

# TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (II). ACUTE POST-TRAUMATIC ICHT. SECONDARY AND TERTIARY LESIONS

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**34484 Pathology of the nervous system**

**Neurosurgery**

**Topic 18**

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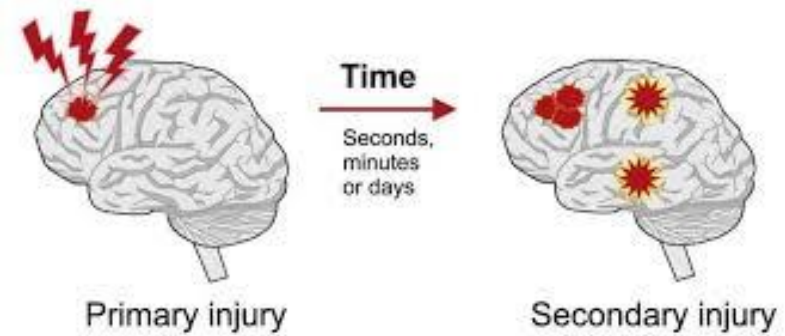
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# Key points

- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Cranial and brain lesions
- Evaluation and staging in emergency room
- Intracranial haemorrhage
  - *Subdural haematoma (SDH) and epidural haemorrhage (EDH)*
- **Progressive injury: Hypoxia and hypotension in TBI**
- **Severe TBI**
  - *Edema, congestion, ischemia, and brain herniation*
  - *Treatment of severe TBI*
- **Complications and sequelae**



# Types of lesions



- Primary

- Contusion and scalp wounds
- Skull / facial fracture
- Brain concussion
- Brain contusion
- Brain laceration
- Diffuse axonal injury

- Secondary  $\Rightarrow \uparrow$  ICP

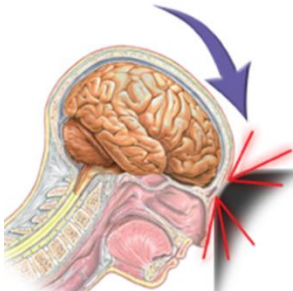
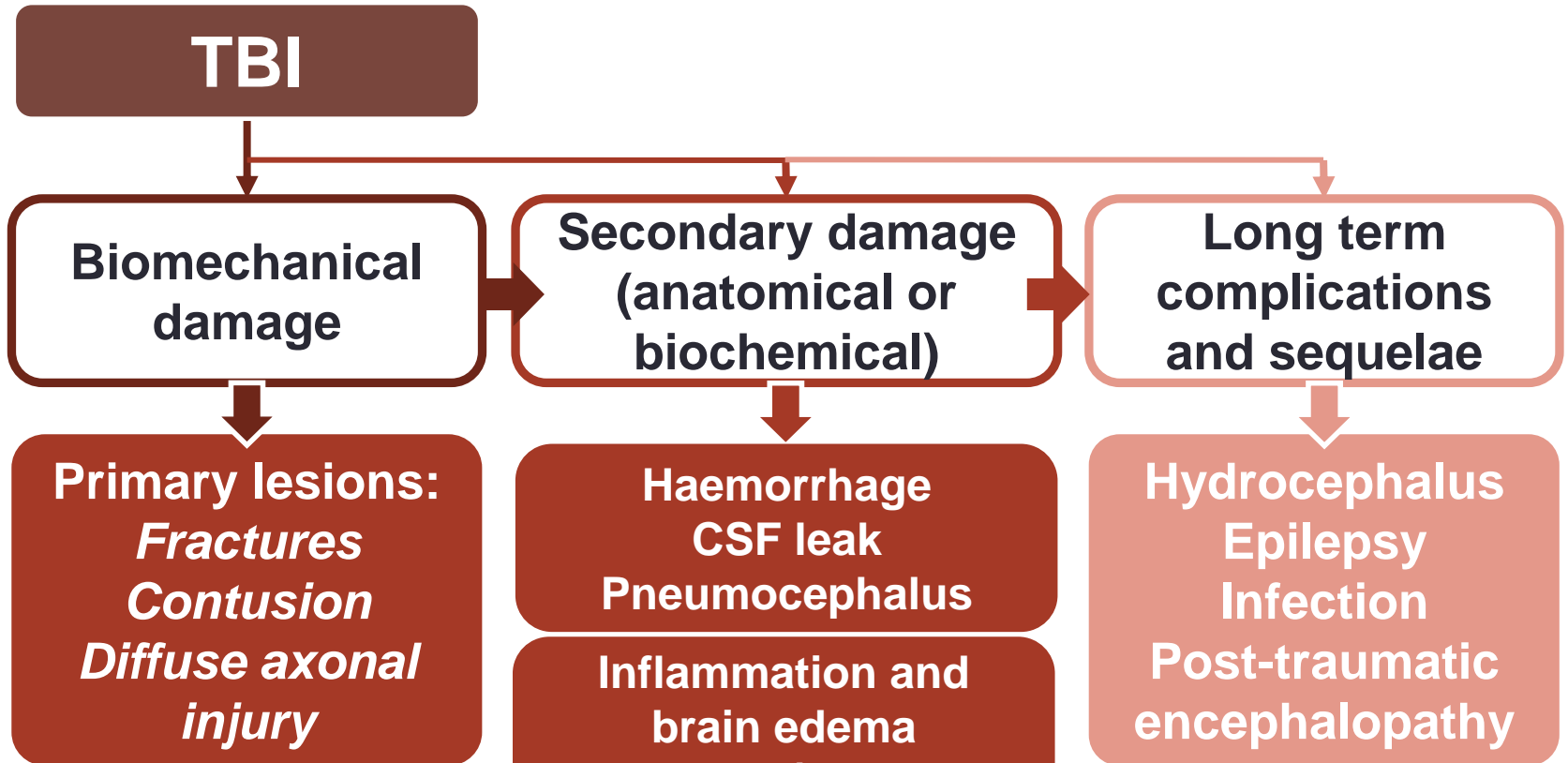
- Intracranial hematomas
- Brain edema / herniation
- Brain congestion (hyperaemia)
- Extracerebral causes: cerebral ischemia / hypoxia

