

The prevalence of left and right bundle branch block morphology ventricular tachycardia amongst patients with arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy and sustained ventricular tachycardia

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1 **The Prevalence of Left and Right Bundle Branch Block Morphology**
 2 **Ventricular Tachycardia amongst Patients with Arrhythmogenic**
 3 **Cardiomyopathy and Sustained Ventricular Tachycardia.**
 4 **Insights from the European Survey on Arrhythmogenic**
 5 **Cardiomyopathy.**
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8 **Bernard Belhassen^{1,2}, Mikael Laredo³, Rob W. Roudijk⁴, Giovanni Peretto⁵, Guy**
 9 **Zahavi^{2,6}, Srijita Sen-Chowdhry⁷, Nicolas Badenco³, Anneline S.J.M. te Riele^{4,8},**
 10 **Simone Sala⁵, Guillaume Duthoit³, J. Peter van Tintelen^{4,9}, Gabriele Paglino⁵, Jean-**
 11 **Marc Sellal¹⁰, Alessio Gasperetti¹¹, Elena Arbelo¹², Antoine Andorin¹³, Sandro**
 12 **Ninni¹⁴, Anne Rollin¹⁵, Petr Peichl¹⁶, Xavier Waintraub³, Laurens P. Bosman^{4,8},**
 13 **Bertrand Pierre^{17a}, Eyal Nof^{2,18}, Chris Miles¹⁹, Jacob Tfelt-Hansen²⁰, Alexandros**
 14 **Protonotarios²¹, Carla Giustetto²², Frederic Sacher²³, Jean-Sylvain Hermida²⁴,**
 15 **Stepan Havranek²⁵, Leonardo Calo²⁶, Ruben Casado-Arroyo²⁷, Giulio Conte²⁸,**
 16 **Konstantinos P. Letsas²⁹, Esther Zorio³⁰, Francisco J. Bermúdez-Jiménez³¹, Elijah**
 17 **R. Behr¹⁹, Roy Beinart^{2,18}, Laurent Fauchier^{17ab}, Josef Kautzner¹⁶, Philippe**
 18 **Maury¹⁵, Dominique Lacroix¹⁴, Vincent Probst¹³, Josep Brugada³², Firat Duru¹¹,**
 19 **Christian de Chillou¹⁰, Paolo Della Bella⁵, Estelle Gandjbakhch³, Richard Hauer^{4,8},**
 20 **Anat Milman^{2,18}**

21
 22 **Short title: Bundle Branch Block Morphology during Sustained Ventricular**
 23 **Tachycardia in Patients with Arrhythmogenic Cardiomyopathy**

- 24
 25 1. Heart Institute, Hadassah University Hospital, Jerusalem
 26
 27 2. Sackler School of Medicine, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
 28
 29 3. Sorbonne Université, AP-HP, Groupe Hospitalier Pitié-Salpêtrière, Institut de
 30 Cardiologie, Paris, France
 31
 32 4. Netherlands Heart Institute, Utrecht, The Netherlands
 33
 34 5. IRCCS San Raffaele Scientific Institute, Milan, Italy
 35
 36 6. Department of Anesthesiology, Sheba Medical Center, Tel-Hashomer, Israel
 37
 38 7. Institute of Cardiovascular Science University College London, UK
 39
 40 8. Department of Cardiology, University Medical Center, Utrecht, The Netherlands
 41
 42 9. Department of Genetics, University Medical Center, Utrecht, The Netherlands
 43
 44 10. Département de Cardiologie, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Nancy, Vandœuvre lès-
 45 Nancy, France

- 1
2 11. Department of Cardiology, University Heart Center Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
- 3
4 12. Cardiovascular Institute, Hospital Clinic and IDIBAPS, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain
- 5
6 13. Service de Cardiologie, CHU de Nantes, Nantes, France
- 7
8 14. Université de Lille et Institut Cœur-Poumon, CHRU Lille, France
- 9
10 15. Cardiology, University Hospital Rangueil, Toulouse, France.
- 11
12 16. Department of Cardiology, Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine (IKEM),
13 Prague, Czech Republic
- 14
15 17. (a) Service de Cardiologie, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Trousseau et (b) Université
16 François Rabelais, Tours, France.
- 17
18 18. Leviev Heart Institute, Sheba Medical Center, Tel Hashomer, Israel
- 19
20 19. Cardiovascular Sciences and Cardiology Clinical Academic Group St. George's
21 University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK.
- 22
23 20. The Department of Cardiology, The Heart Centre, Copenhagen University Hospital,
24 Rigshospitalet, and Department of Forensic Medicine, Faculty of Medical Sciences,
25 University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 26
27 21. Nikos Protonotarios Medical Centre, Naxos, Greece, and UCL Institute of Cardiovascular
28 Science, London, UK
- 29
30 22. Division of Cardiology, University of Torino, Department of Medical Sciences, Città
31 della Salute e della Scienza Hospital, Torino, Italy
- 32
33 23. Hôpital Cardiologique du Haut-Lévêque & Université Bordeaux, LIRYC Institute,
34 Bordeaux, France
- 35
36 24. Centre Hospitalier Universitaire d'Amiens-Picardie, Amiens, France
- 37
38 25. Second Department of Medicine-Department of Cardiovascular Medicine,
39 First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University and General University Hospital in Prague,
40 Prague, Czech Republic
- 41
42 26. Division of Cardiology, Policlinico Casilino, Roma, Italy
- 43
44 27. Department of Cardiology, Erasme University Hospital, Université Libre de Bruxelles,
45 Brussels, Belgium
- 46
47 28. Electrophysiology Unit, Department of Cardiology, Fondazione Cardiocentro Ticino,
Lugano, Switzerland.
29. Second Department of Cardiology, Arrhythmia Unit, "Evangelismos" General Hospital of
Athens, Greece.

