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Title: Treatment of monitored out-of-hospital ventricular fibrillation and pulseless ventricular tachycardia utilising the precordial thump

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1 Treatment of monitored out-of-hospital ventricular
2 fibrillation and pulseless ventricular tachycardia utilising
3 the precordial thump

4
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23

24 **Abstract**

25

26 **Background**

27 Few studies have described the value of the precordial thump (PT) as first-line treatment of
28 monitored out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) from ventricular fibrillation and pulseless
29 ventricular tachycardia (VF/VT).

30

31 **Methods**

32 Patient data was extracted from the Victorian Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry (VACAR) for
33 all OHCA witnessed by paramedics between 2003 and 2011. Adult patients who suffered a
34 monitored VF/VT of presumed cardiac aetiology were included. Cases were excluded if the
35 arrest occurred after arrival at hospital, or a 'do not resuscitate' directive was documented.
36 Patients were assigned into two groups according to the use of the PT or defibrillation as first-
37 line treatment. The study outcomes were: impact of first shock/thump on return of spontaneous
38 circulation (ROSC), overall ROSC, and survival to hospital discharge.

39

40 **Results**

41 A total of 434 cases met the eligibility criteria, of which first-line treatment involved a PT in 103
42 (23.7%) and immediate defibrillation in 325 (74.8%) cases. Patient characteristics did not differ
43 significantly between groups. Seventeen patients (16.5%) observed a PT-induced rhythm
44 change, including five cases of ROSC and 10 rhythm deteriorations. Immediate defibrillation
45 resulted in significantly higher levels of immediate ROSC (57.8% vs. 4.9%, $p < 0.0001$), without
46 excess rhythm deteriorations (12.3% vs. 9.7%, $p=0.48$). Of the five successful PT attempts, three
47 required defibrillation following re-arrest. Overall ROSC and survival to hospital discharge did
48 not differ significantly between groups.

49

50 **Conclusion**

51 The PT used as first-line treatment of monitored VF/VT rarely results in ROSC, and is more
52 often associated with rhythm deterioration.

53

54 **Keywords**

55 Cardiac arrest

56 Precordial thump

57 Cardiopulmonary resuscitation

58 Emergency medical services

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60 **Introduction**

61

62 Since being first described by Schott in 1920 as a single sharp blow to a patient's chest, the
63 efficacy of the precordial thump (PT) has been the subject of ongoing debate.¹ Historically,
64 international resuscitation guidelines supported its initial application for the treatment of
65 monitored ventricular fibrillation or pulseless ventricular tachycardia (VF/VT) where
66 defibrillation was likely to be delayed.² However, the absence of empirical data demonstrating
67 its efficacy in patients with ventricular fibrillation led to its application being limited to
68 monitored episodes of VT.^{3,4}

69

70 Theoretically, the PT remains clinically desirable. Its application can be completed in seconds
71 after the onset of cardiac arrest and therefore reduces the time to termination of the lethal
72 arrhythmia. This is of particular benefit in emergency medical service (EMS)-witnessed OHCA,
73 where immediate defibrillation can be complicated by patient extrication or a moving
74 ambulance.

75

76 Over the last three decades, three non-randomised prospective studies⁵⁻⁷ and a collection of
77 case series reports⁸⁻¹⁴ have demonstrated varying levels of effectiveness in terminating
78 ventricular arrhythmias using a PT. Many of these reports were poorly generalisable to real-life
79 cardiac arrest situations, and others were limited by scientific merit. Only two reports
80 investigating the PT effects on out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) could be identified, of
81 which one recruited only 11 patients witnessed to arrest by EMS personnel,⁶ and the other did
82 not specify the proportion of witnessed events in the population.⁸ Thus, both the effectiveness
83 and safety profile of PT application during OHCA remain unclear.

84

85 In this study, the impact of PT application in patients with monitored out-of-hospital VF/VT is
86 examined, utilising prospectively collected data from a population-based registry of OHCA
87 patients from Melbourne, Australia.

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94 **Materials and methods**

95

96 **Study Design**

97 A retrospective analysis of cases from the Victorian Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry (VACAR)
98 was undertaken, for all EMS-witnessed cardiac arrest cases where resuscitation was attempted
99 between 2003 and 2011. Adult patients aged greater than 15 years who suffered a monitored
100 VF/VT cardiac arrest of cardiac aetiology were included. Eligible patient care records were
101 retrieved and underwent individual screening by a member of the research team. Cases were
102 excluded on review if the arrest occurred after arrival at hospital, or the patient had a 'do not
103 resuscitate' directive. First-line treatment with PT or defibrillation was identified in all cases.

