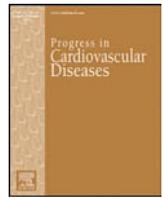




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Sudden death related cardiomyopathies - Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy[☆]



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ABSTRACT

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) is a form of inherited cardiomyopathy. Most individuals with HCM experience minimal symptoms throughout their lifetime. However, those with HCM are at risk of ventricular arrhythmias and sudden cardiac death (SCD), the most feared complication of HCM. Implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) implantation has played a large role in transforming this disease from one with an ominous prognosis to one with mortality rates that are on par with the general public. Since the early 2000s, balance between SCD prevention and unnecessary ICD placement has been sought, this is reflected in the evolution of SCD risk stratification models for patients with HCM. This review discusses key concepts pertaining to HCM, with emphasis on prevention of SCD, and summarizes and compares the recommendations for ICD implantation in current guidelines.

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Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM) was initially described in living patients in 1959 by Marrow and Braunwald in a case series of 3 patients, documenting significant pressure gradients in the absence of valvular outflow obstruction observed during open-heart surgery.¹

HCM is the most common sudden cardiac death (SCD)-related cardiomyopathy. The long-standing estimated prevalence has been 1 in 500,² with one study estimating the prevalence as high as 1 in 200.³ HCM is one of the most common causes of SCD in young athletes.^{4,5}

Abbreviations: AF, Atrial fibrillation; BP, Blood pressure; CMR, Cardiac magnetic resonance; HCM, Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy; HF, Heart failure; ICD, Implantable cardioverter defibrillator; LGE, Late gadolinium enhancement; LV, Left ventricular; LVOT, Left ventricular outflow tract; LVH, Left ventricular hypertrophy; NSVT, Non-sustained ventricular tachycardia; SAM, Systolic anterior motion; VA, Ventricular arrhythmia.

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Four studies of SCD etiology in young athletes show that HCM accounts for 6–13% of SCD cases.^{4–7} The largest of these reviewed SCD in 1866 athletes over 27 years. HCM was confirmed in 251 cases (13%) and suspected in another 57 cases (3%).⁵ Fig. 1 shows the cause of SCD in the 690 cases confirmed to be of cardiac etiology, with HCM accounting for 36% of cases.

HCM is a familial cardiomyopathy that is inherited in an autosomal dominant pattern. The pathologic hallmark of HCM is myocyte disarray.⁸ Mutations in eight genes, encoding sarcomeric proteins, have been determined to cause HCM: beta myosin heavy chain (MYH7), cardiac myosin binding protein-C (MYBPC3), cardiac troponin T (TNNT2), cardiac troponin I (TNNI3), alpha tropomyosin (TPM1), cardiac alpha actin (ACTC1), myosin regulatory light chain (MYL2), and myosin essential light chain (MYL3). Mutations in the genes encoding beta myosin heavy chain and cardiac myosin binding protein account for nearly 50% of all cases of HCM. As many as 11 additional genes have been less definitively linked to HCM.^{9–12} Data from the Sarcomeric

