

ECG of the Month



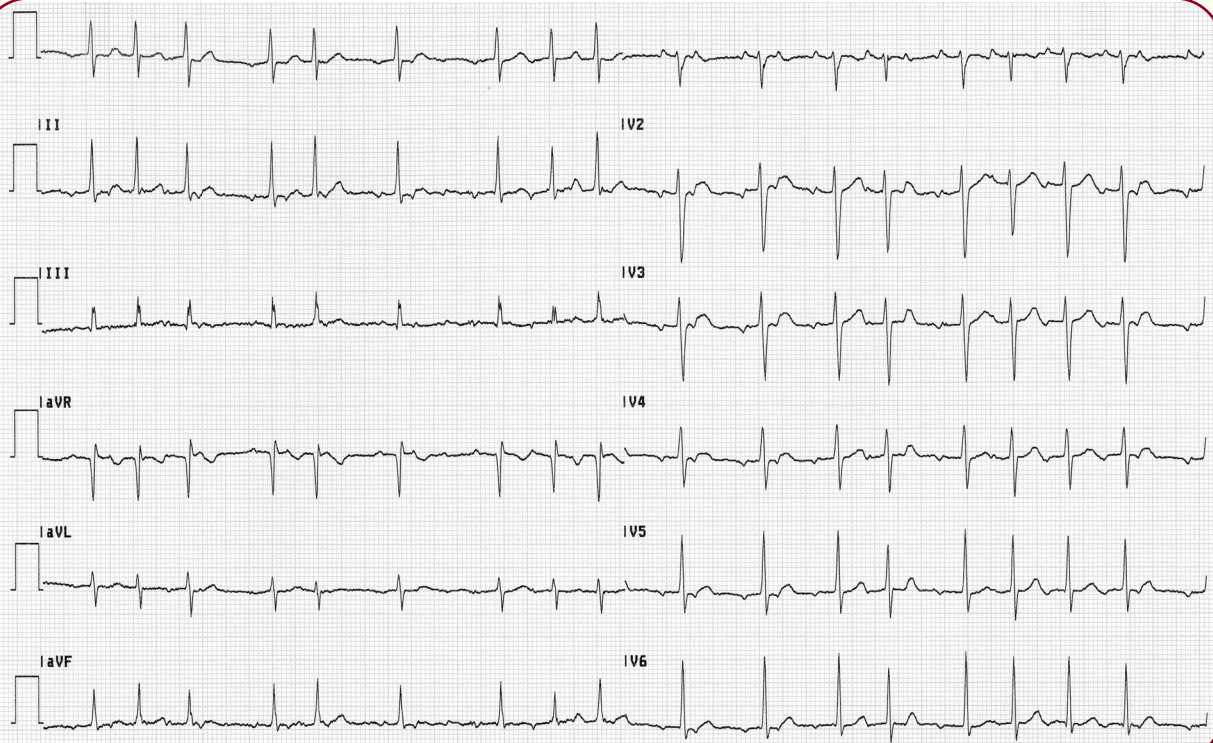
By Martin S. Green, MD, FRCPC

University of
Ottawa Heart Institute

“I feel a little irregular”

This ECG is from a 13-year-old girl who presents with palpitations.

What is the diagnosis?





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ECG of the Month


This Month's ECG Diagnosis

The ECG shows an irregularly irregular ventricular response with narrow QRS. On close inspection of the atrial rhythm, there appears to be discrete P waves (best seen in lead V₁) which are irregular, and of abnormal morphology. The P waves are negative in leads I and II, and appear to be biphasic (negative

positive) in V₁. The P waves are discrete, but the PP intervals are somewhat irregular. Some of the P waves are blocked.

This rhythm is an atrial tachycardia which is somewhat irregular. The atrial tachycardia was mapped at electrophysiology study to originate in the region of the AV node.

Because the ventricular response is irregularly irregular, this ECG could easily be confused with atrial fibrillation. In fact, in leads, such as III and aVL, P waves are not easily visible, and rapid inspection of these leads may easily result in the misdiagnosis of atrial fibrillation. However, inspection of all 12 leads clearly demonstrate the presence of discrete P waves in most of the other leads.

This case underscores the necessity of obtaining a 12 lead ECG, and not just a single lead monitor on a patient with an arrhythmia. Clearly, if such a patient had presented and been put on a monitor and lead aVL had been viewed, then the misdiagnosis of atrial fibrillation might well have taken place. In this case, the diagnosis of an irregular atrial tachycardia was easily confirmed by examination of the other leads. 



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