104

105 **Setting & Emergency Medical Service**

106 This study was undertaken in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia's second most populous city with
107 over four million people. The state of Victoria operates a single statewide EMS, with 1,500
108 professional ambulance paramedics operating in the city of Melbourne. Advanced life support
109 paramedics and intensive care paramedics are dispatched in a two-tier system to emergency
110 medical incidents in the community. Advanced life support paramedics are authorised to
111 undertake laryngeal mask airway insertion and administer intravenous adrenaline
112 (epinephrine) during cardiac arrest. In addition, intensive care paramedics are authorised to
113 undertake endotracheal intubation including rapid sequence intubation, and can administer a
114 wider range of cardiotropic medications.

115

116 Cardiac arrest treatment guidelines follow the recommendations of the Australian Resuscitation
117 Council (www.resus.org.au), which are similar to its international counterparts.¹⁵ A single PT
118 was advised if the patient suffered a monitored episode of VF/VT and defibrillation was not
119 immediately possible.^{16,17} Clinical practice guidelines recommend that paramedics deliver a PT

120 using a single sharp blow to the patient's mid-sternum using the medial aspect of a clenched fist
121 from a height of 20 to 30 centimetres. During the study period, all ambulances were equipped
122 with electrical defibrillators and heart monitors as a single device, and all paramedics were
123 capable of performing rhythm interpretation, defibrillation or PT administration as required.

124

125 **Data sources**

126 The Victorian Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry (VACAR) records clinical and operational data
127 from all OHCA cases where an ambulance is in attendance. Population-based case capture is
128 assured through a statewide framework for case ascertainment, involving both electronic and
129 paper patient care records.

130

131 Electronically captured clinical data are synchronised daily with an organisational clinical
132 database. The VACAR identifies potential OHCA cases using a highly sensitive database search
133 strategy, and screens individual cases for eligibility. Review of computer-aided dispatch records
134 supplements the identification of potential cases. In the absence of electronically completed
135 records, paramedic team managers are required to identify and submit eligible paper records to
136 the VACAR for screening. This process is further supplemented with the screening of all paper
137 records received by the finance and billing department.

138

139 Eligible OHCA cases are reviewed and entered into the registry according to the Utstein
140 requirements.¹⁸ Arrests are presumed to be of cardiac aetiology unless the aetiology is
141 identified on the patient care record (e.g. trauma, submersion, drug overdose, exsanguination
142 etc.). Hospital follow-up data are obtained from hospital medical records in approximately 99%
143 of all transported cases. Hospital outcome data are validated through cross checking of records
144 from the Victorian Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages.

145

146 The systematic recording of PT administration is not considered a core reporting element, and
147 thus is not easily identifiable within the VACAR database. Patient care records of eligible EMS-

148 witnessed cases identified in the VACAR underwent manual screening and data extraction using
149 a standardised case report form. An random audit of cases was undertaken by the lead
150 investigators (ZN and EA), with all disagreements being resolved through consensus.

151

152 **Statistical analyses**

153 Cases were assigned into two groups on the basis of first-line treatment for cardioversion. Cases
154 in the “Shock First” group received immediate defibrillation with or without cardiopulmonary
155 resuscitation efforts. Cases assigned into the “Thump First” group received an immediate PT
156 and ongoing resuscitation efforts as appropriate. Cases whose rhythms deteriorated into non-
157 shockable rhythms before the administration of either intervention were excluded from group
158 comparisons. We defined cardioversion or “successful ROSC” as the immediate restoration of a
159 palpable carotid pulse within seconds of a shock/thump being administered. The term “rhythm
160 deterioration” was used to describe a potentially harmful change in the patient’s cardiac rhythm
161 following first shock/thump (e.g. a change from VT into VF or other non-shockable rhythm).

162

163 Baseline characteristics, survival outcomes, and the frequency of observed rhythm changes
164 following first intervention were presented according to treatment groups. Categorical data
165 were reported as frequencies and proportions, and continuous data were reported using
166 medians and interquartile range. Comparison of baseline characteristics, survival outcomes, and
167 impact of first intervention across groups were undertaken using χ^2 test, fisher’s exact test, and
168 Mann-Whitney U test as appropriate. Statistical significance was determined by a threshold of p
169 < 0.05 . Effect size differences across groups were compared using odds ratios and 95%
170 confidence intervals. All statistical analyses were undertaken using PASW® Statistics 18 (SPSS
171 Inc., Chicago, IL, USA).