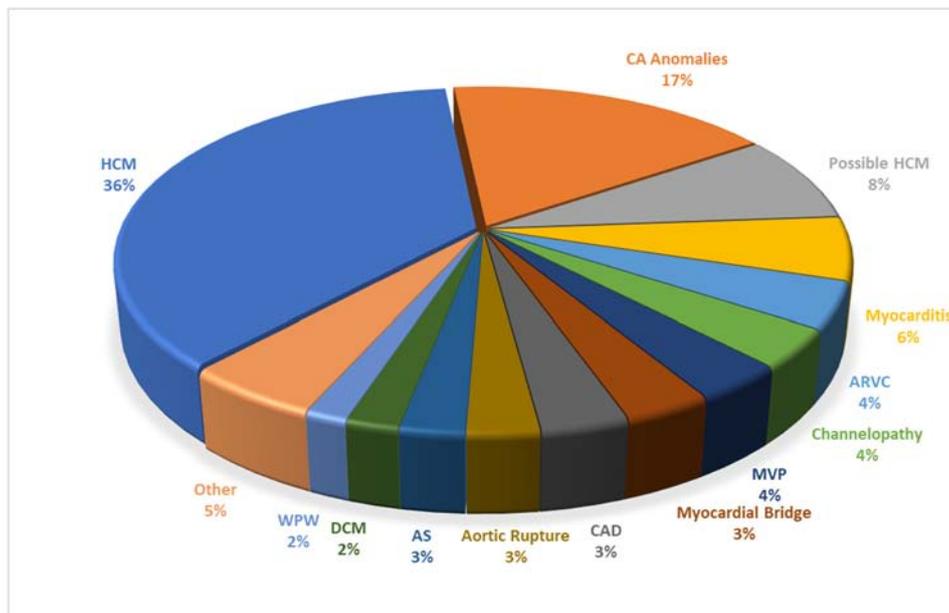


Fig. 1. Etiology of SCD due to cardiovascular events. Cause of sudden death in 690 young competitive athletes who died as a consequence of a cardiovascular event. ARVC – Arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy; AS – Aortic stenosis; CA – Coronary artery; CAD – Coronary artery disease; DCM – Dilated cardiomyopathy; HCM – Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy; MVP – Mitral valve prolapse; WPW – Wolff-Parkinson-White. Adapted from Maron BJ, Doerer JJ, Haas TS, et al. Sudden deaths in young competitive athletes: analysis of 1866 deaths in the United States, 1980–2006. *Circulation*. 2009;119⁸:1085–1092.

Human Cardiomyopathy Registry (SHaRe), the largest HCM cohort to date, report 46% of 4591 patients carried a pathogenic or likely pathogenic mutation.¹² Genetic testing is recommended (Class I) for patients who meet clinical criteria for HCM and have family members who are available and willing to consider cascade genetic screening. Genetic testing is also recommended (Class I) when the diagnosis is equivocal. Given the lack of genotype-phenotype association in the current data, genetic testing may be of limited value when cascade screening is not possible.^{9,10}

HCM is diagnosed by three criteria: 1) left ventricular (LV) wall thickness ≥ 15 mm, by any cardiac imaging modality, 2) absence of LV cavity dilation, 3) LV hypertrophy (LVH) unable to be explained by cardiac or systemic disease.^{9,10} However, given disease heterogeneity and overlap with other causes of LVH, these criteria should be considered in the entire clinical context of the patient, including morphology of LVH, family history, electrocardiography, multi-modality cardiac imaging, and genetic testing. These other considerations are of particular importance when diagnosis is equivocal, such as LV wall thickness 13–15 mm. Measurement of LV wall thickness is primarily from transthoracic echocardiogram, however cardiac magnetic resonance imaging (CMR) is increasingly being used. LVH is generally asymmetric with the basal interventricular septum being affected to the greatest degree.

Although not necessary for diagnosis of HCM, identification of a sarcomeric gene mutation, severe LV wall thickness (>25 mm), or systolic anterior motion (SAM) of the mitral valve leaflets support the diagnosis of HCM, when the diagnosis is unclear.¹⁰ SAM is the most common cause of LV outflow tract (LVOT) obstruction in HCM and is present at rest in approximately one third of patients with HCM, another third develop SAM with physiologic stress, the final third have no obstructive physiology.^{9,10} Identification of LVOT obstruction is an important prognostic indicator; it is associated with increased symptoms and risk of atrial fibrillation (AF), stroke, and SCD.^{13,14}

The differential diagnosis for HCM in adults most commonly includes LVH due to increased afterload and physiologic cardiac remodeling secondary to athletic training (“athlete heart”).¹⁰ Evaluation of the patient’s medical history and degree of physical involvement are important in determining the cause of LVH. The morphology of LVH secondary to conditions of increased afterload is typically symmetric and <15 mm. These patients will have an identifiable cause of increased afterload,

such as systemic hypertension or aortic stenosis. Athletic training typically causes symmetric LVH with enlarged LV end-diastolic diameter (>55 mm), without associated left atrial enlargement. During periods of deconditioning, the severity of LVH will decrease, if the hypertrophy is secondary to athletic conditioning.¹⁵ Other less common causes of LVH are mitochondrial, metabolic, neuromuscular, and infiltrative diseases.

