

The scheme of ionic currents within a cardiac cycle for a mammalian pacemaker cell (i.e., SA node) is generally described with the background  $[Ca^{2+}]_i$  continually increasing and decreasing. Starting in diastolic depolarization with a slow release of  $Ca^{2+}$  by ryanodine receptors (RyR), from the SR, leads to a rise in  $[Ca^{2+}]_i$ . The SERCA pumps  $Ca^{2+}$  back into the SR and the NCX removes  $[Ca^{2+}]_i$  in exchange for  $Na^+$  ions across the plasma membrane of the cell. The influx of  $Na^+$  ions can lead to a depolarization of the plasma membrane. Thus, opening low voltage-gated T-type  $Ca^{2+}$  channels ( $V_{Ca}$ ) (Hüser *et al.* 2000) and potentially voltage-gated  $Na^+$  channels. The influx of  $Ca^{2+}$  acts on the RyR to cause the ER to dump  $Ca^{2+}$  which results in a calcium induced inhibition of the RyR. Until the  $[Ca^{2+}]_i$  is reduced by the SERCA and NCX, the RyR stay inhibited but will start leaking  $Ca^{2+}$  as  $[Ca^{2+}]_i$  returns to a low level to then repeat the cycle (Subramani and Subbanna, 2006). In the mammalian heart, the pace making sinus node cells do not contain a  $K^+$  current ( $I_{K1}$ ) which is thought to be one reason the pacing cells do not show a resting membrane potential (Ophthof, 2007).