172

173 **Ethics approval**

174 Approval for the use of VACAR data in this project has been granted by the Victorian
175 Department of Health Human Research Ethics Committee as a quality assurance project.

176 Approval for the collection and use of patient follow-up data in the VACAR has been granted by
177 individual hospital ethics/research committees.

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179 **Results**

180

181 A total of 1,379 adult EMS-witnessed OHCA events of presumed cardiac aetiology occurred in
182 the Melbourne region between 2003 and 2011. Of these, 132 cases had missing patient care
183 records and could not be reviewed for detail. A further 191 cases were excluded as the patient
184 had a 'do not resuscitate' directive or arrested after arrival at hospital (Fig. 1). Cases involving
185 VF/VT were identified in 465 of the remaining cases, although 31 (6.7%) were not monitored at
186 the time of arrest. The final sample included 434 monitored arrests of which 308 (71.0%) were
187 the result of VF and 126 (29.0%) of VT.

188

189 The use of the PT as first-line treatment following cardiac arrest was identified in 103 (23.7%)
190 cases, of which 76 occurred in patients with VF and 27 in patients with VT. Of those not
191 receiving a PT, defibrillation was immediately administered in 325 (74.8%) cases. Six patients
192 (1.4%) deteriorated into non-shockable rhythms before either intervention could be
193 administered and were excluded from group comparisons.

194

195 Baseline patient characteristics and survival outcomes are presented in Table 1. The Shock First
196 and Thump First groups did not differ by age, gender, location of arrest or initial presenting
197 rhythm. The Thump First group was associated with a higher proportion of patients suffering
198 multiple arrests (28.0% vs. 36.9%, $p=0.09$), and fewer patients receiving chest compressions
199 (62.8% vs. 52.4%, $p=0.06$), although neither trend was statistically significant. The median time
200 to defibrillation did not differ across groups, although the proportion of cases achieving ROSC
201 after first shock was lower in the Thump First group (57.8% vs. 47.8%, $p=0.09$).

202

203 No significant differences in the frequency of scene and survival outcomes were observed
204 across treatment groups. Return of spontaneous circulation occurred in 89.8% and 93.2% of the

205 Shock First and Thump First groups respectively. A total of 70.2% and 70.9% of patients were
206 discharged alive respectively.

207

208 Table 2 describes the impact of the first shock or PT on the rhythm changes observed in each
209 group. Application of a PT resulted in neither ROSC nor rhythm change in 86 (83.5%) patients,
210 with only 17 (16.5%) patients obtaining a PT-induced rhythm change. A total of five patients
211 experienced ROSC following PT application of which three occurred in the VF group and two in
212 patients with VT. Except for two patients who were thumped from VF into VT, the remaining 10
213 patients sustained deteriorations in their cardiac rhythms following PT application. Ventricular
214 fibrillation (n=8) and pulseless electrical activity (n=1) was induced in nine patients presenting
215 in VT. Of these, only four patients with PT-induced VF survived to hospital discharge, while the
216 patient induced into pulseless electrical activity died. One patient presenting with VF was
217 thumped into asystole and died on scene.

218

219 An immediate shock strategy resulted in significantly higher levels of immediate ROSC when
220 compared to the Thump First group (57.8% vs. 4.9%, OR 26.90, 95% CI 10.66 – 67.84, $p <$
221 0.0001). Rhythm deteriorations following immediate shock into pulseless electrical activity
222 (n=16) and asystole (n=24) were present in the overall population, but did not differ
223 significantly when compared to the Thump First group (12.3% vs. 9.7%, $p=0.48$). Within the
224 subgroup population of VT, rhythm deteriorations were significantly lower in the Shock First
225 group (11.4% vs. 33.3%, $p=0.01$), although the opposite effect was observed in the VF subgroup
226 population (12.7% vs. 3.9%, $p=0.03$).

227

228 Table 3 provides a short descriptive case series of the five successful PT applications. Of these
229 cases, three required rescue defibrillation following re-arrest.

230

231

231

232 **Discussion**

233

234 Recent resuscitation guidelines have recommended that a PT be reserved for the treatment of
235 monitored and pulseless ventricular arrhythmias where a defibrillator is not immediately
236 available.^{2,3} However, few reports have adequately assessed the utility of this procedure during
237 monitored episodes of VF/VT. In this population-based observational study, we assessed the
238 efficacy of the PT through a retrospective analysis of monitored OHCA.