- Tertiary  
(complications and sequelae)

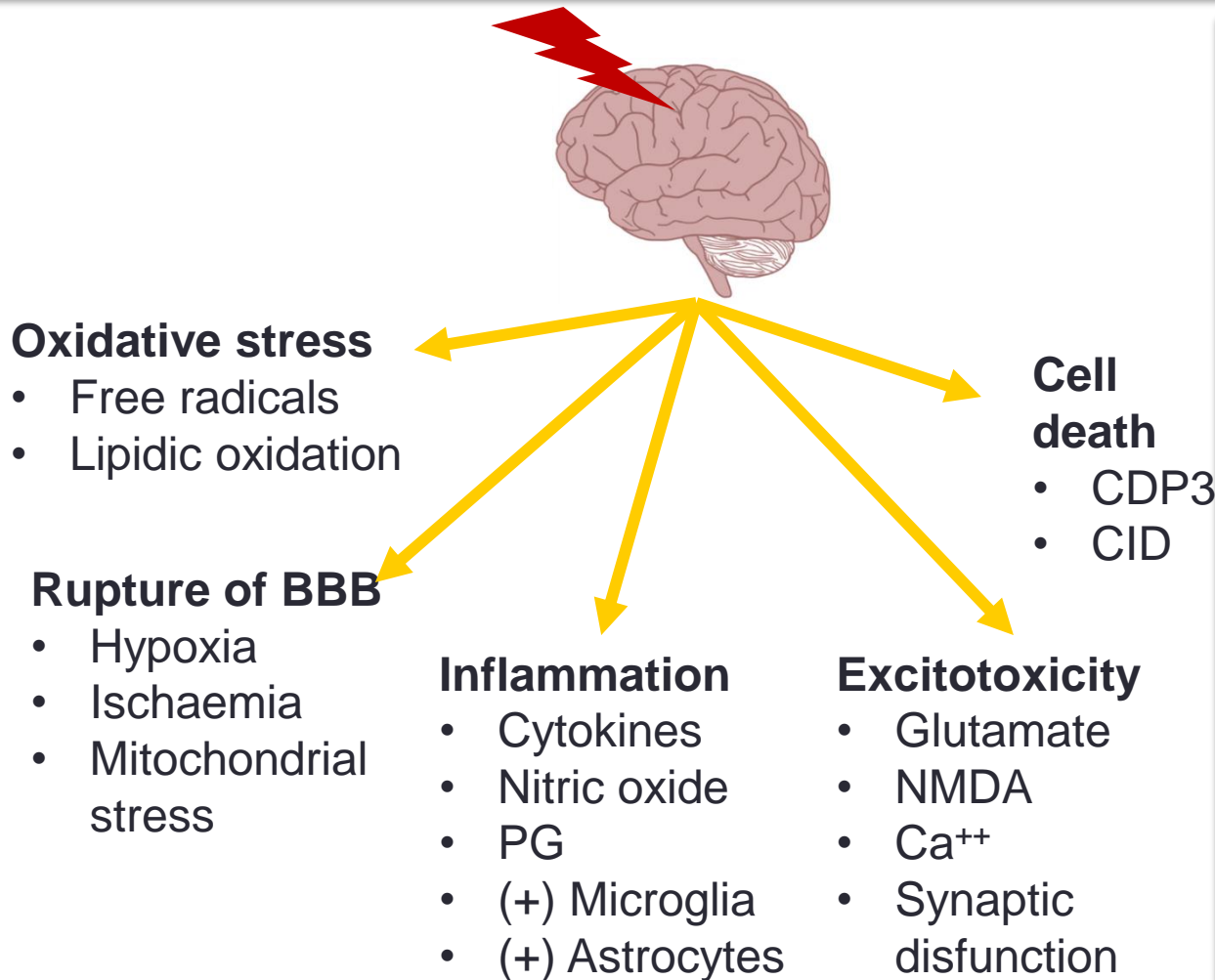
- Hydrocephalus
- Epilepsy
- CSF fistula
- Septic (meningitis, empyema, abscess)
- Post-traumatic encephalopathy



