

AMA Criteria for Permanent Impairment Associated with a Cardiac Arrhythmia

Overview: Cardiac arrhythmias can cause impairment which can be quantitated using the AMA criteria.

- Parameters:
- (1) symptoms
 - (2) evidence of cardiac arrhythmia
 - (3) other findings

Evidence for Cardiac Arrhythmia	Symptoms	Response to Therapy	Impairment of the Whole Person
documented by ECG or has had an isolated syncopal episode; no evidence of ≥ 3 ectopic beats or periods of asystole > 1.5 seconds; both atrial and ventricular rates are between 50-100 beats/minute	none during ordinary activities; no evidence of organic heart disease	none required	0 - 9%
documented by ECG or has had an isolated syncopal episode	evidence of organic heart disease; no symptoms during ordinary activities	controlled by therapy (drug diet and/or pacemaker)	10 – 29%
documented by ECG	infrequent palpitations and/or episodes of lightheadedness presyncope or temporary inadequate cardiac output	symptoms partially responsive to therapy (drugs diet and/or pacemaker)	30 – 49%
constant and documented by ECG	episodes of syncope; functional Class 3 or 4;	symptoms present despite maximal therapy	50 – 100%

where:

- Functional classification uses the 1964 NYHA criteria.
- A patient who has had surgery catheter procedure or implantable cardioverter-defibrillator for cardiac arrhythmia is classified according to findings above.

References:

Cocchiarella L Andersson GBJ (editors). Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment Fifth Edition. American Medical Association. 2001. (Table 3-11 page 56; for functional class see Table 3-1 page 26).