

New Patch May Facilitate Arrhythmia Monitoring

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Currently, a patient with a suspected cardiac arrhythmia has to undertake a 24 hour ambulatory heart monitoring by use of a Holter monitor to detect abnormal electrical activity in the heart. The US based company iRhythm Technologies has designed a small, self-adhesive, non-invasive patch that might replace the procedure. The device monitors and records the electrical activity of the heart over a 14 day period.

Following the examination period the device posts back the data to iRhythm for analysis and dissemination. According to the company, the device is low profile and can be used in an ambulatory environment. It has no leads or external wires and is therefore potentially much less likely to interfere with patients activities during the period of investigation. It is also water proof therefore there is no need to take the device off during bathing and other activities.

The company claims it to be more effective in diagnosing abnormal cardiac rhythms than the Holter method as the results of a large validation trial recently published in the [American Journal of Medicine](#) have shown.

One of the most important aspects of detecting arrhythmias is to ensure that unnecessary treatment is avoided and that specific types of arrhythmia are detected. Effective monitoring can literally be the difference between life and death. If the device is as specific and effective as the manufacturers claim, this could be the new gold standard in arrhythmia detection. The patch is already FDA cleared in the US and undergoing further trials – the likelihood is that it will be available in Europe within the next 2-3 years.

By Adele Graham-King

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