Syncope

Definition
- **Syncope** – a sudden, transient Loss of Consciousness that usually occurs secondary to a period of Cerebral Ischemia (hypoxia) caused by hypotension and is usually self-limiting but is potentially Life Threatening.

Syncope

- **Vasodepressor (Vasovagal)** Syncope
  - **Postural (Orthostatic)** Hypotension

Vasodepressor Syncope

- Common Faint
- Most Common Emergency in the Dental Office
- Malamed says greater than 50%
- O’Brien says greater than 90%
- Can lead to Death from Anoxia or Aspiration

Pathophysiology

- Stress or Pain or Fright
- “Fight or Flight” syndrome
- Adrenaline Flows
- Blood is pumped to the Legs
- Patient doesn’t Fight or Flee
- Blood Pools in the Legs
- Hypotension and Hypoxia

Prevention

- Adequate Psychological Evaluation
- Observation and Communication with the Patient (most important)
- Proper Positioning
- Possible premedication or other sedation techniques
- Referral if necessary
Signs and Symptoms
- Feeling of Warmth (hot)
- Pale and Perspiration
- “Feeling Bad or Faint”
- Nauseated (feel sick)
- Tachycardia to Bradycardia
- Hypotension, Hypoxia, Loss of Consciousness

Before Syncope
- Good Communication and Observation (you can’t miss first four)
- Reassure the patient and tell them what you are going to do
- Put the patient in a Supine Position with Legs Elevated
- Let them breathe some Oxygen
- Full recovery in minutes and you may be able to continue treatment

Management Syncope
- P - Position - Supine with Legs Elevated
- A - Airway - Head Tilt and Chin Lift
- B - Breathing - Look, Listen, Feel and if breathing Normally start Oxygen
- C - Circulation - Signs of Circulation

Management Syncope
- D - Definitive Treatment -
  - Maintain Airway
  - Use Aromatic Ammonia as a Diagnostic Tool
  - If patient does not become conscious, then Call 911
  - Take Vital Signs and watch for Vomiting and Seizures

Even if patient becomes conscious, must observe and then send them home with escort and make preparations for next time

Postural Hypotension
### Definition

- A disorder of the autonomic system in which syncope occurs when the patient assumes an upright position due to a drop in the systolic blood pressure or 20 mm of Hg or more causing an inability of the heart to pump adequate oxygenated blood to the brain.

### Comparison

- Probably the Second most common cause of Unconsciousness
- Not caused by Anxiety
- Good - Fastest Recovery period
- Bad - No Pre-syncope Signs
- The Incidence increases with Age and Hypertension

### Predisposing Factors

- Advanced Age
- Prolonged Recumbence
- Anti-Hypertensive Medications
- Drug Administration
- Late Pregnancy
- Large Varicose Veins

### Prevention

- Good History
- Avoid keeping patient in a reclined position for an extended period
- Always put patients up in stages
- Have them sit on the side of the chair
- Always stand in front of the patient when they stand

### Management

- **P** - Position - Supine with Legs Elevated
- **A** - Airway - Head Tilt and Chin Lift
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- **D** - Definitive Treatment -
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Problem

- Because recovery is so fast it would seem relatively harmless
- But what happens is that the patient has a chance to stand before Unconsciousness and thus falls quite a distance causing major injuries in some cases (law suit)

Questions?