

STROKE

Step-by-step



There are two major types of stroke

Haemorrhagic stroke: A blood vessel with a stretched or damaged wall bursts. This interrupts blood supply, and the leaked blood interferes with nearby brain cells. Because there is no spare room inside the skull, a large volume of leaked blood can squash the rest of the brain.

Ischaemic stroke: Blood clots can occur in brain arteries or travel from distant vessels until they get stuck. They stop blood flow to an area of brain. If the clot breaks down quickly, the patient recovers quickly. This is called a Transient Ischaemic Attack. (TIA).

Scenario

A 55-year old man is heard bumping into furniture by colleague in the next office. He is agitated and not speaking clearly. One side of his face is not moving well. He is brought straight to the medical centre. Your notes say that he is a diabetic and a smoker.

Task

Some of you will be asked to tackle a similar practice scenario this month.

Discuss your approach with your colleagues before then.

Question

Why would hospitals like stroke patients to arrive within a few hours of symptom onset?



★ **Attend ABC if necessary.**

★ **Give oxygen 8 L / minute by mask.**

★ **Call 000 urgently.**

★ **Could this be a stroke?**

- **Ask to smile. Is one side weak?**
- **Ask to lift their arm. Is one side weak?**
- **Ask to repeat a sentence. Are there slurred, missed or wrong words?**
- **Ask about vision. Is there an area the patient can no longer see?**

★ **Check blood sugar. Low sugar can mimic a stroke.**

★ **Record the last time the patient was symptom-free.**

★ **Send to hospital even if symptoms resolve in a few minutes. This may be a TIA and warn of an imminent stroke.**