

CLINICAL "SNIPPETS"

Preparing for sudden cardiac arrest--the essential role of automated external defibrillators in athletic medicine: a critical review.

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Overview: Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is the leading cause of death in exercising young athletes. This article reviews emergency response planning for SCA and highlights recent data that provide a compelling case for the essential role of AEDs in the athletic setting.

Conclusions: Three factors-prompt recognition of SCA, the presence of a trained rescuer to initiate cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and access to early defibrillation through on-site automated external defibrillators (AEDs)-are critical to improving survival. Schools, clubs and organisations sponsoring athletic events should have an established emergency response plan for SCA.