



Advisory 21-09 Medical Equipment Warning: Inadvertent Pacing Using the LifePak 15

To: All ALS EMS Agencies and Providers
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Date: July 28, 2021

Case:

An unstable trauma patient was being transported to the area trauma center in a peri-arrest condition. The crew applied defib pads to the patient and the “Paddles” view was automatically selected on the monitor. The limb leads were not yet attached. During transport and care, it was noticed that the patient who had a rhythm of sinus tachycardia was being paced at 60 bpm. The unnecessary therapy was quickly identified and immediately stopped.

Debrief and Review:

Pacing was started likely as a result of the NIBP button located adjacent to the pacing button (image) and being inadvertently pressed while multiple clinicians were engaged in lifesaving care.

Pacing **CAN** occur if only the QuickCombo patches are on and without the presence of limb leads. In such a circumstance if you press Pacer, the LifePak switches to lead II and begins pacing at the defaulted rate / mA asynchronous of the underlying rhythm, even if in demand mode, with no warning. Per the LifePak 15 Operating instructions: “In demand mode, if the ECG SIZE is set too low to detect the patient’s beats, or if an ECG lead becomes detached so that the ECG rhythm is not present, the pacemaker generates pacing pulses asynchronously. This means that the pacemaker generates pacing pulses at the selected rate regardless of the patient’s ECG rhythm.”



It appears at some point the defaults on the monitor were changed to 60 mA and a rate of 60 bpm. Although this is the desired amperage/rate to start pacing, monitors should be set for 0 mA and a rate of 60 bpm to prevent inadvertent pacing in circumstances such as the case above.

Action:

Agencies using the LifePak 15 should confirm that pacing defaults are set to 0 mA and a rate of 60 and ideally password protect the configuration to prevent inadvertent or unauthorized change.

With any questions, please do not hesitate to contact this office and my thanks to the agency involved for investigating and reviewing their findings to allow distribution and learning for all.

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