

A Matter of Minutes

Ben Mundigian, Territory Manager at Physio Control (now part of Stryker)



Key Points

- Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) often has no warning signs and the victim can collapse, quickly lose consciousness, stop breathing and die. It can happen to anyone, of any age, at any time.
- Very different from a heart attack, although both are very serious and could result in death.
- 30,000 UK workplace and community SCA cases every year - survival rate is less than 10%.
- Time is of the essence! The only effective treatment - defibrillation within minutes.
- For every minute lost survival rates decrease by 10-14%. Early defibrillation – within 3-5 minutes of collapse - combined with CPR can improve survival rates to 74%.
- Defibrillators are now increasingly being installed in public places and workplaces with step-by-step instructions. Thousands of people having been trained to use them.
- They are suitable for adults and children.
- Defibrillators enable laypersons to administer a shock – where the machine deems it appropriate – in order to gain vital time whilst awaiting the emergency services.
- If the machine detects an abnormal rhythm it will send an electrical current to the heart which should then recover its normal rhythm.
- The more advanced machines automatically deliver a shock once set up. The semi-automatic machines require the user to press a button to deliver the shock.
- The machines can send data to emergency responders and hospitals whilst in use.