



Health/Education

Heart Devices Becoming Common in Everyday Life

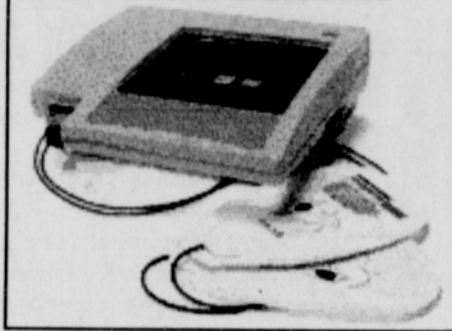
By LINDSEY TANNER

AP MEDICAL WRITER

CHICAGO (AP)—Picture tossing a bottle of aspirin into your shopping cart while cruising down the drug store aisle, along with boxes of tissue, some toothpaste — and a portable heart defibrillator, too.

Dr. Mickey S. Eisenberg wants that scenario to become a reality.

Portable Heart Defibrillator



Eisenberg says consumers should be able to buy the lifesaving devices over the counter for use at home, where most cardiac arrests happen. Then, if a family member keels over, a relative may be able to shock their sick heart

into beating normally again.

But two other emergency medicine specialists want a moratorium on expanding the public use of "automated external defibrillators," their formal name, until they can be shown to reduce cardiac arrest deaths in community settings.

"After all, some might reason, 'Why should I exercise, stop smoking, and monitor my blood pressure when I can simply park (a defibrillator) under my couch?'" Drs. Jeremy Brown and Arthur Kellermann wrote in an editorial alongside Eisenberg's argument in the Sept. 20 Journal of the American Medical Association.

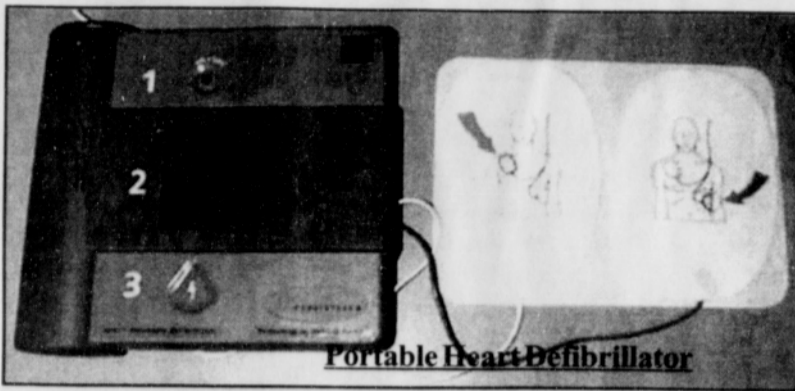
The dueling commentaries represent the extremes of a doctors' debate that intensifies as more and more defibrillators are placed in airplanes, offices, casinos and shopping malls.

The \$3,000 devices, technically known as automated external defibrillators, are the size of a toaster and weigh about 4 pounds. They use an electric shock to restore a natural

beat when a heart suddenly becomes erratic, disrupting blood flow and causing victims to lose consciousness.

They're designed to treat ventricular fibrillation, the most common cause of sudden cardiac arrest, which the American Heart Association estimates kills about 225,000 people each year. If used within four minutes of an attack, they can increase chances of surviving cardiac arrest from 5 percent to about 50 percent, Eisenberg said.

Automated voices walk users through each step, and research has shown the devices are simple enough for sixth-graders to use with minimal training, says Eisenberg, director of the emergency department at the University of Washington Medical Cen-



Portable Heart Defibrillator

ter. "The only thing it doesn't do right now is dial 911 for you," he said in a telephone interview.

Eisenberg likens the current developments to the evolution of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, which began in the 1940s as an operating room procedure and now can be learned over the Internet. The Red Cross last year began adding defibrillator training to its CPR courses.

Giulia Albergo, 65, of suburban Chicago, has good reason to like Eisenberg's idea.

Albergo collapsed just after boarding a United Airlines flight from Tampa

on July 29. Others on board thought she was dead, but a flight attendant revived her with a defibrillator.

Albergo doubts she'd ever buy one herself if given the chance, saying she's too old and doesn't know how to use them. But she thinks people should be able to get them.

"I'd like to help other people," she said. "Oh, my gosh, I was very, very lucky."

But doctors like Bob Suter, a board member at the American College of Emergency Physicians, worry that the devices could be dangerous if used cavalierly by an untrained person. While ACEP supports the widespread use of defibrillators, it says they should be part of a program that includes proper training and consultation with doctors.

The AMA thinks training is essential but otherwise has not weighed in on the availability of defibrillators.

The published debate prompted an immediate retort from the American

Heart Association to the moratorium proposal. While the AHA isn't quite ready to jump on Eisenberg's bandwagon, it strongly endorses making defibrillators available in public areas where lay people can be trained to use them.

