**Objective**

Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) ingestion is a well known but rarely reported poisoning (1-4).

**Case presentation**

A 52-year-old healthy man ingested 5 leaves of *Digitalis purpurea* in the evening to commit suicide. He fell asleep and woke up next morning with nausea, vomiting and pressure in his chest.

On hospital admission a few hours later he had normal BP and respiratory rate. Routine labs including s-potassium and s-creatinine were normal. S-digoxin was 0.3 nmol/L (therapy: <1.4). ECG displayed bradycardia and AV block I.

During the following hours the cardiac monitoring revealed episodes of sinus arrests and asystolic pauses up to 6 seconds. The arrests were managed with atropine, but in the afternoon the frequency of symptomatic asystolic episodes increased (Fig. 1).

24 hours post-ingestion, 4 vials (160 mg) of digoxin-specific fab fragments were administered. During the 12 hours after the antidote treatment there were no asystolic episode but bradycardia remained. A new s-digoxin showed 0.7 nmol/L. New episodes of sinus arrests up to 6-7 seconds were noted 36 hours after ingestion, therefore 2 more antidote vials were given. Again, this eliminated the arrests.

During the following 6 days the ECG remained pathologic with bradycardia and sinus arrests of 3-5 seconds. Blood sample for s-digitoxin was unfortunately not taken until 6 days after ingestion, when it was still significantly elevated, 23 nmol/L (therapy: 10-40). The patient was discharged after 9 days with a normal ECG.

**Discussion**

Two leaves of *D. purpurea* are potentially lethal and ingestion of a whole plant has been rapidly fatal despite adequate antidote treatment (3,4).

**Conclusion**

*Digitalis purpurea* does not contain digoxin, but digitoxin and other toxic glycosides (1,3). However, glycosides from this plant cross-react with commonly used digoxin immunoassays (3). Prolonged ECG disturbances are typical in non-fatal cases (1,2). The efficacy of specific Fab fragments is not fully established.

**References**