Natural history and risk of sudden death

The natural history and clinical manifestation of HCM can be highly variable, even within members of the same family, carrying the same genetic mutation – ranging from completely asymptomatic to heart failure and/or sudden death.¹⁶ Most patients remain asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic throughout their lives. The most common complications of HCM leading to morbidity and mortality are AF (20–25%), heart failure (HF; 22%), end-stage HF (3%), and SCD (1%).^{12,17} Symptoms of HCM include dyspnea, exertional chest pain, palpitations, light headedness and syncope, with dyspnea and angina being the most common and syncope the least common.¹⁸

As described above, HCM is accountable for a considerable portion of SCD in young athletes. Bagnall and colleagues showed that HCM is also a significant cause of SCD in young non-athletes. They reported that in 490 cases of SCD between ages 1 and 35 years, HCM was the cause of SCD in 20 cases (4%).¹⁹ In non-athlete adult populations of all ages, the incidence of SCD due to HCM is less significant. A study of 2661 cases of SCD in a province of Northern Finland identified 15 individuals (0.6%) with HCM.²⁰ Of 525 cases of SCD that underwent autopsy in San Francisco county, 6 (1%) had HCM.²¹

Early mortality rates for HCM were estimated to be 3–6% per year, though this estimate came from tertiary referral centers, whose population may not be representative of the entirety of the HCM population. Later, pre-implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) estimates of 1.5% per year were thought to be more representative.²² More recently, a large cohort of 744 patients with HCM, 44 (6%) experienced SCD over an average of 8 years, yielding and annual mortality of 0.7% due to SCD.²³ Another study reported 17 of 1000 (2%) patients with HCM died of SCD, for an annual SCD mortality of 0.23%.²⁴ The total mortality rates for HCM from these two studies were 0.2% and 0.5% per year,

Table 1 Summary of recommendations for ICD implantation in patients with HCM.	
2017 AHA/ACC/HRS guideline for management of patients with ventricular arrhythmias and the prevention of sudden cardiac death ³¹	<p>Class I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival of cardiac arrest due to VT or VF • Spontaneous sustained VT causing syncope or hemodynamic compromise <p>Class IIa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of ≥ 1 of the following risk factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Maximum LV wall thickness ≥ 30 mm o SCD due to HCM in 1 or more first-degree relatives o ≥ 1 episode of unexplained syncope in the last 6 months • Spontaneous NSVT AND ≥ 1 risk modifier or patient from high-risk subset • Abnormal blood pressure response with exercise AND ≥ 1 risk modifier or patient from high-risk subset <p>Class IIb</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spontaneous NSVT or abnormal blood pressure response with exercise, without additional risk factors <p>Class III</p>
2014 ESC guidelines on diagnosis and management of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCM genotype and no other SCD risk factors <p>Class I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival of cardiac arrest due to VT or VF • Spontaneous sustained VT causing syncope or hemodynamic compromise <p>Class IIa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated 5-year risk $\geq 6\%$ by HCM Risk-SCD model <p>Class IIb</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated 5-year risk $\geq 4\%$ and $< 6\%$ by HCM Risk-SCD model • Estimated 5-year risk $< 4\%$ by HCM Risk-SCD model AND ≥ 1 clinically important feature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Multiple family members with sudden death o Abnormal blood pressure response with exercise <p>Class III</p>
2011 ACCF/AHA guideline for the diagnosis and treatment of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy ¹⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated 5-year risk $< 4\%$ by HCM Risk-SCD method <p>Class I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival of cardiac arrest due to VT or VF • Hemodynamically significant VT <p>Class IIa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of 1 or more of the following risk factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o ≥ 1 first-degree relative with HCM-related sudden death o Maximum LV wall thickness ≥ 30 mm o ≥ 1 episode of unexplained syncope • NSVT AND ≥ 1 risk factor or risk modifier • Abnormal blood pressure response to exercise AND ≥ 1 risk factor or risk modifier <p>Class IIb</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSVT or abnormal blood pressure response to exercise without additional risk factors <p>Class III</p>
2008 guidelines for device-based therapy of cardiac rhythm abnormalities ³⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCM genotype without risk factors • Strategy to allow patients with HCM to participate in competitive athletics <p>Secondary prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival of cardiac arrest due to VT or VF • Spontaneous sustained VT causing syncope or hemodynamic compromise <p>Primary prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of at least one established risk factor

Table 2
Clinical features of HCM associated with increased risk of SCD.

