

MEN NURSES CORNER

SHOCK

By

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Definition: The term shock is used to describe the clinical appearance of a patient with circulatory insufficiency in which the usual signs of congestive heart failure are absent. It results from a decreased venous return to the heart because of a decrease in blood volume. Sometimes the mechanism responsible for the circulatory failure cannot be determined immediately.

Clinical appearance :

1. Appearance of illness.
2. Weakness.
3. Thready radial pulse.
4. Reduced blood pressure (Systolic)
5. Pallor.
6. Sweating.
7. Tachycardia.
8. Nausea.
9. Restlessness (not always).
10. Confusion.

Method of producing this picture :

1. Inability of the heart to pump enough blood because of weakness.
2. Widespread failure of cell metabolism.
3. Failure of heart to pump because of lack of volume.
4. Lessening of vasoconstrictor tone.
5. Failure of the heart to fill properly because of pericardial tamponade.

Causes :

1. Burns.
2. Trauma.

3. Hæmorrhage.

4. Body fluid loss.

Typical traumatic, secondary or wound shock in which the important alteration is the reduction of blood volume. The reduction of blood volume is the important thing in initiation of shock due to loss of blood or fluid at the site of injury whether mechanical or thermal. As shock progresses the cardiac output continues to decrease even though there is no further reduction in the volume of the circulatory blood. After a critical point has been reached in lowered cardiac output, lowered blood pressure and reduced blood volume, then progressive anoxemia leads to tissue metabolic changes and damage to such organs as the heart, brain and adrenals. While reduction of blood volume is usually the main factor in the production of shock, there is evidence that trauma to tissues adds considerably to the severity of the condition and in some instances may be the dominant factor. Unknown factors, as well as loss of plasma, are also responsible. Bacterial infection when present, and injuries to the long bones followed by pulmonary emboli are also possible reasons.

Neurogenic shock is due to direct action on the nervous system in which vasodilatation occurs as a result of diminished constrictor tone, resulting in low blood pressure.

Pre-disposing causes :

1. Inadequate nutrition.
2. Dehydration.
3. Exposure to excessive cold or heat.
4. Prolonged loss of sleep.

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