When is freezing harmful?

To the Editor We read with interest an article by Kasper et al.1 describing complications following cryoballoon ablation in a patient with atrial fibrillation (AF). This technique is widely used, and the success rate as well as safety are comparable to those of standard radiofrequency ablation for AF. One of prerequisites for safe cryoballoon ablation is not to achieve too low temperatures because this may cause damage to the lungs and esophagus. The generally accepted temperature limit is –55°C or, more liberal, –60°C. Temperatures below –60°C are usually achieved when cryoballoon is positioned too distally, inside the pulmonary vein, which may cause collateral damage. Thus, it is not surprising that such a complication occurred in the described patient. This case report reminds us that any medical procedure should be performed according to the instruction.

Author names and affiliations Jakub Baran, Piotr Kulkowski (JB: Centre of Postgraduate Medical Education, Grochowski Hospital, Warsaw, Poland; PK: Centre of Postgraduate Medical Education, Grochowski Hospital, Warsaw, Poland)

Corresponding author Jakub Baran, MD, PhD, Klinika Kardiologii, Centrum Medyczne Kształcenia Medycznego, Szpital Grochowski, ul. Grenadierów 51/59, 04-073 Warszawa, Poland, phone: +48 22 51 52 757, e-mail: j.baran@sampi.pl

Conflict of interest The authors declare no conflict of interest.


REFERENCES
