


Reviving the ECG series

W S Teo, W C G Peh

The electrocardiogram (ECG) is one of the most basic investigations in evaluation of the heart. It is usually the next investigation after the history and physical examination. ECGs can be easily performed in the clinic or hospital, with the results being available almost immediately. The ECG is most useful when it is done on the patient while he or she is having symptoms, particularly in the diagnosis of acute coronary syndromes and cardiac arrhythmias. In such patients, doing the ECG promptly can mean the difference between life and death. For example, a patient with atypical chest pain and ECG changes suggestive of an acute myocardial infarction should be immediately hospitalised for further management.

For many doctors, their main difficulty with the ECG lies in its interpretation. Similar to other initially-difficult matters and problems that we encounter, we need to know what to look out for, in order to make them appear simpler and hence more readily solvable. In interpreting ECGs, the more we see, the more familiar we will become, and the more confident we will be in making a correct diagnosis.

The Singapore Medical Journal (SMJ) is pleased to announce the revival of the ECG series. Under the editorships of Professors Chee Yam Cheng and Tan Choon Kim, this series enjoyed a previous life, running from 1992 to 1996. The very first article in the series, published in the February 1992 issue of SMJ, was authored by none other than Dr Teo Wee Siong, then a young senior registrar in cardiology⁽¹⁾. Life has turned a full circle and as an Associate Editor of this journal, Dr Teo will now be responsible for reviving and sustaining this series⁽²⁾.

In line with the editorial board's aim of making the SMJ both readable and educational, articles in this ECG series will appear regularly and be part of the ongoing Category 3B CME programme. We would like to invite readers to submit interesting ECG cases for peer-review and possible publication. We hope that our readers will find the ECG articles relevant and useful for their daily clinical practice. 

REFERENCES

1. Teo WS. ECG case. Broad complex tachycardia- supraventricular with aberrancy or ventricular tachycardia? Singapore Med J 1992; 33:82,95.
2. Ching CK, Teo WS. ECG case. Asymptomatic patient with ST-segment elevation. Singapore Med J 2004; 45:538-41.

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