# Types of lesions: progressive damage



# Biochemical damage



## Hypoxic ischemic damage

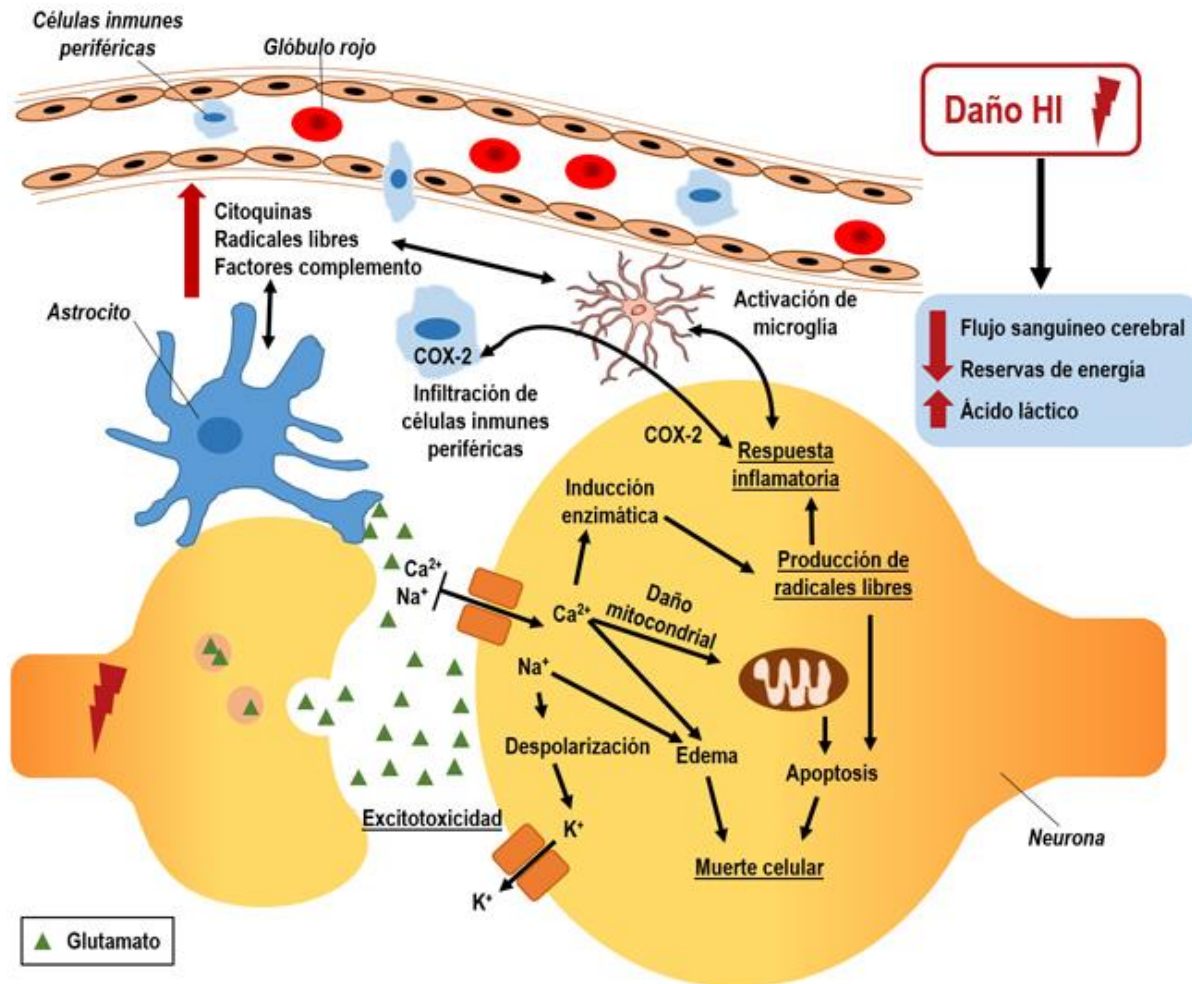
**Activation microglia (inflammatory response)**