"Lives will be saved with wide availability of this device and appropriate training which speeds the delivery of lifesaving defibrillation to those who need it," said Dr. Vinay Nadkarni, chairman-elect of the AHA's emergency cardiovascular care committee.

The AHA and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute are studying the effects of public use of defibrillators in a \$13.5 million, 2 1/2-year study, looking at things like cost and victims' survival rates.

JAMA authors Brown, of Harvard Medical School, and Kellermann of Emory University, say a moratorium is needed until such data is available.

"With rare exceptions," they wrote, "it is not even clear where public access AEDs should be placed because few locations are settings for more than one cardiac arrest per year."

Students Learn How To Win Scholarships



Marianne Ragins

More than 100 students, parents, grandparents and educators packed north-east

Portland's Center for Self-Enhancement auditorium recently to get tips on how to conduct an effective and comprehensive scholarship search. A group of seven students even traveled from as far the Tacoma to attend the three-hour-long workshop with

nationally renowned speaker and author Marianne Ragins.

Ragins earned more than \$410,000 in scholarship money as a high school student and has been featured in everything from Parade to USA Today to most recently Ebony magazine. She told students to make sure that any scholarship materials they submit are typed, proofread and sent in a timely, professional manner. She encouraged students to make follow up calls, surf the Internet for scholarship information, and showed them examples of letters to write for more information.

For parents, Ragins reminded them to let the students do the bulk of the work. The Portland Association of Black

Journalists sponsored the event.

Association board members said the workshop was organized to encourage students to pursue a higher education as well as equip them with the tools to make it possible.

After the workshop, a number of participants asked PABJ to bring Ragins back next year. Also as part of the event, PABJ awarded three students pursuing journalism degrees scholarships of \$2,500. Workshop sponsor Hewlett Packard awarded the students a new computer, color inkjet printer and \$500 gift certificate for software. Oregon State University was a workshop co-sponsor and provided an information table during the workshop.

CPR training saves lives

American Heart Association will give classes and health screenings at the African-American Wellness Village

Spending 90 minutes in a class could mean the difference between life and death for a family member, best friend or colleague.

The American Heart Association will give free cardiopulmonary resuscitation training at the fifth annual African-American Wellness Village, Saturday at Self-Enhancement Inc., 3920 N.

Kerby Ave., Portland. Visitors to the association's booth at the event also receive free blood-pressure and stroke screenings.

Class participants can choose a noon, 1:45 p.m. or 3:30 p.m. time slot to learn CPR for adults and first aid for choking.

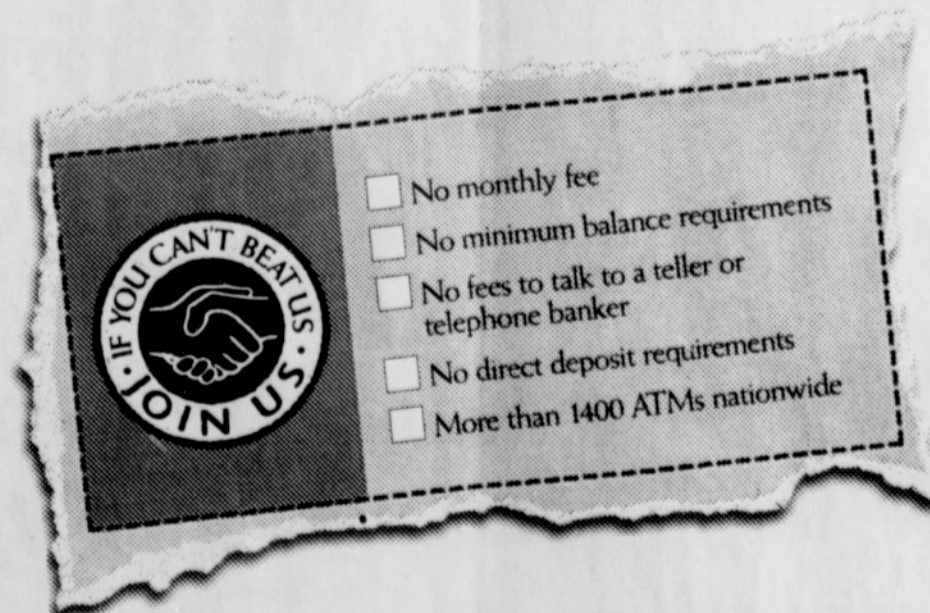
"Calling 9-1-1 first and doing CPR can save lives from heart attack and stroke," said John

Chism, an American Heart Association spokesman. "So we want to make it convenient as possible for people to learn these simple techniques."

Students from Benson High School, along with volunteers from American Medical Response, will teach the 90-minute classes. To register, call 503-233-0100.

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