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Elevated Plasma Levels of Nt-proBNP in Patients With Type 2 Diabetes Without Overt Cardiovascular Disease

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OBJECTIVE—The NH₂-terminal portion of the precursor of brain natriuretic peptide (Nt-proBNP) has been reported to be elevated in left ventricular dysfunction. This peptide is a split product from the proBNP molecule, and its level in the circulation is not, as the mature BNP peptide, dependent on the peripheral number of BNP receptors. We aimed to test the

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CONCLUSIONS—Our data suggest that the secretion of **Nt-proBNP is increased in type 2 diabetic patients with no overt heart disease**, suggesting that type 2 diabetes is associated with a higher prevalence of ALVD than hitherto thought. **Nt-proBNP may thus serve as a screening instrument to select patients with type 2 diabetes who could benefit from an echocardiographical examination.**

The incidence and prevalence of type 2 diabetes increases worldwide. In the adult population all over the world, the average prevalence for diabetes is estimated to be at least 4.0% (1). This figure is predicted to double until the year 2015 (2). Although microangiopathy represents a severe threat to the population with diabetes, macroangiopathy and subsequent cardiovascular disease are the major causes of morbidity and mortality in these patients. Screening for kidney and retinal complications is already an established part of routine diabetes care today, but there is no comparable reoccurring screening for cardiac complications of diabetes. This may simply be due to the lack of cost-effective methods; an echocardiographical examination is both expensive and time consuming and, therefore, not suited for screening purposes. The most evident cardiac complication is coronary atherosclerosis. Not only is the extent of coronary

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