



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.)



U.S. DOT Objectives Directory

*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



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



SAMPLE and OPQRST

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

(cont.)



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**

(cont.)



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

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SAMPLE History

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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?

(cont.)



Street Scenes

- * 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?**