

Geriatric Patients

Effects of Aging on Body systems

Cardiovascular Systems

- Hypertension common
- Heart rate and rhythm changes

Respiratory System

- Cough power is diminished
- Increased tendency for infection
- Less air and less exchange of gas due to general decline

Musculoskeletal System

- Osteoporosis common
- Osteoarthritis common

Neurological System

- Brain changes with age
- Clinical depression is common
- Altered mental status is also common

Gastrointestinal System

- Constipation common
- Deterioration of structures in the mouth
- General decline in efficiency of liver
- Impaired swallowing
- Malnutrition as result of deterioration of small intestine

Renal System

- Drug toxicity problems
- General decline in efficiency

Integumentary System

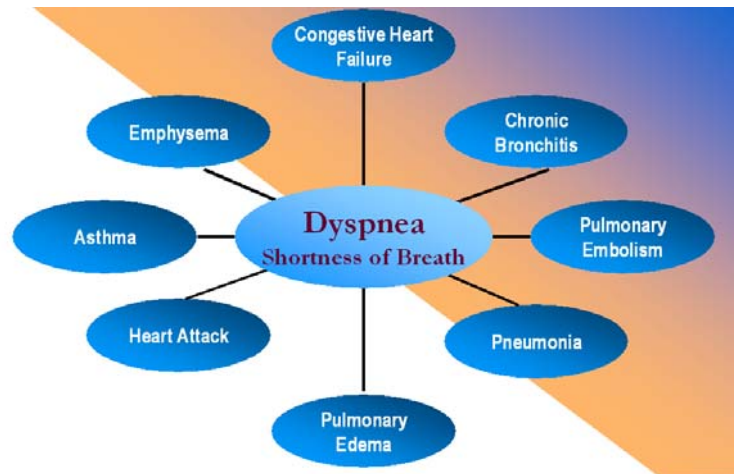
- Perspires less
- Tears more easily
- Heals slowly

Assessment: Geriatric Patient

- Scene Size-up
- Body substance isolation
- Assess environment
- Trauma event ?
- Medical event ?

Initial Assessment

- Mental status
- Airway and breathing
- Circulation
- Skin condition and temperature



Focused History / Physical Exam

- Conduct the focused history and physical exam, followed by a detailed physical exam, based on patients
 - Mechanism of injury (trauma)
 - Or Chief complaint (medical)

Diminished Sight

- Speak calmly
- Be positioned so that the patient can best see you speak
- If the patient has them, make sure he is wearing his/her eyeglasses

Diminished Hearing

- Do not shout
- Increase volume, not pitch, or your voice
- Speak slowly and directly toward the patient
- Note-writing

Geriatric Trauma Patient

- Greater risk for traumatic injury
- Decreased sensitivity to pain
- Maintain a high index of suspicion and treat any complaint of pain as a symptom of serious injury

Geriatric Medical Patient

- One or more chronic diseases and medications
- Communicate with patient
- Obtain SAMPLE History
- Anticipate that the elderly patient may not report or fully report all complaints, ask questions.

Emergency Medical Care

- Maintain a patient airway
- Assess and be prepared to assist ventilations
- Establish and maintain oxygen therapy
- Position the patient
- Transport

Special Geriatric Assessment findings

Chest Pain

- Silent heart attack
- Congestive heart failure (CHF)

