

# Common symptoms of Atrial Fibrillation

**Shona Holding**

Cardiovascular Specialist Nurse Practitioner  
Westcliffe cardiology community service  
Bradford

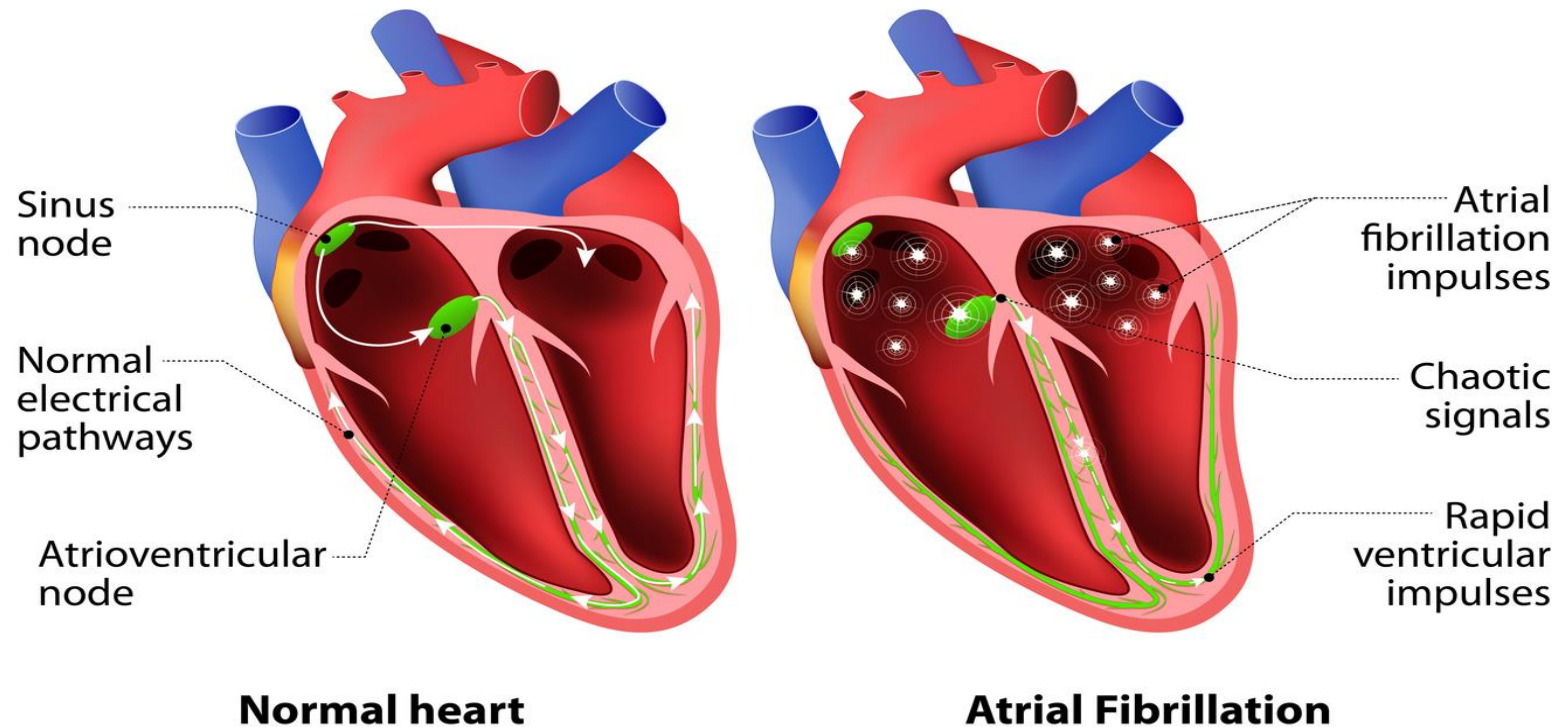
# AF Symptoms include:

- Breathlessness
- Lethargy
- Palpitations
- Dizziness
- Syncope/faint
- Chest pain
- Anxiety/stress



# Why AF can cause symptoms...

## Cardiac arrhythmia





However.....

