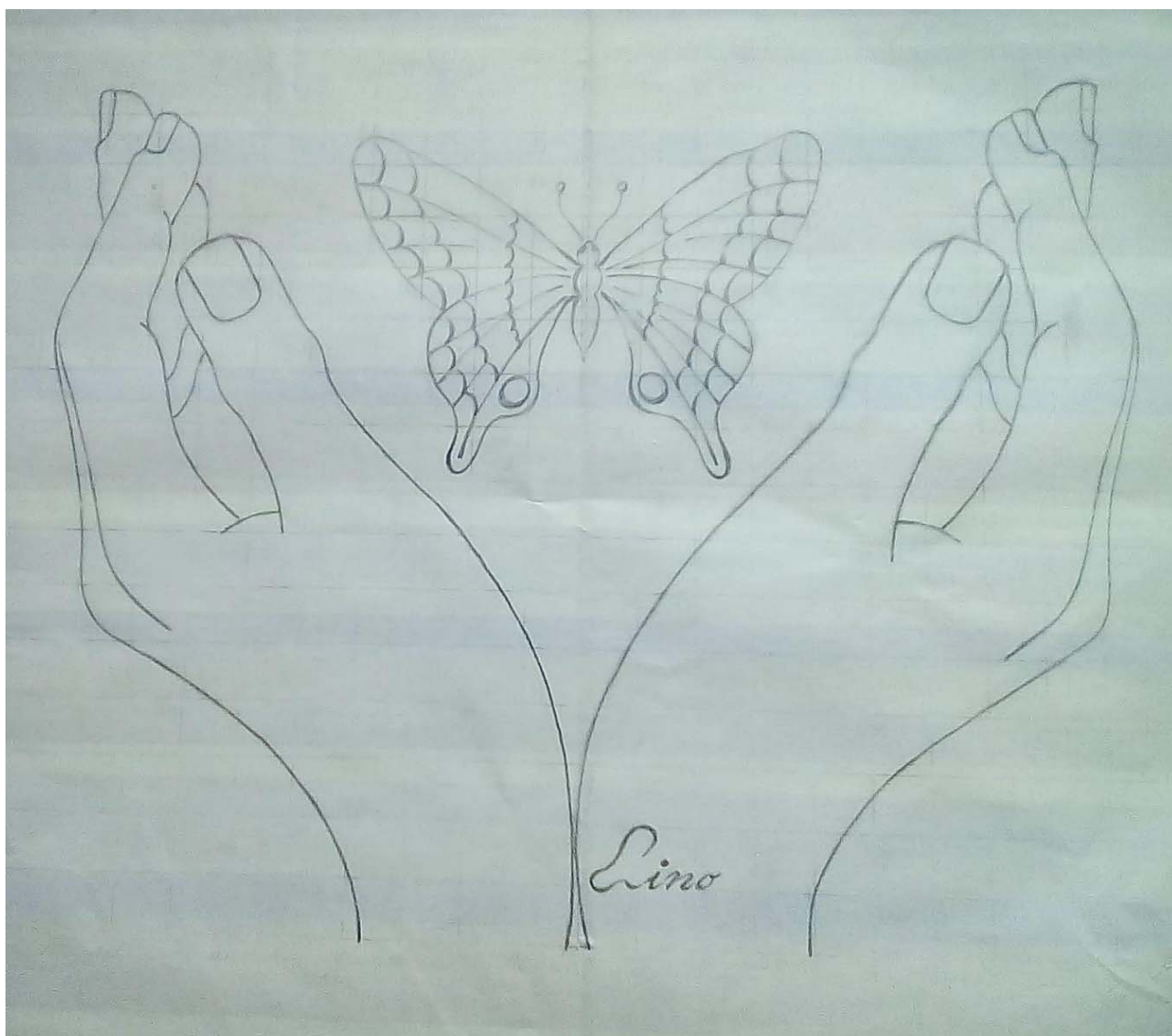


# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MEDICAL AND NURSING APPROACH (IJMNA)

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## VHF exploration using HRV analysis in the frequencies domain.

