

A population-based study of mortality among patients with atrial fibrillation or flutter

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PURPOSE: To determine the mortality associated with atrial flutter and atrial fibrillation in the general population. **SUBJECTS AND METHODS:** Using the Marshfield Epidemiologic Study Area, a database that captures nearly all medical care and deaths among its 58,820 residents, we identified patients diagnosed with atrial flutter or atrial fibrillation from July 1, 1991, through June 30, 1995. Patients were followed prospectively and compared with a group of controls without these arrhythmias. **RESULTS:** A total of 4775 person-years of follow-up were completed in 577 patients and 577 controls. Compared with controls, mortality among patients with atrial fibrillation or flutter was nearly 7.8-fold higher at 6 months (95% confidence interval [CI]: 4.1 to 15) and 2.5-fold higher (95% CI: 2.0 to 3.1; $P < 0.0001$) at the last follow-up (mean [\pm SD] of 3.6 ± 2.3 years; range, 1 day to 7.3 years). At 6 months, mortality among patients with atrial flutter alone was somewhat greater than in controls a