

Role of Drug Therapy in Arrhythmia; What, When and Why not

Dr Rohan Gunawardena

Consultant Cardiac Electrophysiologist, National Hospital of Sri Lanka

Honorary Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Both tachy and brady arrhythmias are relatively common cardiac problems encountered by the Physicians in day to day practice. The drugs available to treat these conditions are limited. Most are old with hardly any new molecules being introduced by the pharmaceutical industry and these have been developed long before the mechanisms of arrhythmias were discovered. Adding to this, many drugs which we now find are useful in the management of arrhythmias have been phased out and some are not available in Sri Lanka. Due to this and the poor understanding of how these drugs work many of the available 'anti-arrhythmic drugs' are inappropriately used. Not all drugs work in all arrhythmias. Therefore, it is important to know which drugs work in which situation and when not to use them.