PUBLIC DEFIBRILLATORS AND VANDALISM: MYTH OR REALITY?

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PURPOSE

When defibrillators are placed in public locations both public and private institutions worry the defibrillators might be vandalised in such a manner they could put both their use and the patient's security at risk. Naturally, vandalism also causes economic loss. In Ticino there are over 850 defibrillators of which 142 have been placed in public locations. We have thus decided to measure, assess and qualify the events of vandalism. Our presentation shall both qualify and quantify the vandalism suffered during the cantonal programme of placing defibrillators in public locations in the period 2008 - 2012

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data involving vandalism on the 142 public defibrillators placed within the cantonal territory were collected from 1.1.2008 to 31.12.2012. We then classified these data according to type, seriousness and risk for the patient's health.

RESULTS

Type of damages caused	Nr of events	Description	Economic loss	Patient's risk
Tampering of the defibrillators	1	Detached battery	+	++
Theft of the defibrillators	0	__	__	__
Tampering of the cabinet containing the defibrillator	2	• Earthing of the cabinet containing the defibrillator • Graffiti	++	
TOTAL	**3**			

LEGEND: + low   ++ average   +++ quite serious   ++++ serious

CONCLUSIONS

The study performed shows that during the period taken into consideration, the number of acts of vandalism, on defibrillators placed in public locations was extremely reduced and there were certainly no events which could have jeopardized the patient's security and/or health. It must also be highlighted that this might be the result of the awareness campaign and training courses offered to the volunteers performed during the whole early defibrillation programme. Thus the worry that there might be acts of vandalism, even if legitimate, cannot become an obstacle for the diffusion of defibrillators in public locations.