

Diagnostic yield and optimal duration of continuous-loop event monitoring for the diagnosis of palpitations. A cost-effectiveness analysis.

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Ann Intern Med 1998; 128:890-5.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Continuous-loop event recorders are widely used for the evaluation of palpitations, but the optimal duration of monitoring is unknown. **OBJECTIVE:** To determine the yield, timing, and incremental cost-effectiveness of each week of event monitoring for palpitations. **DESIGN:** Prospective cohort study. **PATIENTS:** 105 consecutive outpatients referred for the placement of a continuous-loop event recorder for the evaluation of palpitations. **MEASUREMENTS:** Diagnostic yield, incremental cost, and cost-effectiveness for each week of monitoring. **RESULTS:** The diagnostic yield of continuous-loop event recorders was 1.04 diagnoses per patient in week 1, 0.15 diagnoses per patient in week 2, and 0.01 diagnoses per patient in week 3 and beyond. Over time, the cost-effectiveness ratio increased from \$98 per new diagnosis in week 1 to \$576 per new diagnosis in week 2 and \$5832 per new diagnosis in week 3. **CONCLUSIONS:** In patients referred for evaluation of palpitations, the diagnostic yield of continuous-loop event recording decreases rapidly after 2 weeks of monitoring. A 2-week monitoring period is reasonably cost-effective for most patients and should be the standard period for continuous-loop event recording for the evaluation of palpitations.