1 30. Cardiology Department at Hospital Universitario y Politecnico La Fe and Research
2 Group on Inherited Heart Diseases, Sudden Death and Mechanisms of Disease
3 (CaFaMuSMe) from the Instituto de Investigación Sanitaria (IIS) La Fe, Valencia, Spain, and
4 Center for Biomedical Network Research on Cardiovascular Diseases (CIBERCV), Madrid,
5 Spain

6
7 31. Cardiology Department, Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves, Granada, Spain.

8 32. Cardiovascular Institute, Hospital Clínic Pediatric Arrhythmia Unit, Hospital Sant Joan de
9 Déu University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain.

10
11
12 **ORCID identifier is 0000-0002-7468-2054**

13
14
15 **Address for correspondence:**

16
17 Bernard Belhassen, MD
18 Heart Institute
19 Hadassah University Hospital
20 Jerusalem
21 Israel.
22 Telephone: +972-52-4-266-856, Fax: +972-153-52-4266856
23 Email: bblhass@gmail.com; bblhass@hadassah.org.il

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25
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ABSTRACT

Aims. In arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy (ACM), sustained ventricular tachycardia (VT) typically displays a left bundle branch block (LBBB) morphology while a right bundle branch block (RBBB) morphology is rare. The present study assesses the VT morphology in ACM patients with sustained VT and their clinical and genetic characteristics.

Methods and results. Twenty-six centres from 11 European countries provided information on 954 ACM patients who had ≥ 1 episode of sustained VT spontaneously documented during patients' clinical course. ACM was defined according to the 2010 Task Force criteria, and VT morphology according to the QRS pattern in V1. Overall, 882 (92.5%) patients displayed LBBB-VT alone and 72 (7.5%) RBBB-VT [alone in 42 (4.4%) or in combination with LBBB-VT in 30 (3.1%)]. Male-sex prevalence was 79.3%, 88.1% and 56.7% in the LBBB-VT, RBBB-VT and LBBB+RBBB-VT groups, respectively ($P=0.007$). First RBBB-VT occurred 5 years after the first LBBB-VT (46.5 ± 14.4 vs. 41.1 ± 15.8 years, $P=0.011$). An ICD was more frequently implanted in the RBBB-VT (92.9%) and the LBBB+RBBB-VT groups (90%) than in the LBBB-VT group (68.1%) ($P<0.001$). Mutations in *PKP2* predominated in the LBBB-VT (65.2%) and the LBBB+RBBB-VT (41.7%) groups while *DSP* mutations predominated in the RBBB-VT group (45.5%). By multivariable analysis, female-sex was associated with LBBB+RBBB-VT ($P=0.011$) while *DSP* mutations were associated with RBBB-VT ($P<0.001$). After a median follow-up of 103 (51-185) months, death occurred in 106 (11.1%) patients with no intergroup difference ($P=0.176$).

Conclusion. RBBB-VT accounts for a significant proportion of sustained VTs in ACM. Sex and type of pathogenic mutations were associated with VT type, female sex with LBBB+RBBB-VT and *DSP* mutation with RBBB-VT.

1 **Keywords:** Arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy; Arrhythmogenic right ventricular
2 cardiomyopathy/dysplasia; Arrhythmogenic left ventricular cardiomyopathy; Ventricular
3 tachycardia; Genetics

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8 **What's New?**

- 9 • Of 954 patients with spontaneous sustained monomorphic ventricular tachycardia
10 (VT) recorded during the course of arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy (ACM), 882
11 (92.5%) displayed LBBB-VT alone and 72 (7.5%) RBBB-VT [alone in 42 (4.4%) or
12 in combination with LBBB-VT in 30 (3.1%)]
- 13 • Male prevalence was significantly lower in the LBBB+RBBB-VT group than in the
14 LBBB-VT or RBBB-VT groups.
- 15 • First RBBB-VT occurs \approx 5 years after the first LBBB-VT.
- 16 • Female sex is associated with LBBB+RBBB-VT.
- 17 • DSP mutation is associated with RBBB-VT.
- 18 • DSP mutation is associated with RBBB-VT.

