

# Minimally invasive epicardial ablation for atrial fibrillation

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# **Chapter 13**

## **Impact of the Research**

The importance and actuality of atrial fibrillation therapy are highlighted by the fact that the current guidelines present two points that we wanted to address: the first aspect is to emphasize that, although the previous guidelines were quite "recent," a further update was needed to help improving "adherence" to both therapies by the attending doctors as well as the compliance of patients; the second aspect concerns a large list of gaps in knowledge, which is currently listed in the same guidelines. Therefore, a study group like ours, is fundamental for what it has achieved and for what it promises for the future. The publication of the data of our research addressed the following objectives and would like to have the following impacts:

Firstly, it is hoped that the excellent results recorded with the technique we have developed will lead to increasingly better treatment outcomes for patients with atrial fibrillation, delivering a better quality of life to the treated patients. Secondly, as we disseminate our results and techniques, we hope other centers may consider adopting our strategies, demonstrating the last aspect of reproducibility that we cannot prove alone.

Our research also hopes to have a strong stimulating impact in terms of improving cooperation and multi-disciplinarity in the treatment of atrial fibrillation. Currently, up to 70% of patients undergoing catheter ablation fail to achieve complete electrical isolation and are therefore susceptible to recurrence of atrial fibrillation. However, among the many "incomplete" patients, only a small percentage of patients was subjected to discussion within

a heart team for a possible "hybrid" approach. The remaining majority were either re-subjected to a trans- catheter or, more importantly, was simply classified as "failed.". Therefore, our aim is also to stimulate the understanding that an integrated approach, in which a multi-specialist team shall be created for the treatment of atrial fibrillation via a "tailored approach" therapy for any patient, is certainly the most effective approach. The approach must be increasingly present or it must rather be present in all the centers where patients are referred to for the treatment of atrial fibrillation.