

THE EFFECTS OF VENTRICULAR TACHYCARDIA AND WHAT IT IS LIKE BEING CURED WITH ABLATION

I first started having problems with my heart at about 17, six years ago. I do a lot of sport and train six times a week and it seemed to affect me every time I did exercise. I am a triple-jumper, and I am ranked 8th in the UK. During exercise, especially competing, I got multiple palpitations, I got dizzy, felt faint and had to stop what I was doing.

I had this for quite a while; if I got worked up about anything or stressed out I got palpitations, irregular heart beats, slow heart beats, missed beats. I was diagnosed by my doctor with ventricular tachycardia.

I had two attempts at ablation, the first one was unsuccessful, nothing could be started up to guide the ablation. Last July I had a successful ablation. They had seen the tachycardia on an ECG while I was exercising but the first time I had the attempt at ablation I was under sedation and they couldn't find the palpitations. So the second time we decided not to have sedation before the ablation to put myself in a more stressful situation as the palpitation happened under stressful situations. I had a local anaesthetic and I couldn't feel it apart from a burning sensation in my chest. It went quickly and afterwards you have to lie down for a while.

I had a bit of soreness around my chest around the ribs but apart from that it was fine – I had an exercise test the following morning and I didn't have any palpitations so we had an idea that it was successful.”

I have always wanted to do athletics. I work really hard and weight-train twice a week with sprints, running and jumps work. However, I always had to stop as I was getting palpitations 30-40 times during a training session. It made me reassess what I was doing to do with my life and whether I could carry on doing it, as I was worried that something was going to happen. I was worried I was going to black out or worse. I did go on beta-blockers for a short time, but I was worried that I would not be able to compete if I had beta blockers as they are a banned substance. The Athletic Association said I could, but the effect of having them while I was trying to compete – it was quite difficult to have enthusiasm with them and an adrenaline rush. I couldn't seem to achieve what I wanted.

I made the decision to carry on and have the ablation and I'm glad I did. I competed just three weeks after the ablation having missed six weeks of training. At that first session, I did two personal bests! It has given me the chance to be on a level playing field with all the others and do what I want to do.

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