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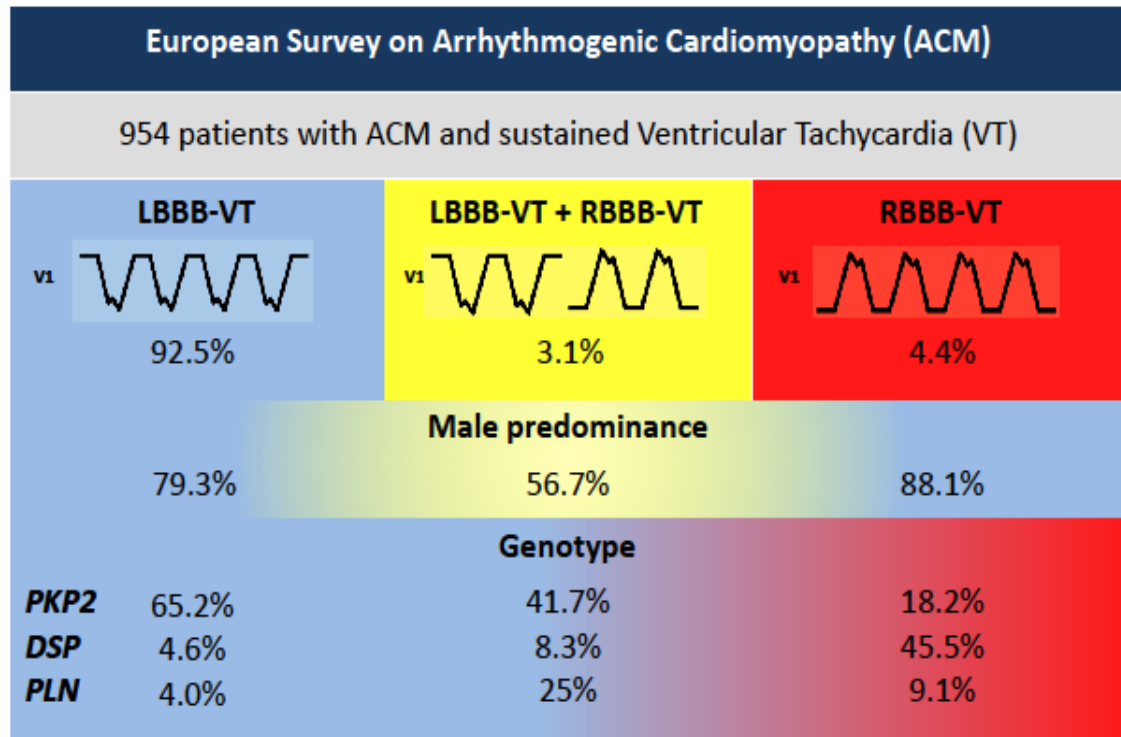
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Representative figure. Prevalence of LBBB-VT, RBBB-VT and LBBB-VT+RBBB-VT in 954 patients with arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy and sustained monomorphic ventricular tachycardia, with corresponding male-sex proportion and most common genetic alterations.

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1 **Introduction**

2 Four decades ago, Marcus, Fontaine and coworkers described a pathologic condition in which
3 sustained ventricular tachycardia (VT) of left bundle branch block (LBBB) morphology was
4 associated with fibro-fatty replacement of the right ventricular (RV) musculature and named
5 it “arrhythmogenic RV dysplasia” (ARVD).¹ The same disease was later considered to be a
6 cardiomyopathy and also referred to as “arrhythmogenic RV cardiomyopathy” (ARVC).
7 Frequent left ventricular (LV) involvement was demonstrated in ARVC/D that led to use the
8 broader term of arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy (ACM).² About one decade ago, a new
9 classification of ACM into 3 types was proposed³: (a) the *classic form*, with isolated RV
10 disease or LV involvement in association with predominant RV impairment (ARVC/D); (b)
11 the *left dominant form*, with early and prominent LV involvement and relatively mild right-
12 sided disease⁴ (left-dominant ACM), which have to be distinguished from LV diverticulum;
13 and (c) the *biventricular form*, in which both ventricles are affected to a similar extent
14 throughout the disease course.

15 Despite the frequent LV involvement in all these ACM variants, the great majority of
16 sustained monomorphic VT spontaneously documented in patients with ACM exhibit an
17 LBBB morphology,^{1,5,6} and originate from the RV.⁷ Clinical right bundle branch block
18 (RBBB)-VT is scarcely reported.⁸

19 The present study has two main objectives: 1) to assess the prevalence of spontaneous
20 sustained VT with LBBB, RBBB or both morphologic types in a large cohort of ACM
21 patients with sustained VT; 2) to compare their clinical and genetic characteristics.

