

Head Trauma Scenario



Dispatch

Just as you are finishing your homework, the radio crackles and the tone goes off. You are dispatched to a dorm for a conscious, intoxicated 19 yr old male. How would you go to the call?

- A. Run as fast as you can to the location.
- B. Grab your jump bag and radio, and walk quickly over.
- C. Take the time to put away your homework, then walk over.

A. Run as fast as you can to the location

Wrong.

As you are running over, you remember you left your bag and radio in your room. On the way back, you trip and scrape your knees. Now there are two people who need to be treated.

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B. Grab your jump bag and radio, and walk quickly over

Correct!

You have all of your equipment to help treat the patient, and you arrived in six minutes!

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C. Take the time to put away your homework, then walk over

Incorrect.

You are late and the call is almost done by the time you get there.

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Scene Safety

The room is small for all four people to fit into. You all put your bags near the walls which leaves a clear path to the door. Before you help the patient, you should:

- A. Make sure there is nothing dangerous in the room (fire from a candle)
- B. Put your gloves on
- C. Put your own mask on before assisting others
- D. A and B

A. Make sure there is nothing dangerous in the room (fire from a candle)

Yes, the open flame could burn you or your equipment. Are there other things you are forgetting?

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B. Put your gloves on

True, gloves are important in keeping you safe from bacteria and viruses. Is there something else you are forgetting?

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C. Put your own mask on before assisting others

If the call requires it yes, but this is not likely. Are there other things to consider here?

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D. A and B

Yes! You should always put on gloves before interacting with patients. You should also check the scene to make sure it is safe.

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Initial Impression

You approach the patient who is lying down in bed. He has scrapes on his face, but they are not bleeding. He appears to be sleeping, but wakes up when you walk in. As you introduce yourself, you notice he is not focusing on you. What are some questions you should ask?

- 1) Do you know where you are?
- 2) Do you know what day it is?
- 3) Do you know who the president is?
- 4) Would you like to go to the hospital?

[Answer](#)

Answer

These all are the types of questions you should ask to assess how conscious he is.

[Continue](#)

More information

You ask your patient how did he get so scraped up? He responds that he fell several hours ago after drinking and thinks he hit his head. An important question during calls involving head injuries is: do your neck or spine hurt? Your patient responds that neither of them hurt, so you do not put on a c-collar.

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Transport Decision

Your patient is able to answer all of your questions correctly, but he takes longer than you would expect to think about his answers. He isn't sure if he should go to the hospital so you advise him that it's a good idea to get head injuries checked out.

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Vitals

Vitals are taken.

Pulse: 74, strong and regular

Respirations: 14

Blood Pressure: 138/70

Skin: Warm, pink, and dry

Eyes: Pupils are equally round, but react sluggishly to light

Which vital sign is a cause for concern?

If you would like to know more about how to take vitals, go to Weekend Training!

Email ems@vassar.edu for more information.

Pulse

This is a normal pulse. The resting heart rate should be between 60 and 90 beats per minute.

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Respirations

Respirations should be between 12 and 20 breaths per minute.

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Blood Pressure

The blood pressure is a little high, but not alarmingly so. You take three sets of vitals to make sure they are consistent.

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Skin

The skin is unremarkable and not a cause for concern.

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Eyes

Correct.

Pupils should be equally round and contract quickly when light is shone in them.

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Secondary Assessment

While waiting for the ambulance to arrive, you have time to ask the patient for more information. Take a SAMPLE history! What are some questions you could ask in this situation?

S: Signs and Symptoms

A: Allergies

M: Medications

P: Past Pertinent History

L: Last oral intake

E: Events

[More Information](#)

More Information

Your patient tells you his head hurts, and he feels dizzy and nauseous. He says the light does not make his head hurt more.

He does not have any allergies and is not taking any medications.

You ask if he's had a concussion before. He says he has not.

His last oral intake was at 18:00 then drank five beers over two hours.

[Ask about OPQRST!](#)

OPQRST

Continue

O: Onset

When did you hit your head?

P: Provocation/Palliation

Does anything make it feel better or worse?

Q: Quality

Can you describe how your head feels?

R: Radiating

Does the pain radiate into your neck?

S: Severity

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much does your head hurt?

T: Timing

Is there a constant pain or does it fade in and out?

Other questions to ask

Did you lose consciousness?

Have you thrown up since hitting your head?

[The ambulance arrives!](#)

Transport

The ambulance arrives, but your patient is still unsure if he wants to go to the hospital. What should you do?

- A. Go back to your room.
- B. Gather up your equipment, tell the paramedics the patient's information and vitals, then leave.
- C. Advise the patient it's a good idea to go to the hospital to check for brain bleeds. Give the paramedics the patient's vitals and relevant information.
- D. Start chatting about the weather with the paramedics.

Go back to your room

You leave and the paramedics decide not to transport your patient. You get called back later when he starts throwing up.

Return to [Transport](#)

Leave quickly

You give the paramedics the relevant information and leave. They decide not to transport your patient. You get called back later when he starts throwing up.

Return to [Transport](#)

Advise your patient

You give the paramedics the relevant information and advise your patient to go to the hospital to check for internal injuries. The hospital finds a blood clot in the brain that needs to be operated on immediately.

[Return to Baldwin](#)

Chat with the paramedics

You start discussing the weather with the paramedics who ignore you. They decide not to transport your patient and everyone leaves. You get called back later when he starts throwing up.

Return to [Transport](#)

Conclusion

You write up your report and go to sleep.

If you would like to know more about what we do, go to Weekend Training!

Email ems@vassar.edu for more information.