**Release of free radicals**

**↑Excitotoxicity (↑Glutamate)**

**Cell death**

# Biochemical damage



**Hypoxic -  
ischaemic  
damage**

**Activation  
microglia  
(inflammatory  
response)**

**Release of free  
radicals**

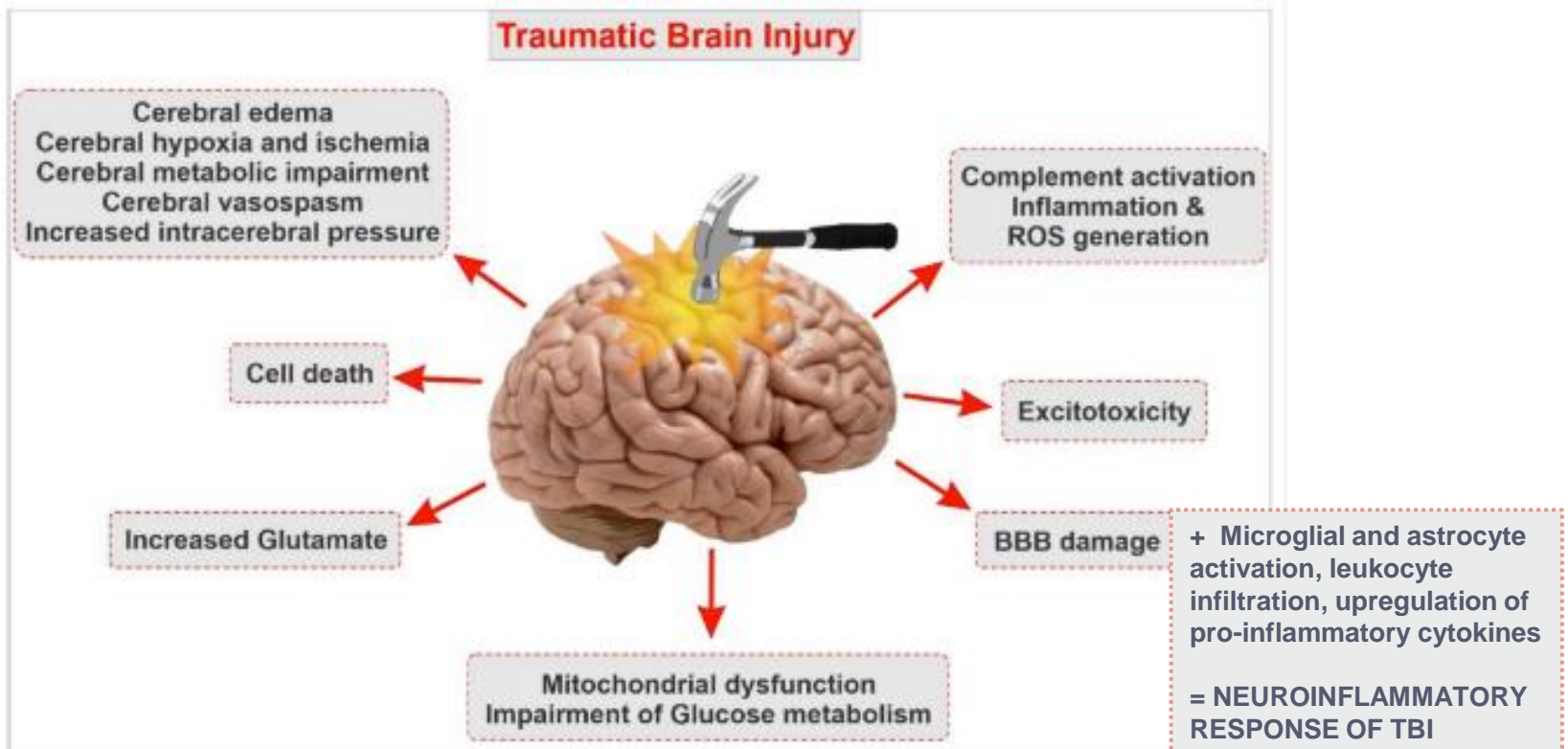