22

23 **Methods**

1 The Sheba Medical Center Institutional Review Board committee approved the study. All
2 centers complied by local IRB registry protocols. The data that support the findings of this
3 study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

4 **Data source and center selection**

5 A Medline search using the terms “arrhythmogenic right or left ventricular dysplasia or
6 cardiomyopathy and ventricular tachycardia” was performed to select European centers with
7 experience in the diagnosis and management of ACM patients with VT.

8 **Study inclusion and exclusion criteria**

9 Patients were eligible if they fulfilled both conditions: a) they were diagnosed with definite,
10 probable or borderline ACM according to the revised 2010 Task Force criteria (TFC)⁹ for
11 ARVC/D diagnosis; b) they exhibited at least one *spontaneous* episode of sustained (≥ 30 sec)
12 VT documented on 12-lead ECG during their disease’s course. VT was classified as either an
13 LBBB morphology (QS, rS or qrS in V1) or RBBB morphology (mono-, bi or triphasic R
14 waves in V1, Rs, or qR in V1).

15 Study exclusion criteria included: a) patients with ventricular flutter (rate ≥ 250 /min)
16 or non-sustained VT (< 30 sec); b) patients with only electrophysiologically-induced VT; c)
17 patients in whom VT could be related to a different cardiac pathology.

18 **Centre recruitment**

19 Twenty-six (67%) of the 39 initially contacted centers, belonging to 11 European countries,
20 agreed to participate in the survey. Twenty-three (88.5%) centers provided data from their
21 single centre, whereas the remaining 3 (11.5%) provided data from multiple institutions in
22 their countries (**Table 1**).

23 **Data acquisition**

24 Participating centers were requested to provide anonymised patient information regarding: 1)
25 patient sex; 2) age at first documented VT; 3) QRS morphology (LBBB or RBBB) of first

1 documented VT; 4) morphology (LBBB or RBBB) of any further documented sustained VT
2 during clinical course; 5) level of certitude of the disease diagnosis according to the 2010
3 TFC⁹; 6) patient management [implantation of an automatic cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD)
4 or VT ablation] and outcome (death); 7) results of molecular-genetic testing when available.

5 In patients who underwent genetic testing, all genetic assays sequenced at least five
6 desmosomal genes [plakophilin-2 (*PKP2*), desmoplakin (*DSP*), desmoglein-2 (*DSG2*),
7 desmocollin-2 (*DSC2*) and plakoglobin (*JUP*)]. Specialists of cardiac genetics at each center
8 reviewed genetic variants associated with ACM and their pathogenicity classified using the
9 ACMG criteria: pathogenic, likely pathogenic, variants of unknown significance (VUS) or
10 benign. The benign variants were assimilated to negative genetic results. Only pathogenic and
11 likely pathogenic variants were taken into account in regression analyses.

12 A local committee (BB, AM) reviewed the data provided by each participating center. ECG
13 tracings were reviewed by referring cardiologists as well as three of the senior study co-
14 authors (BB, AM, ML).

15 Patients were categorised into three groups according to the morphology of the spontaneous
16 sustained VT documented during clinical course: LBBB-VT only, RBBB-VT only or both
17 LBBB+RBBB-VT.

18 The cases of four patients included in this survey were previously reported.⁸

19 **Statistical analysis**

20 The data are presented as mean (SD), median [interquartile range (IQR)] or count (percent).

21 Non-parametric statistical tests were systematically used for comparisons because of
22 imbalanced group sizes. Fisher's exact test, Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis test were
23 used as appropriate. Post hoc tests were done with Fisher's exact test and a Bonferroni
24 correction of the P-values. Multinomial logistic regression was used for VT morphology
25 prediction. Predictors with $p < 0.05$ in univariable models were included in a multivariable

1 model. Missing data about genetic testing and the results of specific gene mutations was
2 considered as “No”. Otherwise, missing data was reported as “Unknown” and was not
3 included in univariable statistical comparisons.

4 All statistical analyses were done with *R* version 3.6.1 (R Foundation for Statistical
5 Computing, Vienna, Austria).

6

7 **Results**

8 **Study population**

9 The study population included 954 patients (78.9% males) with ACM and at least 1 episode
10 of spontaneous sustained monomorphic VT documented during clinical course (**Table 2**).

11 The diagnosis of ACM, based on the revised 2010 TFC, was definite, borderline or possible
12 in 89.9%, 6.3% and 3.8% of patients, respectively.

13 In the entire cohort, age at first documented sustained VT of any morphology ranged from 7
14 to 87 (mean 41.5 ± 15.8) years (**Figure 1A**). The first documented VT predominated in the 46-
15 55 years age group for females and the 36-45 years age group for males; however, the mean
16 ages at first VT were not significantly different between males and females

17 (41.3 ± 15.9 years vs. 42.1 ± 15.2 years, respectively, $P=0.488$) (**Supplemental Figure 1**). The
18 male-to-female ratio was 3.8 for the whole cohort, with the lowest (2) and highest (11) ratios
19 observed in the pediatric and elderly age groups, respectively (**Figure 1B**).

