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## Improving Survival from Sudden Cardiac Arrest: The Role of the Automated External Defibrillator

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A study in today's issue of Journal of the American Medical Association reaffirms the life-saving role of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in treating sudden cardiac arrest.

This analysis of more than 100 journal papers detailing AED experience found that recent advances in AED technology and design have simplified AED operation, reduced costs and improved accuracy and effectiveness in analyzing heart rhythms.

"Defibrillation is the only effective treatment for most sudden cardiac arrests and the use of AEDs by trained personnel has reduced time to defibrillation -- a critical point in increasing the chances of survival someone in cardiac arrest," says Rose Marie Robertson, M.D., president of the American Heart Association. "We need to continue to gather more information about the effect of public access to defibrillation programs on victims of sudden cardiac arrest, including survival rates through hospital discharge, post-arrest quality of life and the costs of conducting such programs."

The American Heart Association supports the increased availability and use of AEDs as part of its Operation Heartbeat program. Operation Heartbeat is a community-based initiative designed to help improve the national sudden cardiac arrest survival rate, which is currently about 5 percent. And the association is co-funding a two-and-a-half-year study with the National, Heart, Lung and Blood Institute to further examine issues relating to the cost and quality of life of public access defibrillation (PAD) programs.

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### Source:

[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

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