

and Keenan (J.A.M.A., 187:164-165, 1964) "a bigeminal rhythm developed but it responded well to intravenously administered procaine amide hydrochloride." Procaine amide is an antiarrhythmic agent with potent local anesthetic effects.

Review of published case reports of propoxyphene overdose that include electrocardiographic commentary indicate that, with rare exception, ECG abnormalities subside or disappear once adequate ventilation is restored and anoxia and acidosis are overcome. It is important to realize that ECG changes may revert to normal as ventilation is restored, over an interval of a few minutes to a few hours--intervals too brief, in view of the long half-life of norpropoxyphene, to have allowed for much, if any, lowering of norpropoxyphene concentrations in blood or tissues.

During the recent Senate hearing on propoxyphene, FDA Commissioner Donald Kennedy called attention to the higher mortality rate from propoxyphene overdose among people twenty to forty years of age in comparison with those over sixty, although the number of propoxyphene prescriptions is approximately the same for both groups. The fatality rate in the younger group was five times that in the older group, a group in which sudden cardiac death is much more frequent and in which one would expect any cardiotoxic effect of propoxyphene most likely to become evident.