One-third of patients undergoing open-heart surgery experience an episode of atrial fibrillation on the second or third day after surgery. The reasons for this arrhythmia tendency are not known, and the long-term consequences are poorly understood. The findings in this thesis indicate that postoperative atrial fibrillation is a risk factor for late arrhythmia and late cardiovascular death. No correlation between inflammation and postoperative atrial fibrillation was found. In patients with preoperative atrial fibrillation, modern surgical ablation procedures seem to preserve atrial contractile function.

Anders Ahlsson, Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery and Anaesthesiology, Örebro University