

The role of molecular imaging in cardiology. Limits of cardiac imagers available. Is there a need for new devices?

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Molecular Imaging (MI) using tracer techniques and multimodal instrumentation allows integrative tissue characterization. PET/CT offers excellent spatial resolution to delineate coronary anatomy and myocardial dimensions by fast CT, while PET in combination with a variety of tracers provides unique insights in processes like substrate metabolism, inflammation and innervation of the heart. Starting from the identification of tissue viability in ischemic heart disease to local delineation of cardiac innervation in patients with arrhythmias, PET has become a source of important clinical information. Most recently FDG has been used to identify and quantitate the extent of sarcoidosis in the heart. PET/MR adds to the spectrum of noninvasive techniques to link contrast kinetics(delayed enhancement) with metabolic information to assess the extent of ischemic injury after infarction. The future diagnostic and prognostic role of MI will be defined by the relative value of molecular imaging in management of cardiovascular diseases, currently most evident in ischemic heart disease

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