**↑Excitotoxicity  
(↑Glutamate)**

**Cell death**





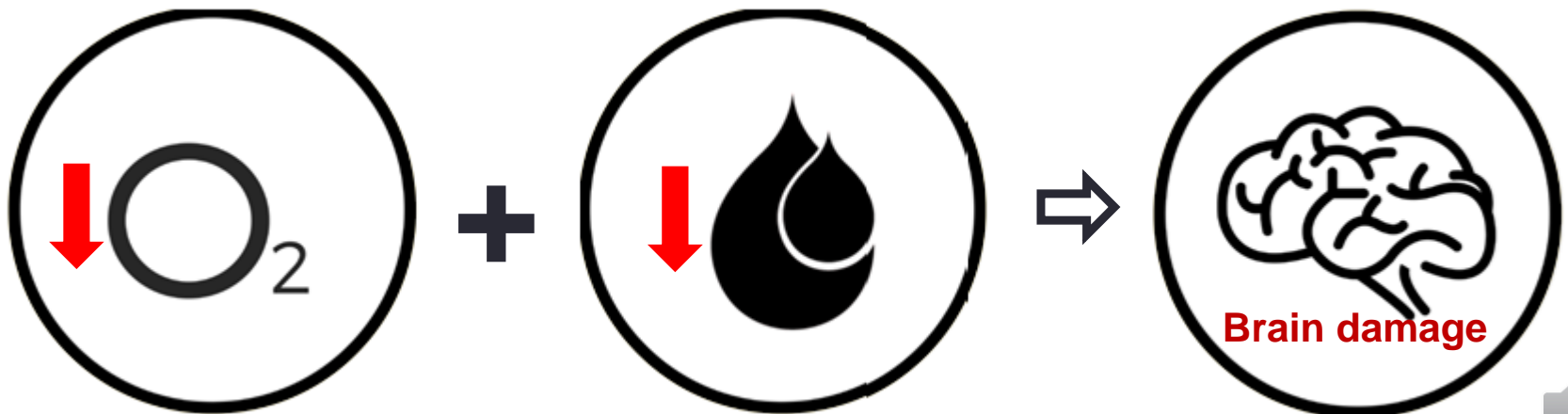
# Biochemical damage



# Biochemical damage

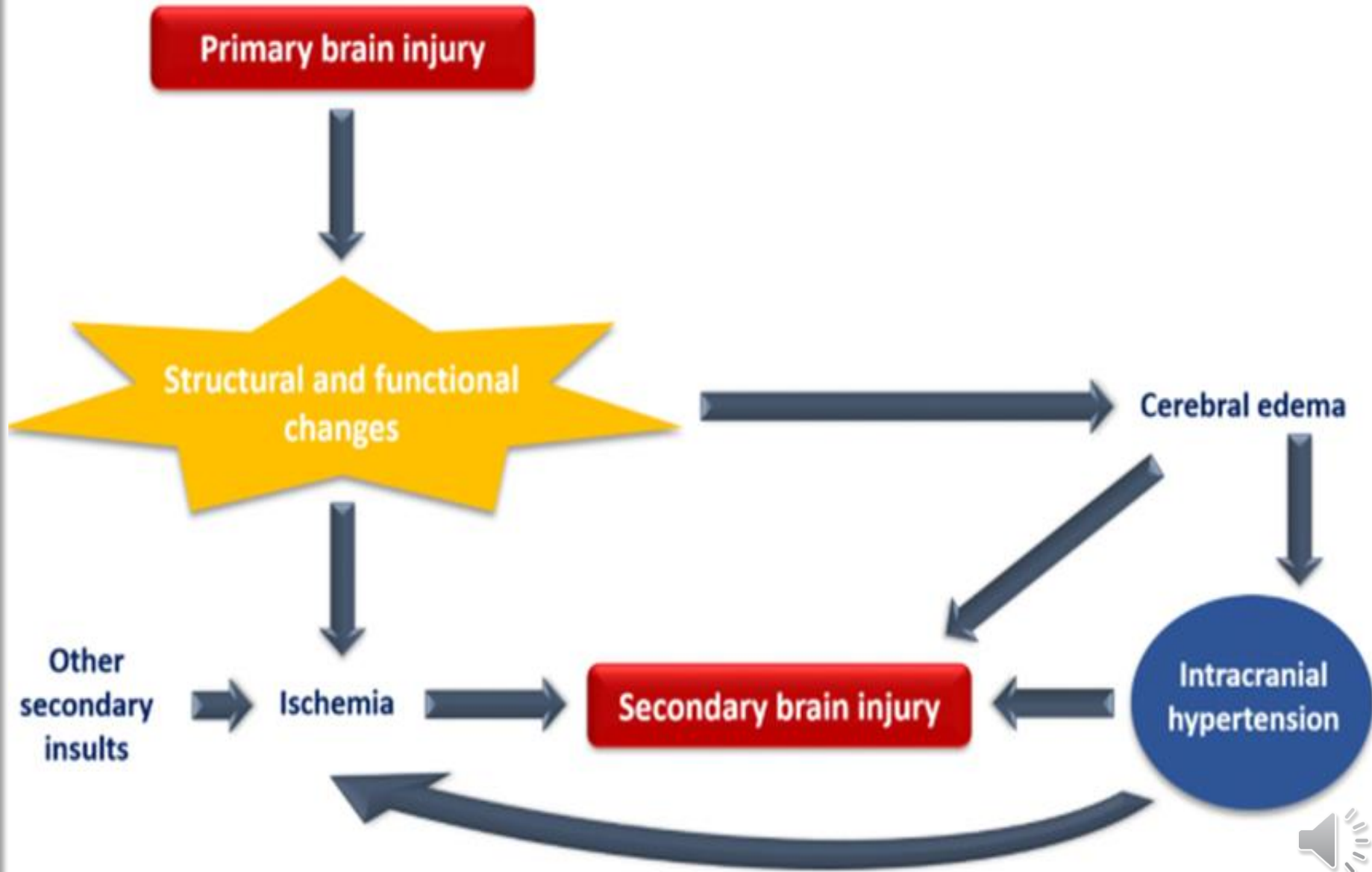
- Hypoxic-ischaemic encephalopathy  $\Rightarrow$   $\uparrow$  mortality

$\downarrow$ O <sub>2</sub> availability	$\downarrow$ Arterial pressure	$\uparrow$ ICP
Hypoxemia	Hypotension	ICHT (ischemia)
Ventilation Gas exchange Anaemia (hemorrhage, hemodilution, coagulopathy)	Hypovolemia $\downarrow$ Cardiac output (Shock)	Cerebral hematoma Edema Congestion Pneumocephalus Hydrocephalus

