of ARVC should not participate in most competitive sports, with the possible exception of low-intensity class 1A sports (Class III; Level of Evidence C).
- **EAPC/ESC 2019:** Athletes who are genetic carriers of pathogenic AC-associated desmosomal mutations (even in the absence of phenotypic expression of the disease) should not participate in competitive sports. These athletes should be advised to limit their exercise programmes to leisure-time activities and remain under clinical surveillance (Class IIa/Level of Evidence C).



Conclusions

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy

- Hypertrophy may be insufficient as the sole diagnostic criterion
- Risk factors and events do occur in phenotype negative patients but they are very rare.
- Novel imaging/EP and hybrid techniques may allow for a more detailed understanding of such occurrences in phenotype negative patients.
- Current guidelines do not suggest restriction of exercise but focus on early detection of phenotypical conversion.

Arrhythmogenic/NDLV cardiomyopathy

- Less structured pathophysiology compared to HCM
- The phenotype here may only be arrhythmia, even in the absence of structural abnormalities
- Two major concerns
 - Events
 - Disease progression
- Both may increase with exercise.
- Current guidelines suggest restriction of exercise and are in favor of predictive treatment