Box 1

NT-proBNP testing

BNP or its amino-terminal cleavage equivalent (NT-proBNP) is generated by cardiomyocytes in the context of numerous triggers, most notably myocardial stretch. Assays for both BNP and NT-proBNP are increasingly used to establish the presence and severity of heart failure. Either can be used in patient care settings as long as their respective absolute values are not used interchangeably.[1] The value of natriuretic peptide testing is particularly significant when the aetiology of dyspnoea is unclear, and if BNP is normal it is unlikely that the patient has heart failure.

Patients with HFpEF have lower levels of BNP than HFrEF patients. However, for a given BNP level, the prognosis (risk of all-cause mortality and heart failure hospitalisation) is similar in both HFpEF and HFrEF patients.[2]