239

240 A strength of our study is the population-based and consecutive nature of the enrolled patients,
241 which represent 'real life' applicability to the OHCA environment. Previous work evaluating the
242 efficacy of the PT during cardiac arrest may have been subject to selection bias and poor
243 external validity. Early case reports involving small select populations of cardiac arrest patients
244 reported high success rates of 36% (range 11% to 56%) for cardioverting VT.^{8,10-14} However,
245 more recent work involving experienced cardiologists in the electrophysiology lab failed to
246 validate these findings.^{5,7} In fact, several reports have documented that a PT is relatively
247 ineffective during cardiac arrest. Miller et al. demonstrated that a PT had little effect in
248 terminating ventricular tachyarrhythmias during OHCA, and was more often associated with
249 rhythm deterioration.⁸ Similarly, a non-randomised prospective study assessing the use of the
250 PT by EMS, did not observe ROSC when utilised for all episodes of VF/VT, albeit only one was
251 witnessed by EMS personnel.⁶

252

253 Despite a smaller sample of VT cases receiving a PT in our study (26.2%), we did not observe
254 the rate of ROSC following PT to be significantly higher in patients presenting with VT in
255 comparison to those in VF. While we noted a higher success rate in cardioverting VT when
256 compared to previously published electrophysiology studies,^{5,7,9} we could not replicate the
257 pooled result of 36% from earlier case reports.^{8,10-14} Our observed rate of ROSC of 3.9% in

258 patients with VF is also not significantly higher than the reported pooled result of 1.5% in a
259 recent review study.⁴

260

261 More importantly, we observed that the PT was almost twice as likely to result in rhythm
262 deterioration as successful ROSC. Previous studies have attributed pre-existing severe hypoxia⁶,
263 ⁸ or drug-induced cardio-toxicity¹⁹ to an increased likelihood of rhythm deteriorations following
264 PT, however we are unable to substantiate these as contributing factors in our population.
265 Application of PT occurred within seconds of cardiac arrest onset, limiting the likelihood of
266 hypoxia in our study population. Furthermore, this study excluded instances of cardiac arrest
267 secondary to known drug overdoses. Instead, we surmise that like all forms of forceful
268 mechanical stimulation of the heart, the PT carries an inherent risk of commotio cordis²⁰ and
269 should not be considered an intervention without risk of adverse event.

270

271 When used as part of an ongoing resuscitation strategy, including the administration of
272 advanced life support, we could not establish an overall balance of benefit or harm in the PT
273 First group. However, it is clear that the use of defibrillation as a first-line intervention was
274 significantly more likely to result in immediate ROSC and therefore potentially reduces any
275 further arrest downtime. In addition, we observed favourable trends in the Shock First group
276 including a greater use of chest compressions, fewer episodes of re-arrest, and a higher
277 proportion of cases achieving ROSC following the first shock. Indeed, of the five patients who
278 achieved ROSC following the application of PT, three required subsequent defibrillation. While
279 we are unable to conclude that either strategy offers greater clinical benefit, it is clear that the
280 PT as an isolated intervention offers relatively little benefit in achieving ROSC. In fact, the PT
281 was more commonly associated with either no change in condition, or deterioration into VF,
282 pulseless electrical activity and asystole.

283

284 Despite the widespread presence of defibrillators in our EMS, we observed a large fraction of
285 patients receiving a PT (23.7%) with no apparent documented evidence of delay to

286 defibrillation. Nearly all patients required some preparation for defibrillation (e.g. body
287 positioning, stopping ambulance movement, removal of clothing, pad placement, etc.), and we
288 can only deduce that these barriers led to the perception that a PT was reasonably warranted.
289 Given that these delays did not appear to have a negative impact on the success of first
290 defibrillation, there is good basis for withholding PT use until defibrillation is possible.

291

292 What remains unclear is whether the use of a PT is of greater benefit than immediate chest
293 compressions in circumstances where defibrillation is not possible within the first few minutes
294 of arrest. With the extensive use of defibrillators in most clinical settings, the need to resolve
295 this uncertainty with further prospective studies is becoming less relevant.