Established risk factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survival of cardiac arrest due to VT or VF Spontaneous sustained VT causing syncope or hemodynamic compromise Family history of HCM-related SCD Maximum LV wall thickness ≥ 30 mm Unexplained syncope within 6 months Non-sustained VT ≥ 3 beats Abnormal blood pressure response to exercise
Potential risk modifiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age < 30 years Delayed hyperenhancement on cardiac MRI Left ventricular outflow tract obstruction Unexplained syncope > 5 years prior
High-risk subsets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Left ventricular aneurysm Left ventricular ejection fraction $< 50\%$

Modified from Al-Khatib SM, Stevenson WG, Ackerman MJ, et al. 2017 AHA/ACC/HRS Guideline for Management of Patients With Ventricular Arrhythmias and the Prevention of Sudden Cardiac Death: A Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Clinical Practice Guidelines and the Heart Rhythm Society. *J Am Coll Cardiol.* 2018;72(14):e91–e220.

respectively, both less than the annual mortality rate of the general United States population (0.8%).^{23,24} This improvement in mortality is attributed to implantation of ICDs, which have been shown to be highly effective in preventing SCD, and heart transplantation.^{25,26}

Prevention of SCD and other management considerations

SCD is the most devastating complication of HCM and can be the initial presentation of HCM. Indications for ICD implantation, to prevent SCD, have evolved over the last 2 decades.^{17,27–29}

Shown in Table 1 is a summary of current recommendations for ICD implantation from four current guidelines: 2017 AHA/ACC/HRS guidelines on ventricular arrhythmias (VA) and prevention of SCD, 2014 ESC HCM guidelines, 2011 ACCF/AHA HCM guidelines, and 2008 ACCF/AHA/HRS cardiac device guidelines. New guidelines, to replace the 2011 ACCF/AHA HCM guidelines, are currently in process but not available for discussion in this review. ICD implantation for secondary prevention in patients who have experienced hemodynamically unstable VA or survived SCD is recommended (Class I) unanimously. The decision for primary prevention ICD implantation utilizes two risk stratification models: identification of established risk factors or calculation of individual risk estimates.

The three current guidelines from US societies all endorse the classic risk factor model, which is shown in Table 2. ICD implantation is reasonable (Class IIa) in patients with family history of premature sudden death, unexplained syncope, or LV thickness greater than or equal to 30 mm. Two additional risk factors, which have been deemphasized in current AHA/ACC/HRS guidelines, abnormal blood pressure (BP) response to exercise (decrease in systolic BP by 20 mm Hg or inability to increase systolic BP by 20 mm Hg during exercise) and nonsustained ventricular tachycardia (NSVT), now require the presence of another established or potential risk factor for ICD implantation to be considered reasonable (Class IIa). Presence of only abnormal BP with exercise or NSVT, in the absence of additional risk factors, should only lead to consideration of ICD on a case-by-case basis (Class IIb).^{10,30,31}

The 2014 ESC HCM guidelines endorse a novel model for estimation of SCD risk developed by Mahony and colleagues (HCM Risk-SCD) to predict individualized estimates of SCD for patients with HCM.³² This model addressed concerns that use of a single risk factor to identify patients at high risk for SCD, as recommended by the 2011 ACCF/AHA HCM guidelines, may overestimate the risk of SCD and lead to unnecessary ICD implantation.³³ The HCM Risk-SCD model utilizes 8 predictors (age, maximal LV wall thickness, left atrial diameter, LVOT gradient, family history of SCD, NSVT, and unexplained syncope) to calculate an individualized 5-year estimate of SCD. The ESC guidelines consider ICD implantation reasonable (Class IIa) for patients with an estimated 5-year risk of SCD $\geq 6\%$. Those with 5-year estimated SCD risk of 4–6%

may benefit from ICD implantation (Class IIb). ICD is not recommended for those with an estimated risk $< 4\%$.⁹ Efforts have since been made to validate this model, with mixed results.^{34–39} This online risk calculator can be accessed at <http://www.doc2do.com/hcm/webHCM.html>.