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Heart beat rhythm is regulated by autonomic nervous system(ANS), and its variability, called heart rate variability(HRV), reflects ANS activities and provides meaningful information for clinical intervention in cardiovascular disease. Conventional spectral analysis of HRV contains three major frequency bands in quantitative ANS assessment, including very low frequency band (VLF;0.01-0.04Hz), low frequency band (LF;0.04-0.15Hz), and high frequency band (HF;0.15-0.4Hz), in short-term recording (5-10 minutes). Each frequency band indicates specific ANS activities, such as HF related to parasympathetic nervous activities(PNS) and LF related to the modulation of sympathetic nervous activities(SNS). Recently it is reported a new frequency band defined very high frequency band(VHF;0.4-0.9Hz) but literature reports on VHF are scanty. VHF power is usually negligible. The presence of VHF peaks is an important finding in the power spectrum of heart rate fluctuations. VHF peaks, assumed to be harmonics of the respiratory rate, originate from non linear coupling between the respiratory system and heart. There are two types of VHF peaks in HRV: harmonics of respiration and peaks uncorrelated with respiration. The physiological mechanism of this phenomenon is still unclear. **Aim:** to define the spectral VHF component in an adult and elderly population. **Materials and Methods:** in the present study we have enrolled 129 patients (65 F and 64 M) splitted into 6 groups. We divided the population in 2 groups according to age (60-79, 33 patients with mean age  $68.8 \pm 4.7$  years old and 34 patients 80-100 years old, with mean age  $85.1 \pm 3.4$  years old). In the first group 22 patients were affected by arterial hypertension, 4 were diabetic and 7 were obese, 4 were smokers. In the older group 27 patients were affected by hypertension, 4 were diabetic and 6 obese, 3 were smokers. The other four group are studied during changes in cardiovascular hemodynamics induced by postural variations and/or during changes in respiratory rate induced to mediate controlled breath. **Protocol:** After 10 rest minutes we recorded a digital ECG (CARDIOLAB XAI-MEDICA) for 5 minutes. Recorded data were analyzed with the same CARDIOLAB XAI MEDICA software for HRV linear analysis in the time and frequency domain. Statistical analysis was performed with SigmaStat 3.5 software for Windows. Paired T-test for quantitative variables were used to compare the effect of the treatment in the different groups. Statistical significance was fixed at  $P < 0.05$ . **Results:** We observed no significant differences in R-R interval and in Total Power between the two groups, while we found significant differences in the other indexes of spectral analysis between the two groups. In fact in the older group the parasympathetic indexes had significantly increased. The results are expressed as mean  $\pm$  SD. **Discussion:** Our data show that in very elderly people the VHF component is much more represented than in younger patients. Although only a few investigations have reported the existence of VHF oscillations in HRV, most authors speculate on the origin of these components. All the protocols of the present study show statistically significant variations of the VHF variable both in the controlled breath at 6 and 12 respiratory acts / min. These variations are statistically significant also in the protocol "at rest vs tilt" and "at rest vs inversion bench", but this protocols do not show the same statistically significant variation of the VHF if data about the vertical position (Tilt) is compared with the data about the inversion position (bench rotation at  $-135^\circ$ ). **Conclusions:** No investigation has ever been carried out design specifically to elucidate the origin of this frequency range in HRV, which remains hither to conjectural. The present study did not address the origin of VHF either. We can suggest that the activity in this frequency range may be related to the

intensity of a reduction in the cardiac parasympathetic influence as a consequence of autonomic neural fiber damage, as has been shown in patients affected by cardiac autonomic neuropathy. In any case VHF activity of HRV is not an artefactual phenomenon but is integral to the cardiovascular autonomic control. The variations found in protocol 4 could be dependent on respiratory dynamics since, with postural variations, the abdominal organs exercise different compression on the thorax and in particular on the diaphragm muscle with consequent variation of the respiratory dynamics. For this reason, we cannot definitively affirm that the VHF variable can only be influenced by respiratory activity, but we can say with certainty that the value of the VHF variable is highly dependent on respiratory modulation. Since the protocols were performed in numerically heterogeneous population groups, we believe that further studies on a greater number of subjects are useful in order to have definitive conclusions.

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