Chapter 11
Assessment of the Medical Patient
U.S. DOT Objectives Directory

U.S. DOT Objectives are covered and/or supported by the PowerPoint™ Slide Program and Notes for Emergency Care, 11th Ed. Please see the Chapter 11 correlation below.

**KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE**

- **3-4.1** Describe the unique needs for assessing an individual with a specific chief complaint with no known prior history. Slide 4
- **3-4.2** Differentiate between the history and physical exam that is performed for responsive patients with no known prior history and responsive patients with a known prior history. Slides 4-15
- **3-4.3** Describe the needs for assessing an individual who is unresponsive. Slides 4, 16-22
- **3-4.4** Differentiate between the assessment that is performed for a patient who is unresponsive or has an altered mental status and other medical patients requiring assessment. Slides 4, 6, 16-17
- **3-4.5** Attend to the feelings that these patients might be experiencing.

(cont.)
**SKILLS**

- **3-4.6** Demonstrate the patient assessment skills that should be used to assist a patient who is responsive with no known history.
- **3-4.7** Demonstrate the patient assessment skills that should be used to assist a patient who is unresponsive or has an altered mental status.
Medical Assessment

Determine if

Responsive  OR  Unresponsive
Responsive Medical Patient

Focused History and Physical Exam
Steps in Focused History and Physical Exam

- Responsive medical patient
  - History of present illness
  - SAMPLE history
  - Focused physical exam
  - Baseline vital signs
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SAMPLE History

S = Signs and symptoms
A = Allergies
M = Medications
P = Pertinent past history
L = Last oral intake
E = Events leading to injury or illness
SAMPLE and OPQRST

- Patient should be initial source of information.
- Family and friends may also be a useful source.
SAMPLE and OPQRST

✦ Certain medical conditions and chief complaints may allow for further treatment and/or assessment.

✦ In these cases, you will need to get certain additional information.
Get Additional Information

- Chest pain
  - With prescribed nitroglycerin

- Difficulty breathing
  - With prescribed inhaler

- Allergies
  - With prescribed epinephrine auto-injector
Focused Physical Exam

As appropriate, assess:

- Head
- Neck
- Chest
- Abdomen
- Pelvis
- Extremities
- Posterior
Baseline Vital Signs

- Respirations
- Pulse
- Skin color, temperature, condition
Baseline Vital Signs

- Pupils
- Blood pressure
- Oxygen saturation, according to local protocol
Further Steps

- Provide any interventions required for specific conditions.
- Transport the patient.
Unresponsive Medical Patient

Focused History and Physical Exam
Steps in Focused History and Physical Exam

Unresponsive medical patient:

- Rapid physical exam
- Baseline vital signs
- Consider requesting ALS
- History of present illness
- SAMPLE history
Rapid Assessment

Start with rapid assessment:

- Head
- Neck
- Chest
- Abdomen
- Pelvis
- Extremities
- Posterior
Baseline Vital Signs

- Respirations
- Pulse
- Skin color, temperature, condition
- Pupils
- Blood pressure
- Oxygen saturation, according to local protocol
History of Present Illness

O = Onset
P = Provocation
Q = Quality
R = Radiation
S = Severity
T = Time
SAMPLE History

S = Signs and symptoms
A = Allergies
M = Medications
P = Pertinent past history
L = Last oral intake
E = Events leading to injury or illness
Further Steps

- Provide any interventions required for specific conditions.
- Transport the patient.
Review Questions

1. Explain how and why the focused history and physical exam for a medical patient differs from the focused history and physical exam for a trauma patient.

2. Explain how and why the focused history and physical exam for a responsive patient differs from the focused history and physical exam for an unresponsive medical patient.
Street Scenes

- What priority is this patient?
- What are the next steps in the management of this patient?
What part of the focused history and physical exam should follow next?

What signs or symptoms would you look for to determine if the patient was getting better or worse?