20 Ablation of VT was performed in 550 (57.7%) patients. Median duration of follow-up after
21 first VT was 103[51-185] months. Death occurred in 106 (11.1%) patients at a median time
22 of 143[75-228] months after first VT.

23 **Prevalence of LBBB and RBBB-VT**

24 During the clinical course of the 954 study patients, 882 (92.5 %) exhibited LBBB-VT, 42
25 (4.4%) RBBB-VT and 30 (3.1%) both LBBB and RBBB-VT (**Figures 2A+2B and 3A+3B**).

1 The total prevalence of RBBB-VT morphology amongst the survey patients was 7.5%
2 (Tables 1 and 2).

3 **Clinical characteristics**

4 The demographic and clinical characteristics of the study patients according to VT group are
5 compared in Table 2.

6 A definitive diagnosis of ACM was more common amongst patients with LBBB-VT than in
7 those with RBBB-VT (91.4% vs. 66.7%, respectively, $P < 0.001$).

8 Male-sex predominance was significantly lower in the LBBB+RBBB-VT group (56.7%) than
9 in the RBBB-VT group (88.1%) or the LBBB-VT group (79.3%) ($P = 0.007$).

10 Patients' age at time of first documented VT did not significantly differ among the three VT
11 groups ($P = 0.126$).

12 In the LBBB+RBBB VT group, 12 patients exhibited LBBB-VT first while 18 patients
13 exhibited RBBB-VT first. The age at first RBBB-VT was significantly greater than the age at
14 first LBBB-VT in that patient group (47.6 ± 12.2 vs. 35.1 ± 11.5 years, $P < 0.01$). When
15 comparing the age of the 894 patients who displayed first or only LBBB-VT with that of the
16 60 patients who displayed first or only RBBB-VT, the difference was statistically significant
17 (41.1 ± 15.8 vs. 46.5 ± 14.4 years, respectively, $P = 0.011$).

18 Higher rates of ICD implantation were observed in the LBBB+RBBB-VT and the RBBB-VT
19 groups than in the LBBB-VT group ($P < 0.001$). Higher rates of VT ablation were also noted
20 in the LBBB+RBBB-VT group as compared to the other two groups ($P = 0.016$). Death rates
21 did not differ significantly amongst the three VT groups ($P = 0.176$).

22 The estimated survival time after the first VT was similar in all three VT group patients
23 ($P = 0.43$, log-rank test) (Supplemental Figure 2).

24 **Genetic results**

1 Out of the 954 survey patients, 538 (56.4%) underwent genetic testing, comprising a higher
2 proportion of patients with LBBB+RBBB-VT and RBBB-VT ($P=0.018$) (**Table 3**). Gene
3 variants were discovered in 359 (66.7%) patients including single pathogenic/likely
4 pathogenic mutations in desmosomal and *PLN* genes in 293 and 18 patients, respectively.
5 *PKP2* mutations predominated in the LBBB-VT and the LBBB+RBBB-VT groups (65.2%
6 and 41.7%, respectively, $P<0.001$) while *DSP* mutations predominated in the RBBB-VT
7 group (45.5%, $P<0.001$). *PLN* mutations were more commonly observed in the
8 LBBB+RBBB-VT group (25%) than in the other VT groups ($P=0.047$).

9 **Variables associated with VT-morphology groups**

10 Univariable and multivariable multinomial logistic regression models for VT morphology
11 prediction are described in **Table 4**. *DSP* mutations were significantly associated with
12 RBBB-VT alone in univariable [odds-ratio (OR) 13, 95% confidence interval (CI) 5.32-
13 31.76, $p<0.001$] and multivariable (OR 11.42, 95% CI 4.4-29.65, $p<0.001$] analyses but were
14 not predictive of LBBB+RBBB-VT. In addition, RBBB-VT was significantly less likely
15 among carriers of *PKP2* mutations, both in univariable (OR 0.19, 95% CI 0.06-0.54,
16 $p=0.002$) and multivariable (OR 0.28, 95% CI 0.09-0.84, $p=0.023$) analyses. Comparable
17 results were obtained when considering RBBB-VT as patients with RBBB-VT with or
18 without LBBB-VT (**Supplemental Table 1**). Female-sex and *PLN* mutations were
19 significantly associated with LBBB+RBBB-VT in univariable analyses (OR 3.42, 95% CI
20 1.44-8.10, $p=0.005$ and OR 5.74, 95% CI 1.51-21.86, $p=0.010$, respectively) but only female-
21 sex was independently associated with LBBB+RBBB-VT in multivariable analyses (OR 3.2,
22 95% CI 1.31-7.78, $p=0.011$).

23 **Survey results according to countries**

24 These results are reported in **Supplemental Tables 2A and 2B**. The prevalence of RBBB-
25 VT (alone or in combination with LBBB-VT) according to country is summarised in **Table 1**.

