

SECTION: M-9

PROTOCOL TITLE: Autonomic Dysreflexia

REVISED: 15 April 2006

GENERAL COMMENTS: AD is notable in chronic spinal cord injured patients with injuries T-6 and above, manifested by (relative) HTN, sinus congestion, headache, altered mental status, seizures, and other signs and symptoms of hypertensive crisis. A noxious/painful (commonly a full bladder) stimuli is usually the cause, and its removal may eliminate the signs and symptoms without the need for pharmacological therapy.

BLS SPECIFIC CARE: *See adult General Medical Care Protocol M-1*

Find and remove possible causes.

- Loosen all restrictive clothing.
- Ensure Foley catheter is not kinked or occluded. Empty SLOWLY, and record output if feasible.
- Attempt to relieve pressure on any bed sores/ wounds, etc.
- Attempt to correct any other noxious causes.
- Provide a low stimulus environment.

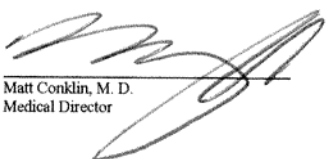
ILS SPECIFIC CARE: *See adult General Medical Care Protocol M-1*

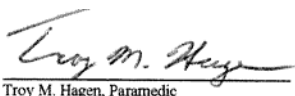
ALS SPECIFIC CARE:

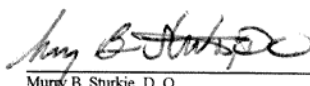
- Assess and treat underlying painful stimuli.

Pharmacological Therapy (attempt to remedy causes first, if rapidly feasible)

- NTG Spray:
 - SL: 0.4 mg SL spray/tab every 3-5 minutes PRN. Hold for B/P <90, Viagra use (or similar drug) within previous 24 hours, or suspected right-sided MI.
- NTG Paste:
 - TD: 0.5-1.5 inches applied topically (TD) to non-hairy area of trunk. Hold for B/P <90, Viagra use (or similar drug) within previous 24 hours, or right-sided MI. Wipe off if hypotension develops.


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AUTONOMIC DYSREFLEXIA

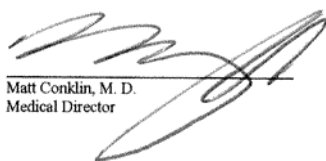
AUTONOMIC DYSREFLEXIA

PHYSICIAN PEARLS

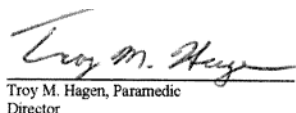
Most spinal cord injury patients will be far more familiar with this condition than many medical providers. Their assistance in determining (and relieving) the noxious stimuli is invaluable and should be enlisted whenever possible.

Additionally, the patient may be prescribed an emergency anti-hypertensive for crisis situations, Hydralazine and Procardia (Nifedipine) being two common examples. When the situation permits, the medic may notify on line medical control to use the patient's prescribed medication instead, as that will often be more effective for the patient than nitroglycerine.

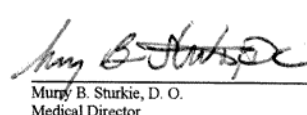
Use caution in administering nitrates without IV access.



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