1.3 The Role of the Molecular Autopsy in the Evaluation of Sudden Deaths in Custody
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Learning Objectives

At the end of the presentation, participants will be able to
1. Discuss the factors that may affect arrhythmogenesis in custodial deaths
2. Recall the cardiac pathology findings that may be observed in these deaths and the challenges in interpreting their significance
3. Discuss the potential significance of cardiac genetics when evaluating these deaths and how this information may be integrated into the greater death investigation

Abstract
Molecular autopsy provides a new tool that may potentially help pathologists and other death investigators understand sudden and unexpected deaths in custody. The complex interplay of factors that may ultimately promote arrhythmogenesis and sudden death could also include underlying genetic predispositions to arrhythmia that may only become unmasked in the highly stressful physical and emotional circumstances that can arise with custodial deaths. Consideration of cardiac genetics in forensic sudden death investigations has forced pathologists to more critically evaluate cardiac phenotype and contextualize this information within a complex death setting that is not easily recreated in any other circumstances in our society.