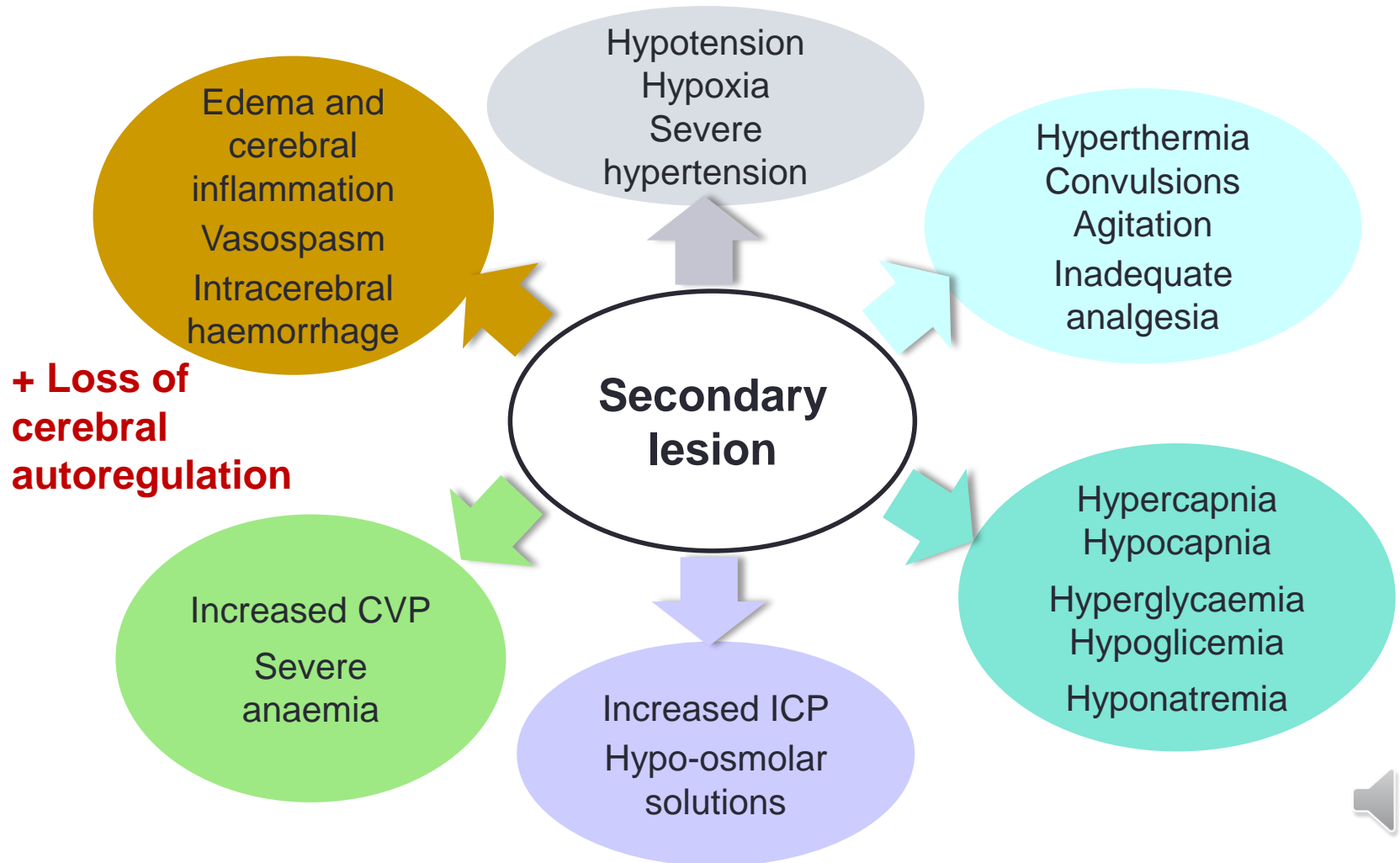




# Evolution of the lesions



# Secondary lesions

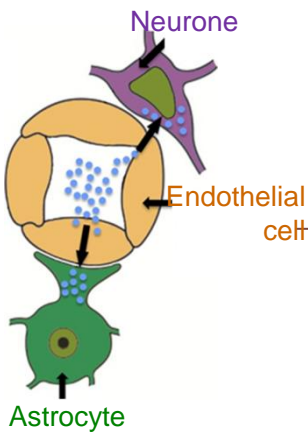
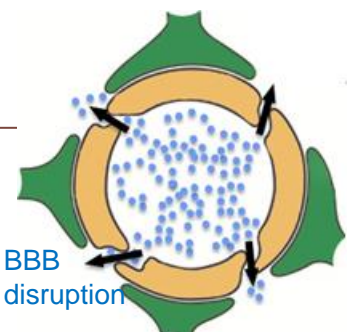
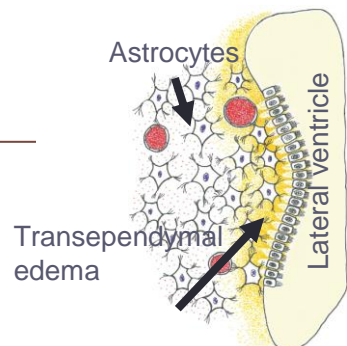
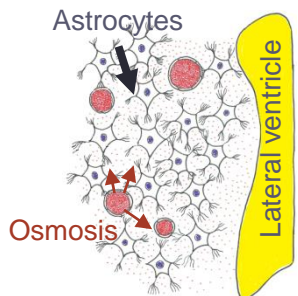


