

### (1) Causes of Head Injuries

- Common causes of head injuries include falls, traffic accidents, industrial accidents, sports-related mishaps and physical assaults.

### (2) Consequences of Head Injuries

- Injury to scalp, causing bleeding or haematoma formation under the skin;
- Skull fracture: a serious head trauma requiring immediate medical attention;
- Intracranial hemorrhage: blood accumulation will cause intracranial pressure to rise and even death;
- Brain injury: abrupt external forces hitting on the brain may injure brain tissues, in serious cases it damages the brain function and result in death;
- Brain concussion: the brain functions are affected temporarily, e.g. a transient loss of consciousness or memory.

### (3) First Aid for Managing Head Injuries

- Send the patient to hospital as soon as possible in case of serious injury;
- If the patient has lost consciousness, adopt the following first aid measures:
  - maintain the airway open: keep the patient in lateral position, avoid moving him/her unless the patient has breathing difficulty;
  - stop bleeding: apply pressure to the wound to stop bleeding.

### (4) Important Medical History

- Medical history or information provided by the relatives or witnesses of the accident is helpful to the doctor's diagnosis.
  - cause and details of accident, any loss of consciousness and for how long;
  - any memory loss;
  - any vomiting and number of times;
  - any seizures;
  - medical history and medicines taken;
  - any other symptoms before and after the accident, e.g. chest pain, dizziness;
  - any alcohol or drug intake before the accident.

## **(5) Treatment at the Accident & Emergency Department**

- Upon arrival at an Accident & Emergency department, the triage nurse would assess patient to determine the priority of treatment;
- Immediate treatment will be given for serious cases with subsequent examinations and inpatient care arranged;
- Waiting for treatment may be needed for minor cases and healthcare professional will provide care at the earliest possible time;
- X-ray examination is optional for minor head injury. It is an aid for diagnosis of skull fractures.

## **(6) Observation and Care After Discharge**

- Patients with minor head injuries may be discharged home. In the first 24 hours after injury, careful observation of the patient's condition by family members is important.
- The following may be signs of deterioration and the patient should return to hospital at once:
  - gradual loss of consciousness and difficult to wake up from sleep;
  - seizures;
  - severe headache;
  - repeated vomiting;
  - disorientation and bad temper;
  - carer is doubtful or worry of the patient's condition.

## **(7) Post-traumatic Brain Syndrome**

- Some patients may experience certain symptoms after a brain injury, e.g. dizziness, headache, tinnitus, fatigue, difficulty remembering and concentrating, depression, etc. Most symptoms will disappear in a few months but may last longer for some patients.

## **(8) Prevention of Head Injuries**

- Wear a suitable helmet when doing dangerous work, exercise or when cycling or driving;
- Take good care of children and elderly to prevent accidents.