

Case Study: Training, Experience and Resources Saves Lives

Case History

A patient presented to a remote site medical treatment facility. He had been previously diagnosed with malaria, was sweaty and had a fever. He was nauseous, anxious, had chest discomfort and was very tired.

It would be understandable to focus on the malaria, prescribing anti-malaria medications, as well as treat the nausea, fever and muscle aches. However, the MSS Paramedic noticed that the patient's blood pressure was unusually high.

The high blood pressure and history of chest discomfort meant that the next logical step was to perform a 12 Lead ECG.

The 12 Lead ECG confirmed that the chest discomfort was actually a sign of an Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS). This directed immediate treatment away from malaria and towards the ACS.

This is the value of experience combined with proper equipment.

Following Advanced Cardiac Life Support guidelines, the patient was admitted, chest pain controlled, blood pressure reduced and vital signs stabilised. He was then transported to a local facility, which was fortunately able to continue care.

What is Definitive Care?

A Definitive Care facility is the medical facility where a patient receives medical care that definitively manages an injury or medical condition. This can be surgery, cardiology or neurosurgery with their associated specialised units, operating theatre and ICUs.

What this means

In serious cardiac events, the phrase "Time is Muscle" is very appropriate; the longer it takes to provide definitive care and unblock the arteries, the more heart muscle is damaged beyond repair.

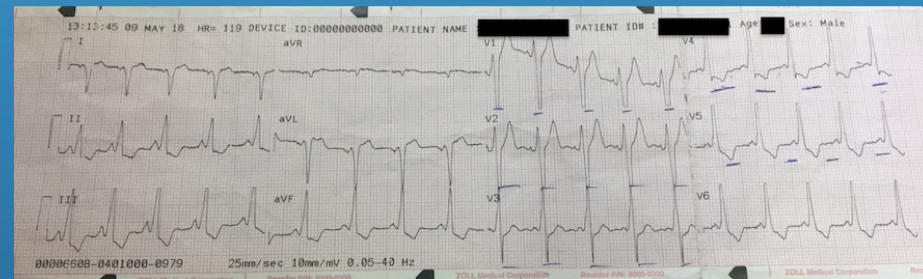
The same principle applies for other medical and trauma emergencies, the earlier a condition is diagnosed, the faster that treatment is started and the sooner the patient reaches definitive care, the better the outcome.

Conclusion

On a remote site, properly organised and equipped healthcare facilities with trained and experienced healthcare professionals can save lives.

Site based medical professionals can provide life saving interventions to minimize further irreversible damage to heart muscle, preventing a fatal heart attack.

The 12 Lead ECG below is the patient's actual ECG. It shows some of the changes that indicate an ACS, caused by partial or complete blockage of blood flow to sections of the heart.



Risks are not only industrial or accident related. Robust health and safety practices cannot prevent medical risks such as Heart Attack, Stroke and other medical or surgical emergencies.

The sooner the arteries are unblocked, the greater chance the patient has of survival

About 90% of people who experience out of hospital cardiac arrest die

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