

Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Cardiomyopathy

A common disease identified in boxers is arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy or ARVC. This is commonly called "Boxer Cardiomyopathy". The cause of the disease is progressive replacement of the normal heart muscle by a fibrous-fatty infiltrate, resulting in arrhythmias originating primarily from the right ventricle. Bulldogs also get a variation of this disorder. Ventricular arrhythmias may occur in rapid succession called ventricular tachycardia and this may cause collapse or sudden death. A diagnosis of ARVC is made by performing an ECG and/or a 24-hour ambulatory ECG termed a Holter monitor. Dogs with ventricular arrhythmias identified are treated with antiarrhythmic medications. Often the ECG or Holter monitor is repeated to determine the response to therapy. Unfortunately, despite appropriate medical management, the risk of sudden death can never be eliminated completely.

