

Polymorphic VT and TdP - 2016

Dr. Andrés R. Pérez Riera

Francois Dessertenne was born in 1917. In 1943, he became an intern, and in 1948 an Assistant Professor of Medicine.

He worked at the Hôpital Lariboisière in Paris and was the assistant to Prof. Bouvrainand later to Prof. Slama. In 1966 (**Dessertenne 1966**), in his pioneering work (published in *Arch des Mal du Coeur*), he described a variety of polymorphic VT characterized by two variable foci, which explained the twisted peaks. This particular aspect is now described using the French term “torsade de pointes”, Dessertenne’s tachycardia or TdP.

Dessertene clearly made the distinction between TdP and ventricular tachycardia, although TdP may turn into ventricular tachycardia.

TdP are typically characterized by an ECG pattern of polymorphous but organized electrical activity of ventricular origin that occurs in the setting of a long QT interval, long-coupled bigeminy, and has specific precipitating causes and therapeutic responses. TdP can result from congenital (adrenergic dependent) and acquired (pause dependent) factors and may have similar cardiac substrates with different precipitating events.

TdP shows unique electrocardiographic features of a special VT . Since this description, TdP has become increasingly recognized as a common and important clinical syndrome. When originally described, it seemed possible to separate torsades de pointes from other forms of VT.

However, increasing data indicate that the electrocardiographic features of the TdP are insufficient to make an accurate diagnosis in all cases.

In fact, practically none of the various elements of the initial description remain as absolutely sensitive and specific diagnostic markers for TdP.

This similarity with other VTs has led some authors to question the validity of maintaining TdP as a unique arrhythmia, completely separated from other forms of polymorphic VTs (**Leenhardt 1992**)

1. *Dessertenne F. La tachycardie ventriculaire a deux foyers opposes variables. Arch des Mal du Coeur 1966; 59:263.*
2. Leenhardt A1, Coumel P, Slama R. Clinical aspects of polymorphic ventricular tachycardia. Arch Mal CoeurVaiss. 1992 Dec;85 Spec No 4:23-9.