296

297 **Study limitations**

298 Our study has several limitations. Firstly, there is always a risk of under-reporting of PT use in
299 patient care records, which may naturally underestimate the exposed population. Secondly, a
300 common limitation in PT studies is the potential for inconsistent application of the procedure
301 across the study population. While this may have reduced its effectiveness, it also demonstrates
302 the real-life nature and generalisability of its application. Finally, it is difficult to accurately
303 determine the rate of rhythm deteriorations experienced following the application of each
304 intervention. For example, we were aware that the presence of pulseless electrical activity after
305 the delivery of the first shock usually resulted in delayed ROSC following a short period of chest
306 compressions. Similarly, it is well-established that VT deteriorates into VF soon after onset of
307 cardiac arrest, and therefore the excess rhythm deteriorations observed following PT use may
308 have been the result of other factors.

309

310 **Conclusion**

311

312 First-line treatment of monitored OHCA utilising the PT rarely resulted in immediate ROSC, and
313 was more commonly associated with rhythm deterioration. Support for its use in patients with
314 monitored episodes of VF/VT should be re-examined.

315

316 **Conflicts of interest**

317 None declared.

318

319 **Acknowledgments**

320 There are no acknowledgments.

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405**Tables****Table 1: Baseline characteristics and clinical outcomes according to treatment group.**

	All Monitored n= 434	Shock First n= 325	Thump First n= 103	OR (95% CI)
Age in years, No. (%)				
16 – 30	2 (0.5)	2 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	-
31 – 45	33 (7.6)	24 (7.4)	9 (8.7)	1.20 (0.54-2.67)
46 – 60	132 (30.4)	106 (32.6)	26 (25.2)	0.70 (0.42-1.15)
61 – 75	146 (33.6)	105 (32.3)	39 (37.9)	1.28 (0.81-2.02)
≥ 76	121 (27.9)	88 (27.1)	29 (28.2)	1.06 (0.64-1.73)
Male sex, No. (%)				
	318 (73.3)	244 (75.1)	69 (67.0)	0.67 (0.42-1.09)
Location of arrest, No. (%)				
House	280 (64.5)	208 (64.0)	68 (66.0)	1.09 (0.69-1.74)
Aged care facility	14 (3.2)	10 (3.1)	3 (2.9)	0.95 (0.26-3.50)
Public location	64 (14.7)	48 (14.8)	16 (15.5)	1.06 (0.57-1.96)
Ambulance	69 (15.9)	53 (16.3)	15 (14.6)	0.87 (0.47-1.63)
Other	7 (1.6)	6 (1.8)	1 (1.0)	0.52 (0.06-4.38)
Rhythm on arrival, No. (%)				
Sinus Rhythm	205 (47.2)	152 (46.8)	53 (51.5)	1.25 (0.80-1.97)
Sinus Bradycardia	40 (9.2)	27 (8.3)	12 (11.7)	1.48 (0.72-3.05)
Sinus Tachycardia	56 (12.9)	44 (13.5)	10 (9.7)	0.70 (0.34-1.45)
Atrial Fibrillation	50 (11.5)	34 (10.5)	14 (13.6)	1.37 (0.71-2.68)
Ventricular Tachycardia	36 (8.3)	32 (9.8)	4 (3.9)	0.38 (0.13-1.09)
Other Rhythm	40 (9.2)	32 (9.8)	7 (6.7)	0.68 (0.29-1.59)
Unknown	7 (1.6)	4 (1.2)	3 (2.9)	-
Minutes from arrival on scene to cardiac arrest, median (IQR)				
	17.0 (8.0-31.0)	18.0 (8.0-31.0)	16.0 (8.0-29.3)	-
Rhythm on arrest, No. (%)				
Ventricular Fibrillation	308 (71.0)	229 (70.2)	76 (73.8)	1.18 (0.72-1.95)
Pulseless Ventricular Tachycardia	126 (29.0)	96 (29.5)	27 (26.2)	0.85 (0.51-1.40)
Chest compressions performed, No. (%)				
	263 (60.6)	204 (62.8)	54 (52.4)	0.65 (0.42-1.02)
Defibrillation performed, No. (%)				
	422 (97.2)	325 (100.0)	96 (93.2)	-
Number of arrests, mean (IQR)				
1	304 (70.0)	234 (72.0)	65 (63.1)	0.67 (0.42-1.06)
2	80 (18.4)	59 (18.2)	20 (19.4)	1.09 (0.62-1.91)
≥ 3	50 (11.5)	32 (9.8)	18 (17.5)	1.94 (1.04-3.63)
Minutes from arrest to first shock, median (IQR)				
	1.0 (0.0-2.0)	1.0 (0.0-2.0)	1.0 (0.0-2.0)	-
Outcome after first shock, No. (%)				
ROSC	232 (53.5)	188 (57.8)	44 (42.7)	0.67 (0.42-1.06)
No ROSC	185 (42.6)	137 (42.2)	48 (46.6)	1.50 (0.94-2.38)

