Instructions

This is a case study – training evolution - for the management of a victim of multiple gunshot wounds. This training can be administered as a table top discussion or a practical scenario. A practical scenario would be the best means if the equipment is available.

The patient in this scenario is typical of this situation - an 18 year old male with a poor social history and living in an urban setting. When delivering the training the instructor should only give the information that the students request or that would be readily apparent upon arriving on the scene of the incident.

Students must treat the patient in accordance with their services local protocols. Class should be from 30 minutes to 1 hour long.

Each student should give a verbal report of their findings and treatment along with a report to a receiving facility.

Scenario

You and your partner are assigned to Ambulance 15 stationed with Engine 22. It is 2300 hours on a warm Saturday night. Your station is dispatched to an address located within your response area for an 18 year old male with several gunshot wounds. Police are en route.

Within 5 minutes you will be on scene.

Question: What are some precautions you can make prior to your arrival on scene?

Possible answers:
- Are police on scene and is the scene safe?
- Use appropriate PPE.

On arrival you are directed by an officer to a young male located inside an apartment complex. He is lying supine on the floor. There are towels placed over his chest and legs in an attempt to stop the bleeding. The towels are bright red from blood.

Physical assessment:

Head/Ear/Eyes/Nose/Throat: unresponsive with snoring respirations, no signs of visible trauma to head or neck area. Blood is draining from nose and mouth. Pupils dilated and slow to react. Patient’s skin is pale and diaphoretic.

Chest: Single entrance wound, right of sternum at the third intercostals space.
Question: What would be some significant findings that you might expect on examination of the chest?

Appropriate answers:

- Decreased breath sounds on right side.
- Additional injuries to chest.
- Air leaking from chest wound.
- Paradoxical movement of chest wall.

Abdomen: Two gunshot wounds, first one in the upper left quadrant, second in the lower right quadrant both with heavy bleeding.

Question: Where are the different quadrants of the abdomen?

Appropriate answer:

The quadrants of the abdomen consist of the upper left, upper right, lower left and the lower right. The umbilicus is the point where the lines that divide the abdomen into four parts transect.

Question: What vital organs could have been hit in this patient?

Answer: Upper left quadrant could include the stomach, spleen, pancreas, intestines, or even diaphragm. Lower right could include the intestines, distal portions of the liver, appendix, or even kidney.

Pelvis: The patient's pelvis is stable on exam

Extremities: There are two gunshot wounds in the patients left leg at the thigh, there is also an odd angulation to the leg.

Question: What is significant about this angulation of the leg?

Answer: If the angulation is mid thigh or mid tib/fib than the EMT must suspect a long bone fracture. If the angulation is at the joint do not rule out injury from falling or from the bullet.

That concludes the rapid trauma assessment for this victim. The answers to the following questions should be based on local protocols and procedures.

Question: After this rapid trauma assessment how are you going to prioritize your treatment options?
EMS Case Study #5  Gunshot Wound

Questions: Is this patient showing signs and symptoms of shock?

Question: How would you manage this patient’s airway?

Question: Would this patient benefit from a rapid transport or by taking time to stabilize the injuries prior to transport.

Question: If there is going to be a significant transport time would the use of an air ambulance be appropriate?

Summary

Your safety is always paramount when dealing with a victim of a violent crime. Though there is a trend for EMS providers to wear ballistic vest and body armor, the best way to protect you is to not get in situation to begin with. Your training is for the care and transport of patients not the apprehension of criminals.