30% of people with AF do not experience any symptoms

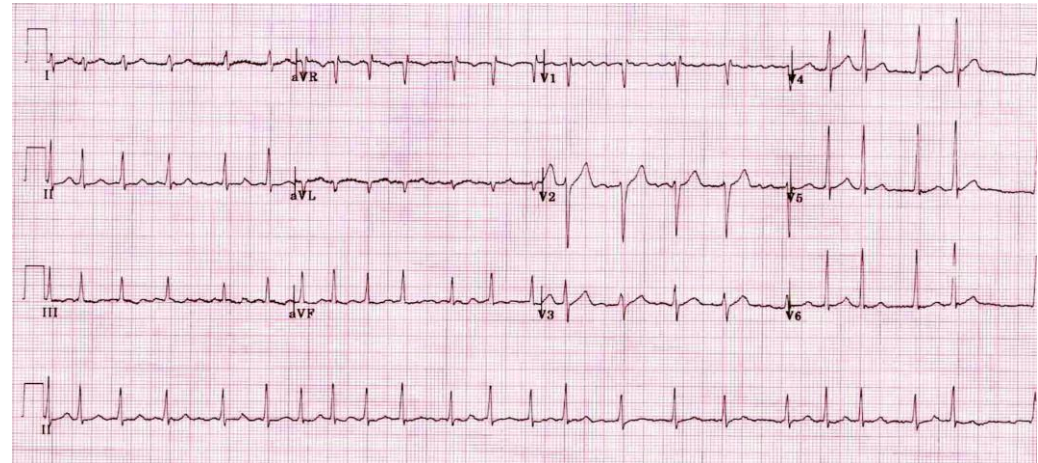
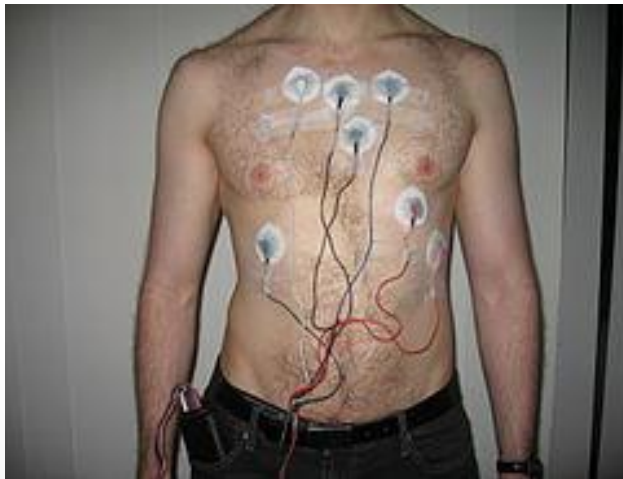
# Which is why

- Any one over 65 years should have manual pulse checks annually



# And

- If you are aware of an irregular heart beat arrange an electrocardiogram (ECG) to rule out AF



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA](#)

# Common concerns

Q1: Am I more likely to have a stroke during symptoms?



NO

BUT

Stroke risk is the same whether  
symptomatic or not

# Common concerns continued.....

Q2: how long should I let my palpitations persist before calling for help (A&E/Dr)??

Q3: when my heart beat is racing is my heart going to suddenly stop beating?

Q4: Will it cause a heart attack?

# Concerns continued...

Q5: does stress cause AF symptoms?

Q6: does exercise help or hinder my symptoms?

# In summary

- Symptoms affect 2/3rds of people with AF
- They can be very debilitating
- Stroke risk is the same whether symptomatic or not
- Manual pulse checks over 65 yrs recommended
- Symptoms can and should be treated to improve quality of life and reduce potential strain on the heart

Thank you for listening

Any Questions??