Response to the letter by Anthony S. Leicht.: Bradycardia-changes in intrinsic rate rather than cardiac autonomic modulation. doi:10.1007/s10286-013-0208-8

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Dear Editor,

We thank Prof. Leicht for the interesting and opportune comments about our paper [1] and the possible mechanisms related to exercise-induced bradycardia (EIB). Although we have not addressed the cardiac intrinsic rate, we agree that modifications on sino-atrial function (SAF) may play an important role on EIB. Further research should be conducted in order to discuss the possible limitations of the usual HRV analysis associated with EIB, based on the evaluation of HRV in different training season periods [2] or employing non-linear methods that allow the use of HRV analysis on dynamic and non-stationary conditions, as the post-exercise recovery period. Our findings are consistent with several studies [3, 4] but different results should also be taken into account [5, 6]. The modality of exercise should also be discriminated. Even though we do agree with Leicht's suggestion about the necessity to examine SAF as a key mechanism, current data indicate that the precise characterization of the EIB is still an open question.

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