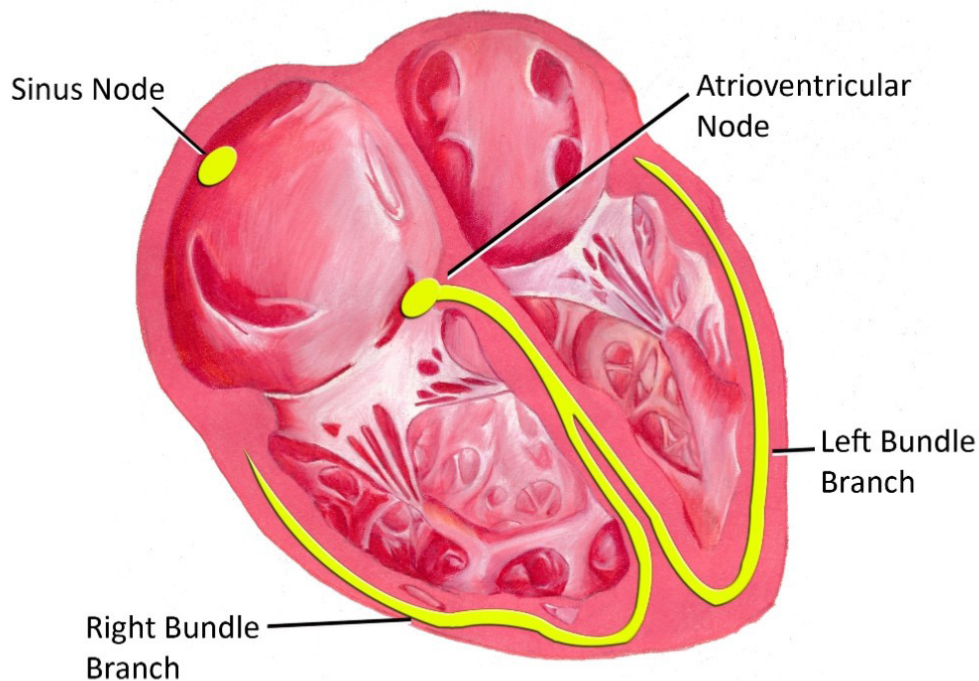


Sick Sinus Syndrome (SSS)



Sick Sinus Syndrome (SSS) is a heart condition that affects the heart's rate and rhythm. In SSS, the heart's electrical impulse-generating site (the sinus node) fails to function normally. As a result, dogs with this problem are unable to maintain normal heart rhythms. There are two basic types of SSS. In brady-tachy syndrome the rhythm varies from slow to fast while bradycardia is characterized by slowness and unusually long pauses. SSS occurs in many smaller dog breeds.

Common symptoms include slow heart rate, abnormal rhythm, and episodes of collapse or fainting (syncope). Episodic weakness is also common.

Diagnosis is typically achieved by EKG or 24-hour Holter monitoring. An echocardiogram (heart ultrasound) is necessary to rule out other heart disease. Testing for response to medicines that increase heart rate is also often employed. Treatment may vary from none to pacemaker implantation, depending on severity and response to medicines. Anesthesia can be dangerous for dogs with SSS.