

# Altered Level of Consciousness

For on site tutorials as part of the remote simulation program  
Professional Entry Module: UG3

*This project was possible due to funding made available by Health Workforce Australia*

# Sponsor

This project was possible due to funding made available by





# General Aims

- Learn in an inter-professional setting
- Apply theory to practice
- Reflect critically on practice

# Ground Rules

- Participation
- Privacy
- Confidentiality
- Disclaimer
- Debriefing
- Mobile phones

# Session Objectives

## Clinical practice

- Assess the patient using DRS ABCDEFG
- Implement initial interventions and investigations
- Seek advice

## Teamwork

- Handover using the ISBAR tool

# ISBAR

Identify

Situation

Background

Assessment

Recommendation



You are called to see Miley Cyrus who is a 48 year women admitted with acute ascites. She has had 5.5 litres drained in the preceding 24 hours and 200mls of 20% albumin administered. Her relative has caught your attention as they have asked you for some help. They say Miley has just had a fit.

**DRS ABCDE**  
**(DEFG)**





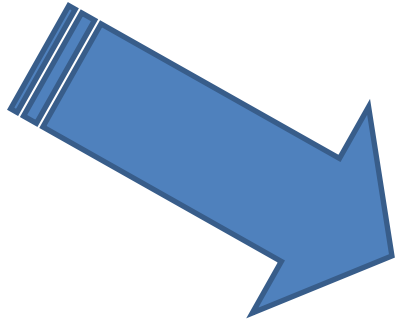
# Let's go see Miley





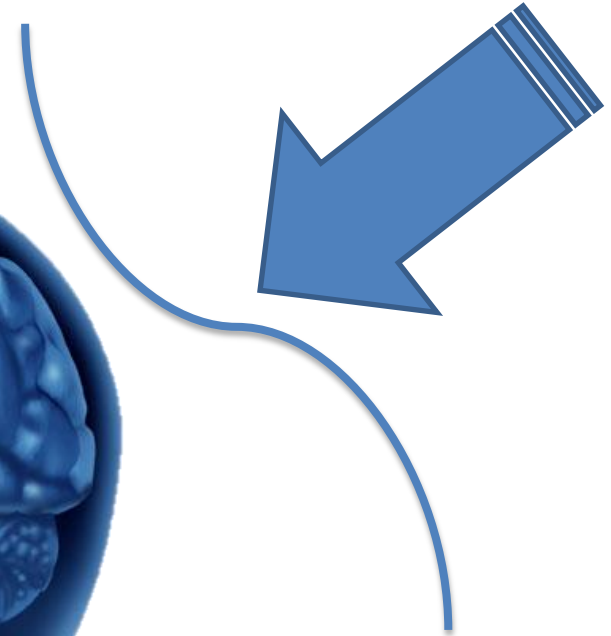
# The unconscious patient

**DIRECT**



# CAUSES

**INDIRECT**



- **TRAUMA**
- **INFECTION**
- **HAEMORRHAGE**
- **SPACE OCCUPYING LESIONS**
- **SEIZURES**
- **DRUGS**

- **RESPIRATORY**
- **CIRCULATORY**
- **METABOLIC**
- **ENDOCRINE**

# Interventions & Investigations

## Simple

- 12 Lead ECG
- Bloods: FBC, EUC, LFT, gasses  
Coags, culture, drug screen
- Urinalysis, Urine toxicology screen
- Chest X-Ray

## Advanced

- CT Brain
- EEG

**DRS ABCDE  
(DEFG)**



# Seizures

**DRS ABCDE  
(DEFG)**



- Protect the airway
- Position the patient
- Supplemental O<sup>2</sup>
- Attach monitoring
- Start an IV
- Check the glucose
- Stop the seizure
- Seek advice

# Alcohol withdrawal

- Assess risk in all patients
- Delirium Tremens
  - DRS ABCDE (DEFG)
  - Restraint – security/pharmacology
- Supportive care
- Diazepam
- Thiamine +/- glucose

**DRS ABCDE  
(DEFG)**



# Stroke

- Protect the airway
- Position the patient
- Supplemental O<sup>2</sup>
- Attach monitoring
- Start an IV
- Check the glucose
- Manage the BP
- Treat seizures
- Seek advice

**DRS ABCDE  
(DEFG)**



# Meningitis

**DRS ABCDE  
(DEFG)**



- Protect yourself -PPE
- Blood cultures
- Lumbar puncture if **NO** signs of raised intracranial pressure
- Commence antibiotics
  - Cefotaxime/ceftriaxone+benzylpenicillin
  - ?acyclovir?
- Treat seizures
- Maintain euglycaemia
- Supportive care
- Public health implications?



# Summary

- Structured approach to the patient with an altered LOC
  - DRS ABCDE (DEFG)
  - Multidisciplinary team based approach
- Many potential causes
  - Pathologies **directly/indirectly** affecting the brain
- Communication
  - Patient
  - Team
  - Senior help!

# References

- Department of Health and Ageing. Guidelines for the early clinical and public health management of meningococcal disease in Australia, **P3 - 4786**. Barton: Commonwealth of Australia; Oct 2007.
- National Stroke Foundation. Clinical guidelines for stroke management 2010. Melbourne Australia; 2010.
- National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. The epilepsies: the diagnosis and management of the epilepsies in adults and children in primary and secondary care, **CG 137**. Manchester UK; Jan 2012.
- Hanna J, Nichol A. Status epilepticus: an intensive care medicine problem. *Anaesth Intensive Care* 2012; **13**: 148-151.
- Ministry of Health NSW. Infants and children - acute management of bacterial meningitis, **PD2012\_065**. North Sydney Australia; Dec 2012.
- Ministry of Health NSW. Drug and alcohol withdrawal clinical practice guidelines - NSW, **GL2008\_011**. North Sydney Australia; Jul 2008.

## Acknowledgments

**Topic expert author:** Morgan Sherwood

### **Educational consultants:**

Stephanie O'Regan Nurse Educator SCSSC

Leonie Watterson Director Simulation Division  
SCSSC

John Vassiliadis Deputy Director SCSSC

Morgan Sherwood Simulation Fellow SCSSC

# Disclaimer

Care has been taken to confirm the accuracy of the information presented and to describe generally accepted practices. However the authors, editor and publisher are not responsible for errors or omissions or for any consequences from the application of the information in this presentation and make no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the contents of the presentation.

## Copyright and Permission to Reproduce

This work is copyright. It may be reproduced for study or training purposes subject to the inclusion of an acknowledgement of the source: Health Workforce Australia EdWISE program. It may not be reproduced for commercial usage or sale.