

Diagnostic and prognostic aspects of exercise testing in patients with coronary heart disease

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Abstract

In clinical practice, exercise testing remains the most accessible method for diagnostic and for evaluation the severity of coronary heart disease. Clinical usefulness of exercise testing has been limited, by poor sensitivity of standard ST-segment depression criteria for assessment of anatomic and functional coronary disease severity and for prediction of risk. Recent data show that symptomatic obstructive plaques that typically result in exercise-mediated ischemia may be less relevant to infarction and sudden death than less obstructive unstable plaques. These limitations lead us to re-examine the exercise testing from two points of view. First, is it possible to improve the diagnostic value of the exercise testing? Second, beyond from its ability to diagnose obstructive coronary artery lesions, can the exercise test be used as a prognostic tool for prevention of premature deaths or coronary events? In this article we try to point out some diagnostic and prognostic aspects of exercise testing which can be applied in current clinical practice.

Keywords: exercise testing, coronary heart disease, diagnostic, prognosis.