Late gadolinium enhancement (LGE) on CMR is thought to represent areas from which VA arise. Both presence of LGE and the extent of LGE have been shown to be associated with increased risk of sudden death, however this has yet to be validated in large prospective studies, therefore the predictive value remains indeterminant.^{40,41}

Additional risk factors have been reported, including: extracellular volume on CMR,⁴² high T2-weighted signal intensity,⁴³ Global longitudinal strain,⁴⁴ left atrial volume,⁴³ fragmented QRS patterns,⁴⁵ J waves,⁴⁵ and LV mechanical dispersion.⁴⁶

Beta-blockers are first-line treatment for symptomatic patients; this is thought to be a class effect and there are little data to support use of individual beta-blockers. They should be up-titrated to a goal heart rate of 60 beats per minute, to decrease myocardial oxygen demand and attenuate sympathetic-induced VA.^{9,10} Non-dihydropyridine calcium channel blockers, verapamil and diltiazem, can also be useful in symptomatic relief for patients that do not tolerate beta-blockers. Dihydropyridine calcium channel blockers can exacerbate obstruction and should not be used in patients with outflow tract obstruction.^{9,10} Disopyramide may be considered as add-on therapy for patients whose symptoms are refractory to beta-blocker or calcium channel blocker therapy.^{9,10} There are limited data to suggest that ranolazine may be beneficial in providing symptomatic relief, however further study is required to establish the role of ranolazine in HCM.⁴⁷ Mavacamten (MYK-461) interacts with cardiac myosin ATPase to impair myosin binding and to decrease intensity of sarcomeric contraction.⁴⁸ Two trials are currently investigating the role of Mavacamten in obstructive and nonobstructive HCM: EXPLORER-HCM (NCT03470545) and MAVERICK-HCM (NCT03442764).

Septal myectomy and alcohol septal ablation are invasive therapies that can be beneficial to select patients with symptoms refractory to medical management. Minimum criteria for consideration of these procedures are: severe dyspnea or angina that interferes with daily activity, septal hypertrophy causing a LVOT gradient of ≥ 50 mm Hg at rest or with exertion, and sufficient septal thickness to perform the procedure.^{9,10} Septal myectomy has been reported to reduce the LVOT gradient and provide symptomatic relief in 90% of HCM patients.⁴⁹ There have been no randomized trials comparing myectomy and alcohol ablation, but both have been shown to improve functional status with similar risk of procedural mortality.⁵⁰ There is risk of developing both left and right bundle branch blocks and, less commonly, atrioventricular block with either of these procedures.^{50,51}

Conclusions and future perspective

HCM is the most common and well-studied inherited cardiomyopathy. In the last two decades, remarkable progress has been made in disease management and prevention of SCD. The role of medical management, namely Mavacamten, is being studied in current trials. Risk stratification for SCD continues to evolve, current data suggest that CMR may have value, but its definitive role in risk stratification for SCD is yet to be determined. Recent data have shown that patients diagnosed before the age of 40 years and those with pathogenic mutations were more likely to experience malignant arrhythmias and SCD.¹² Further investigation of the value of genotype in prognostication and SCD risk stratification is underway in an observational prospective study, Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Registry (HCMR) - Novel Markers of Prognosis in Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (NCT01915615). The study aim is to use CMR and genetic mutations, in addition to clinical and demographic variables, to develop a predictive scoring model for SCD risk.⁵²

Conflict of interest statement

None of the authors have any conflicts of interests with regard to this publication.

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