Not Defibrillated [‡]	17 (3.9)	0 (0.0)	11 (10.7)	-
Scene outcomes, No. (%)				
Resuscitation ceased at scene	31 (7.1)	26 (8.0)	4 (3.9)	0.46 (0.16-1.36)
Transport with ROSC	307 (70.7)	234 (71.8)	72 (69.9)	0.90 (0.56-1.47)
Transport with CPR ongoing	96 (22.1)	66 (20.2)	27 (26.2)	1.39 (0.83-2.33)
ROSC at any time, No. (%)	393 (90.6)	292 (89.8)	96 (93.2)	1.55 (0.66-3.62)
Pulse at hospital arrival, No. (%)				
Unknown	4 (0.9)	4 (1.2)	-	-
Discharged alive, No. (%)	302 (69.6)	228 (70.2)	73 (70.9)	1.02 (0.62-1.66)
Unknown	6 (1.4)	5 (1.5)	1 (1.0)	-

Abbreviations: OR, odds ratio; CI, confidence interval; IQR, interquartile range; ROSC, return of spontaneous circulation. Proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding. [‡]Includes cases where ROSC was achieved prior to defibrillation, or where the rhythm deteriorated into a non-shockable rhythm before defibrillation was administered.

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Table 2: Impact of first administered shock or thump on the observed rhythm changes in the overall population, and within the subgroup populations of ventricular fibrillation and pulseless ventricular tachycardia.

	All VF/VT			Ventricular Fibrillation			Pulseless Ventricular Tachycardia		
	Shock First n= 325	Thump First n= 103	OR (95% CI)	Shock First n= 229	Thump First n= 76	OR (95% CI)	Shock First n= 96	Thump First n= 27	OR (95% CI)
No change in condition, No. (%)	97 (29.8)	86 (83.5)	11.89 (6.71-21.07)†	66 (28.8)	70 (92.1)	28.81 (11.93-69.57)†	31 (32.3)	16 (59.3)	3.05 (1.27-7.34)†
ROSC, No. (%)	188 (57.8)	5 (4.9)	0.04 (0.01-0.09)†	134 (58.5)	3 (3.9)	0.03 (0.01-0.10)†	54 (56.3)	2 (7.4)	0.06 (0.01-0.28)†
Rhythm change only, No. (%)	40 (12.3)	12 (11.6)	0.94 (0.47-1.87)	29 (12.7)	3 (3.9)	0.28 (0.08-0.96)†	11 (11.4)	9 (33.3)	3.86 (1.40-10.68)†
Ventricular Fibrillation	0 (0.0)	8 (7.8)		-	-		0 (0.0)	8 (29.6)	
Pulseless Ventricular Tachycardia	0 (0.0)	2 (1.9)		0 (0.0)	2 (2.6)		-	-	
Asystole	24 (7.4)	1 (1.0)		17 (7.4)	1 (1.3)		7 (7.3)	0 (0)	
Pulseless Electrical Activity	16 (4.9)	1 (1.0)		12 (5.2)	0 (0)		4 (4.2)	1 (3.7)	

Abbreviations: VF/VT, ventricular fibrillation and pulseless ventricular tachycardia; ROSC, return of spontaneous circulation; OR, odds ratio; CI, confidence interval. Proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding. †Statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 3: Descriptive case series of cases reporting an effective precordial thump.

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5
Age in years	82	81	85	49	63
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Male	Female
Primary complaint	Collapse	Chest Pain	Chest Pain	Collapse	Chest Pain
Rhythm on arrival	Sinus Bradycardia	Sinus Bradycardia	Atrial Fibrillation	Atrial Fibrillation	Sinus Tachycardia
Rhythm of arrest	VT	VF	VF	VT	VF
Rhythm after successful precordial thump	Sinus Bradycardia	Sinus Bradycardia	Atrial Fibrillation	Sinus Rhythm	Sinus Rhythm
Total number of arrests	4	1	1	2	2
Shocks after precordial thump	1	0	0	1	1
Discharged alive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Abbreviations: VF/VT, ventricular fibrillation and pulseless ventricular tachycardia

Figures

Figure 1: Utstein-style patient selection for adult monitored VF/VT events occurring in Melbourne, Australia between 2003 and 2011.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interests disclosed by the authors.

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Figure 1