1 **Discussion**

2 The present study includes the largest cohort of patients with ACM and sustained VT ever
3 reported. Although sustained LBBB-VT represented by far the most frequent type of VT
4 encountered, RBBB-VT was documented in a significant proportion of ACM patients (7.5%)
5 either alone or in addition to an LBBB-VT. The study also revealed that sex and genotype
6 were significant predictors of the VT types and that the first documented RBBB-VT occurred
7 approximately 5 years after the first documented LBBB-VT.

8 **Morphology of sustained VT in ACM patients**

9 The first series of patients with ARVD published before the 1994 TFC¹⁰ almost exclusively
10 comprised LBBB-VT.¹ In the first multicenter series of ARVD as defined by the original
11 1994 criteria,¹⁰ Marcus *et al.*⁵ reported that 32 (84%) of their 38 patients with sustained VT
12 had an LBBB morphology. In the Dutch registry of 119 patients with sustained VT who had
13 ACM defined according to the 2010 TFC⁹, Cox *et al.*⁶ reported that 117 (98.3%) patients
14 displayed an LBBB morphology. Finally, Kimura *et al.*¹¹ reported that 88% of the 214
15 spontaneous VT documented in 90 ACM patients had an LBBB morphology. The present
16 survey confirms the high prevalence of LBBB-VT (95.6%) [92.5% alone and 3.1% in
17 association with RBBB-VT].

18 Opposed to the well-known frequent ventricular ectopic activity of RBBB morphology in
19 ACM patients, especially those with left-dominant ACM,⁴ sustained VT of RBBB
20 morphology was previously reported only as case reports⁸ (**Supplemental Table 3**). In 3 of
21 these 15 cases, LBBB-VT was also spontaneously documented during patients' clinical
22 course.⁸ In our study we noticed that 72 (7.5%) of our 954 ACM patients displayed RBBB-
23 VT alone or in combination with LBBB-VT.

24 **VT morphology-genetic correlations**

1 In the setting of ACM, LBBB-VT invariably originates in the RV^{7,12} while, until recently,¹³
2 limited data from invasive electro-anatomical mapping showed that most RBBB-VT originate
3 in the LV.¹² Therefore, we assumed that in the majority of ACM patients, an LBBB-VT and
4 an RBBB-VT suggested an RV and LV origin, respectively.

5 Mutations in desmosomal genes (*PKP2*, *DSP*, *DSG2*, *DSC2* and *JUP*) have previously been
6 identified in 33% to 66% of probands with right-dominant, left-dominant, and biventricular
7 forms of ACM¹⁵. *PKP2* mutations account for the majority of cases with the classical
8 ARVC/D phenotype¹⁴, whereas *DSP* mutations are associated with non-classic (left-dominant
9 and biventricular) subtypes.^{4,14}

10 The genetic profile of the present VT registry was similar. *PKP2* mutations predominated in
11 the LBBB-VT group (65.2%, $p < 0.001$). Carriers of *PKP2* mutations were also significantly
12 less likely to have any RBBB-VT on univariable binomial analysis or RBBB-VT only on
13 multivariable multinomial analysis. In contrast, *DSP* mutations predominated in the RBBB-
14 VT group (45.5%) and carriers of *DSP* mutations were significantly more likely to have
15 RBBB-VT alone.

16 Interestingly, the LBBB+RBBB-VT group had the highest proportion of mutations in *PLN*
17 (25%, $p = 0.047$), known to be associated with biventricular ACM.¹⁵ *PLN* mutations were
18 associated with increased odds of LBBB-VT+RBBB-VT (OR 5.74, 95% 1.51-21.86, $p = 0.01$)
19 in univariable binomial analysis but significance was lost on multivariable analysis (**Table 4**)

20 **Specific country-related observations**

21 Our survey allowed interesting observations about specific ECG and genetic characteristics in
22 some countries. The Netherlands registry provided 17 of the 18 patients with *PLN* mutations
23 (94%, $p = 0.002$), which were first described in Dutch patients. Also, Greek centers provided
24 10 of the 11 patients (91%) who harbored *JUP* mutations, first described in Greek patients.
25 More importantly, Spain, Italy and the Czech Republic displayed the highest proportion of

1 patients with RBBB-VT only (17%, 9.8% and 8.2%, respectively) consistent with the fact
2 these 3 countries exhibited the highest proportion of *DSP* mutations, well-known to be
3 associated with left-dominant ACM (20%, 17.6% and 28.6%, respectively).

