

ABSTRACT : DR. JUSTIN CURRAN

The Unconscious Patient

The assessment of the unconscious patient is always a challenge.

There is immediate pressure to identify life threatening causes that require timely intervention combined with the complexity of a broad differential diagnosis.

Assessment requires a systematic approach to avoid missing something while being faced with time pressure. It is something that is onerous for those of us who manage patients with an altered mental status on a regular basis and even more demanding, if it is a rare event in your practice.

I will provide a framework for assessment and early interventions required in the management of patients with reduced GCS, starting with the initial assessment of the ABCDs, followed by a focused examination and bed side testing.

Review the immediate treatments available, then explore the differential diagnoses in more detail including a paediatric specific differential.