

Lead-I electrocardiogram (ECG) devices for detecting atrial fibrillation

Lead-I electrocardiogram (ECG) devices are hand held devices which can be used in primary care to aid the detection of atrial fibrillation. The devices include touch electrodes, internal storage for ECG recordings and automated software which can interpret the ECG trace and allow data to be transferred to a computer for further analysis by a healthcare professional. Where atrial fibrillation is detected by a lead-I ECG device, a 12 lead ECG is required to confirm the diagnosis. It is claimed that using lead-I ECG devices can result in more accurate detection of atrial fibrillation than manual pulse palpation alone. More accurate detection of atrial fibrillation may lead to earlier identification of people who are at risk of having a stroke and who will benefit from treatment with anticoagulants or anti-arrhythmic medications. The NICE Diagnostics Assessment Programme will assess the clinical and cost-effectiveness of lead-I ECG devices in order to make recommendations on their use in the NHS.