

The mysterious connection between aortic insufficiency and head bobbing

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Aortic insufficiency - Definition

- Also named Aortic valve prolapse and Aortic regurgitation
- A heart valve / aortic root disease, causing an incomplete closure of the Aortic valve
- As a result, there is a backward flow of blood from the Aorta into the left ventricle.

Etiology

- Rheumatic fever (less common today)
- Ankylosing spondylitis
- Aortic dissection
- Congenital valve diseases(like VSD)
- Endocarditis
- Hypertension
- Marfan syndrome
- Reiter syndrome
- Syphilis
- SLE
- Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (type IV)

Prevalance

- 5/10,000 people
- Most common between the ages of 30-60 years old.

General Symptoms

- Bombing pulse (strong and forceful pulse)
- Diastolic Murmur
- Chest pain (Angina)
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Irregular, rapid, racing pulse
- Palpitations
- Shortness of breath

Special signs

- **Corrigan's pulse** – Also known as Water-Hammer pulse. A rapidly rising pulse which collapses suddenly as arterial pressure falls rapidly during late systole and diastole.
- **Quincke's pulse** – Capillary pulsations. An alternate flushing and paling of skin at the root of the nail while pressure is applied to the tip of the nail.
- **Traube's sign** – Pistol shot sound over femoral arteries.
- **Duroziez's sign** – a murmur audible if femoral artery is lightly compressed with stethoscope

But what about the head bobbing?





Alfred De Musset

- 1810-1857
- A French romantic poet and playwright
- Died in his sleep from heart failure, caused by a combination of alcoholism and long-lasting Aortic insufficiency.
- His older brother wrote Alfred's biography, in which he describes a very interesting phenomena his brother was suffering from...

And finally the connection...

- **De Musset's sign** – Rhythmic nodding or bobbing of the head in synchrony with the heart beat, which is a sign of Aortic insufficiency or Aortic aneurism.
- Caused by a very wide pulse pressure.
- Can also be accompanied with the shaking of the whole body.

Conclusion

- Sometimes it's wiser to stay quiet and not to ask questions...