4 **Sex distribution in ACM**

5 Because ACM has as an autosomal pattern of inheritance, one would expect a similar
6 prevalence in both sexes. Nevertheless, a male predominance is typically demonstrated in
7 cohorts of ARVD/C index cases with ventricular tachyarrhythmia, whereas females
8 predominate among asymptomatic ARVD/C patients.^{1,6} Reports on the sex distribution in
9 non-classic disease cohorts vary from an equal sex ratio in the left-dominant subtype^{3,4}, to a
10 female predominance in biventricular disease³ and in a recent study that did not distinguish
11 between left-dominant ACM and biventricular disease.¹⁶ In contrast, males accounted for
12 82% of in a series of 202 sudden cardiac death victims with a post-mortem diagnosis of
13 ACM, of whom 87% had either isolated LV or biventricular involvement.¹⁷
14 In our study, the male predominance observed in the LBBB-VT group (79.3%) is consistent
15 with prior reports on classic right-dominant disease. The male predominance was
16 significantly less, however, in the LBBB+RBBB-VT group (56.7%, $p=0.007$). Furthermore,
17 female sex was an independent predictor of LBBB+RBBB-VT in the multivariable
18 multinomial model (OR 3.2, 95% CI 1.31-7.78, $p=0.011$) (**Table 4**). The findings suggest
19 that, among carriers of genetic mutations predisposing to non-classic disease (e.g., *DSP* and
20 *PLN* mutations), women may have greater odds of presenting with the biventricular subtype,
21 and men with the left-dominant subtype. One possible explanation is that sudden cardiac
22 death may be the first manifestation of the disease in an important proportion of men with
23 biventricular ACM, leading to their over-representation in post-mortem series and under-
24 representation in clinical cohorts^{16,17} In contrast, females with a similar phenotype have been
25 found to exhibit more heart failure-related death¹¹ and thus could be more prone to display

1 both LBBB and RBBB-VT during their clinical course. However, we do not have data on
2 ventricular dysfunction in this group that could support this speculation. Finally, to our best
3 knowledge, our survey demonstrates for the first time similar ages at first documented VT in
4 ACM in both sexes (41.3 ± 15.9 years in males vs. 42.1 ± 15.3 years in females). This result
5 might suggest sex hormones have no significant role in time of onset of VT episodes in
6 ACM.

7 **Age at the time of first documented VT**

8 In the first series including 23 ARVD patients, the first LBBB-VT occurred at a mean age of
9 32 years old.¹ In the Dutch ACM registry, the mean age at VT onset of 147 patients,
10 including 122 who presented with almost exclusive sustained LBBB-VT was 37 years.⁶ Our
11 survey patients exhibited a mean age of 41.5 ± 15.8 years at first documented VT of any
12 morphology while first documented RBBB-VT occurred approximately 5 years after the
13 first documented LBBB-VT. These results could be explained in two ways: (1)
14 LV arrhythmogenic remodeling occurs later in the course of the disease in classical ARVC/D
15 and in patients with presumed predominant LV involvement;² (2) As compared to the RV, the
16 thicker LV wall may be less vulnerable to fatty/fibrotic transformation and a longer evolution
17 of the disease may be required for RBBB-VT to occur. Finally, we observed a marked time-
18 dependent rise in VT incidence from 2.2% (age group <16 years) to 16.6% (age group 16-25
19 years) that supports the recommendation to screen children belonging to ACM families when
20 they approach adolescence.

21 **Diagnostic criteria**

22 As compared to the original 1994 TFC, the 2010 TFC revision has improved the diagnostic
23 accuracy and consequently the management of ARVC/D.^{9,10} Nonetheless, TFC mainly
24 focuses on RV abnormalities and remain poorly efficient at identifying patients with left-
25 dominant or biventricular ACM types before an advanced disease stage.¹⁸ However, only the

1 revised 2010 TFC were available when we designed the present study. Thus, we chose to
2 include not only those patients fulfilling definite diagnostic criteria but also those with
3 borderline or possible ARVC diagnosis. Our decision may be criticised because less
4 stringent criteria may facilitate unintentional inclusion of other disease entities and
5 phenocopies, such as dilated cardiomyopathy or cardiac sarcoidosis.^{19,20} These limitations
6 prompted us to perform an additional analysis which included only those patients with
7 definite ARVC diagnosis (n=858). The results of this new analysis were generally in line
8 with those of the initial analysis (**Supplemental Tables 4-7**). However, we noted that first
9 VT in the RBBB-VT group occurred much later (8.8 years) than in the LBBB-VT group
10 (**Supplemental Table 5**). In addition, the overall number of patients with RBBB-VT (alone
11 or in combination with LBBB-VT) markedly decreased by 27.8% from 72 to 52 while the
12 prevalence of RBBB-VT dropped from 7.5% to 6.1%. Also, the mutations identified in 9 of
13 the 20 patients of the LBBB+RBBB-VT and RBBB-VT groups who had borderline/ possible
14 ARVC diagnosis (**Supplemental Table 8**), were *DSP* (n=7), *PLN* (n=1) and *FLNC* (Filamin
15 C) (n=1), all known to be associated with non-classic (left-dominant and biventricular)
16 subtypes of ACM^{4,15}, but not with dilated cardiomyopathy. Thus, excluding patients with
17 borderline/possible ARVC diagnoses would result in exclusion of a significant proportion of
18 patients with left/biventricular ACM, and underestimation of RBBB-VT prevalence. Such
19 results support the inclusion of borderline or possible cases of ARVC in our survey.

