

# Genetics

## Long QT syndrome

Christina Honeywell MSc Judith Allanson MD  
 Sean M. Blaine MD Carol Cremin MSc  
 Heather Dorman MSc Clare A. Gibbons MS  
 Wendy S. Meschino MD Joanne Permaul  
 Brenda J. Wilson MBChB June C. Carroll MD

Some researchers claim that babies should be routinely tested for long QT syndrome (LQTS) by electrocardiogram (ECG) at around 3 weeks of age because it would be cost-effective and save lives.

**Bottom line.** The ECG is neither sensitive nor specific to hereditary LQTS and can be hard to interpret in newborns. Routine ECG screening of newborns remains controversial, but any individual with clinical features of LQTS (eg, syncope with exercise in a young person), an ECG typical of LQTS, or a family history of either LQTS or young sudden death should be referred to a heart rhythm specialist and a genetics clinic. Assessment of individuals, at-risk relatives, and genetic testing should be offered where indicated.

The complete *Gene Messenger—Long QT Syndrome* by the GenetiKit research team is available on **CFPlus**.<sup>\*</sup> Past Gene Messenger articles can be accessed on-line at [www.cfp.ca](http://www.cfp.ca). On the home page, click on **Collections** in the left-hand menu, then click on **Genetics**.

#### Competing interests

None declared

The GenetiKit research team, a group of family physicians, genetic counselors and geneticists, designed the Gene Messenger series to provide practical information to help family physicians and their patients make informed choices about rapidly emerging genetic discoveries. The series is a collection of up-to-date, definitive, short reviews on genetics topics that have made headlines, and offers recommendations regarding referral for genetic services or testing.

#### Acknowledgment

Funding was provided by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

### GENE MESSENGER

For more information on genetics topics,  
 see [www.mtsinai.on.ca/FamMedGen/](http://www.mtsinai.on.ca/FamMedGen/)



<sup>\*</sup>The Gene Messenger on long QT syndrome is available at [www.cfp.ca](http://www.cfp.ca). Go to the full text of this article on-line, then click on **CFPlus** in the menu at the top right-hand side of the page.