



Resuscitation by the book

Best practices in CRT save the life of a colleague in a German department store

Who/where

Breuninger Department Store, Stuttgart, Germany

Nurse Hannelore Schwille-Krebs

Challenge

Being prepared for all types of medical emergency from headaches to heart attacks

Solution

Philips Heartstart AED (Automated External Defibrillator) as part of the emergency response kit

It was a Tuesday in February 2007 at Breuninger, a traditional department store located in the center of Stuttgart. Onsite nurse Mrs. Schwille-Krebs had only been in her white uniform for 30 minutes when she received a call at her service point from a department in the store at 11:30 am. Without warning and – as discovered later – without any previous signs of illness, a female employee had collapsed. Mrs Schwille-Krebs grabbed the first aid kit and the bag containing the Heartstart FR2+ defibrillator and went down to the book department, which was fortunately only on the floor below. The employee lay on the floor. She wasn't displaying any vital signs, she wasn't breathing and was already cyanotic.

And so began the race against the clock. The onsite nurse began cardiac massage immediately and gave the colleague mouth-to-nose resuscitation. During this, Mrs. Schwille-Krebs arranged for the emergency doctor to be called. The patient did not respond to cardiac massage. One of the book department employees nearby was one of Breuninger's 40 trained first aiders,

and she knew what needed to be done.

She opened up the bag containing the Heartstart FR2+ defibrillator and passed it over to Mrs. Schwille-Krebs. She switched on the Automated External Defibrillator (AED), stuck both electrodes on the patient's thorax and immediately recognized a ventricular fibrillation on the monitor. "Shock advised" was the message given by the machine and the nurse administered an electric shock, designed to help the patient's heart to regain rhythm. And that's what happened: sinus rhythm was restored.

Hannelore Schwille-Krebs, Onsite Nurse at Breuninger Department Store in Stuttgart



PHILIPS



On duty in the store

The patient reacted with a sharp intake of breath, her face remaining blue. This was reason enough for Mrs. Schwille-Krebs to continue cardiac massage until the emergency doctor arrived five minutes later – she'd only been a few hundred yards from the department store when the call came. The doctor intubated the patient and started an infusion, but she was still not responsive. Nevertheless, her circulation stabilized after ten minutes.

"It couldn't have run more smoothly"

It was only several hours later in the hospital that the Breuninger employee regained consciousness, unable to remember a thing. Six months on, she has now been back at work for a while, and an implanted

defibrillator ensures that another such life-threatening situation will not occur.

Mrs. Schwille-Krebs and her patient still come into contact with each other at work. The experience has taken their relationship way beyond a friendly wink. However: Nurse Hannelore (as she's known to the many employees who put their faith in her) does not want to be hailed as a lifesaver: "It was simply a particularly fortunate culmination of several factors.

"Without the defibrillator, the long-term consequences could have been grim indeed given the circumstances"

My service point was really close to the scene as luck would have it, the defibrillator was used to administer the shock after just three minutes, the emergency doctor was on the scene within five minutes and stable circulation was regained after ten minutes. It couldn't have run more smoothly," says Mrs. Schwille-Krebs looking back. The combination of cardiac massage and defibrillator was the key factor. "Without the defibrillator, the long-term consequences could have been grim indeed given the circumstances," suspects Mr. Schwille-Krebs, 49, for whom this was the first resuscitation in her ten years as an onsite nurse. In her previous role as an intensive care nurse in

cardiology and a heart-surgery intensive care unit, she was confronted with scenarios such as this on a daily basis.

Today, she mainly provides band aids, dressings and headache pills, but also treats trapped fingers and customers who've had an accident on the escalator. Circulatory collapses, seizures and burns in the store's restaurant are also all in a day's work for the three onsite nurses at Breuninger.

The Breuninger onsite nurses have had an AED Philips HeartStart FR2+ for five years now. During that time, this life-saving equipment has always been in the possession of the relevant nurse, or with first aiders at all other times. All of these have completed training on handling the device.

That Tuesday in February 2007 was the first time the Heartstart FR2+ defibrillator was used in a non-training situation. And on that day, it helped to save a life.



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