20 **Study limitations**

21 First, this is a retrospective study dealing with a disease that has a low prevalence in most
22 countries. Therefore, the recruitment of patients spanned over long periods, especially at the
23 most experienced centers and it is likely that the first survey patients exhibited more
24 advanced ACM forms, underwent less modern diagnostic imaging techniques or modes of
25 treatment as well as less genetic testing. Conversely, the long duration of follow-up for some

1 of them as well as the fact that about a third of patients did not receive an ICD could have
2 enabled the recording of spontaneous VT episodes of multiple morphologies.

3 Second, we assumed that an LBBB-VT and an RBBB-VT indicated an RV and LV origin,
4 respectively. However, it is conceivable that a VT originating in a dilated RV spreading over
5 the LV might display an RBBB pattern and thus be successfully ablated from the RV rather
6 than from the LV. Marchlinski et al.¹³ recently reported 19 ARVC patients who had 26
7 RBBB-VT induced during ablation procedures. They found that 11 (58%) of these 19 patients
8 had 16 RBBB-VTs that originated in the RV. A typical QRS morphology during VT (early
9 precordial transition in V2-V3 with a left QRS axis) was found to suggest a VT origin in the
10 RV. Applying the ECG criteria of presumed RV origin suggested by Marchlinski et al.¹³ in
11 our 72 patients with RBBB-VT, showed that a RV origin of VT could be suspected in only a
12 small subset (10 of 72, 13.8%) of our patients. Importantly, this study only included patients
13 with a definite TFC diagnosis, thus potentially excluding patients with biventricular or LV
14 dominant ACM. Additionally, this study included an undisclosed proportion of induced
15 rather than clinical VT. These two points complicate the generalization of the study's finding
16 in a less selected ACM population. Nonetheless, the Marchlinski's study points out that the
17 exact site of origin of VT should be determined only after extensive endocardial and
18 epicardial biventricular mapping.

19 Third, the prevalence of RBBB-VT in ACM could be even higher than the one found in our
20 survey. The early policy adopted in some centers to implant an ICD after a first documented
21 sustained VT (usually an LBBB-VT) could hamper the 12-lead ECG recording of a
22 spontaneously occurring RBBB-VT after ICD implantation.

23 Fourth, decisions on genetic analysis, approaches to the evaluation of pathogenicity, and
24 adjudication and reporting of mutations were left to the discretion of participating centers.
25 Both the absence of a reference protocol and of central standardization may have led to

1 skewing of genetic data. However, the paucity of data on the genetic profile of ACM cases
2 with sustained RBBB-VT renders our Registry the largest source to date.

3 Finally, the sample of genotyped RBBB-VT cases remains limited, resulting in under-
4 powering of many statistical analyses. In particular, the logistic regression models were
5 powered at <70% and <40% for all predictors on univariable and multivariable analysis,
6 respectively. The power achieved for the genetic predictors varied from 60% for *PKP2* to
7 <20% for other genes in the univariable model, falling to consistently <30% in the
8 multivariable model (**Supplementary Table 9**). Under-powering likely accounts for the
9 failure of certain predictors (e.g., *PLN*) to retain their significance on proceeding from
10 univariable to multivariable analysis.

11 **Conclusions**

12 Spontaneous sustained RBBB-VT was documented in a significant proportion (7.5%) during
13 the clinical course of ACM patients, indicating that LBBB-VT can no longer be considered as
14 the exclusive ventricular arrhythmia occurring in ACM. We propose the establishment of a
15 more open ECG criterion accepting a RBBB pattern of VT as a relatively common finding in
16 typical cases of ARVC and call for further studies to investigate the link between VT types
17 and various ACM anatomic forms.

18

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23

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Figures legends

Figure 1.

(A) Age distribution in the entire population cohort.

(B) Male-to-female ratio of the entire population cohort in various age groups.

Figure 2. Familial ACM associated with *PKP2* mutation.

(A) First spontaneous RBBB-VT recorded in a 68-year-old man. Reproduced from Rabey et al. (*Circulation*. 2018;138:642-5) with permission of the Publisher.

(B) First spontaneous LBBB-VT recorded at hospital admission 7 years before, in his older brother, at age 78 years-old. Reproduced from Belhassen et al. (*Isr Med Assoc J*. 2014;16:385-7) with permission of the Publisher.

Figure 3. Documentation of LBBB- and RBBB-VT in a non-mutation carrier ACM patient. Reproduced from Belhassen et al. (*Eur Heart J Case Rep*. 2020;4:1-7) with permission of the Publisher.

(A) First exercise-induced LBBB-VT (220/min) documented when the patient was 56-year-old.

(B) First spontaneous RBBB-VT (220/min) recorded 8 years later.

Supplemental Figures legends

Supplemental Figure 1.

Age distribution by sex of the population cohort.

Supplemental Figure 2.

Estimated survival time after the first VT in the three VT groups.