# CEREBRAL EDEMA

- *“Increase of water content in brain tissue in sufficient magnitude to produce clinical symptoms”*
  - CAREFUL! *Brain swelling = result of the volume expansion of any of the intracranial contents (including edema and congestion)*
- Types of cerebral oedema
  - Cellular edema = cytotoxic
  - Extracellular edema = vasogenic > interstitial, osmotic
- Urgent CT in case of clinical suspicion
  - Disappearance of sulci and ventricles, possible midline deviation or hernia

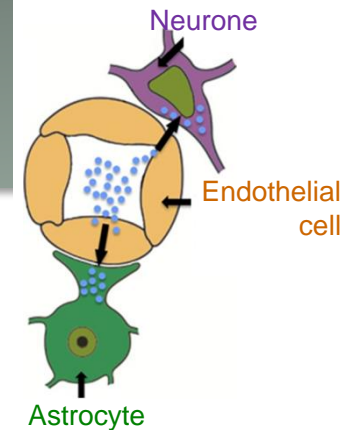


# Cerebral edema

Cellular	Extracellular		
Cytotoxic	Vasogenic	Interstitial	Osmotic
Cell membrane damage (astrocytes, neurones) $\Rightarrow$ Intracellular edema	Endothelial damage $\Rightarrow$ BBB disruption	Transependymal CSF flow $\Rightarrow$ Periventricular edema	Hypoosmolar vascular content $\Rightarrow$ movement of liquid towards parenchyma
Brain ischemia 	TBI, tumours, infections 	Hydrocephalus 	Toxic haemodilution, iatrogenic 



# Cerebral edema

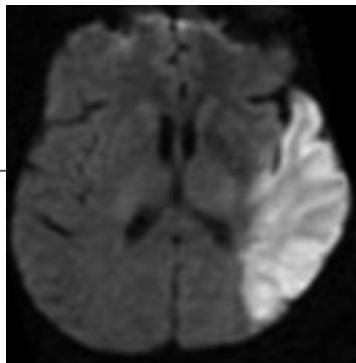


## Cellular

### Cytotoxic

Cell membrane damage  
 (astrocytes,  
 neurones) ⇒  
 Intracellular  
 edema

Brain ischaemia



## • Cytotoxic edema

- Ischemia (energy failure)
- Release histamine and serotonin
- Cell membrane injury
  - *Disruption  $\text{Na}^+/\text{K}^+$  pump*
  - *$\uparrow$  intracellular  $\text{Ca}$  (balances  $\text{Na}^+$  with chloride  $\text{Cl}$ )*
  - *$\uparrow$  intracellular  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$*
- Release excitatory neurotransmitters
  - ***Glutamate** contributes to mitochondrial damage and edema → cell death*
- Affects **astrocytes** > neurones and endothelial cells
- Usually appears on third day post-TBI
- Image: only in MRI DWI series (*diffusion weighted imaging*).



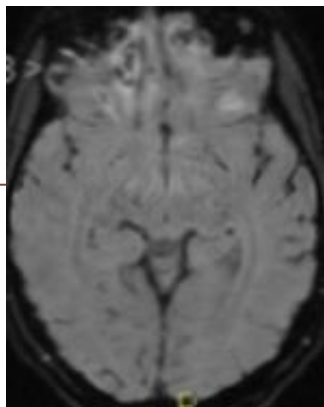
# Cerebral edema

## Extracellular

### Vasogenic

Endothelial damage  $\Rightarrow$  BBB disruption

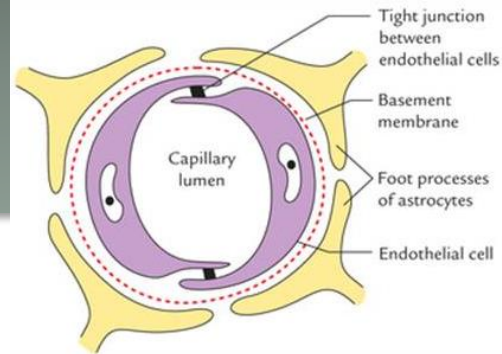
TBI, tumours, infections



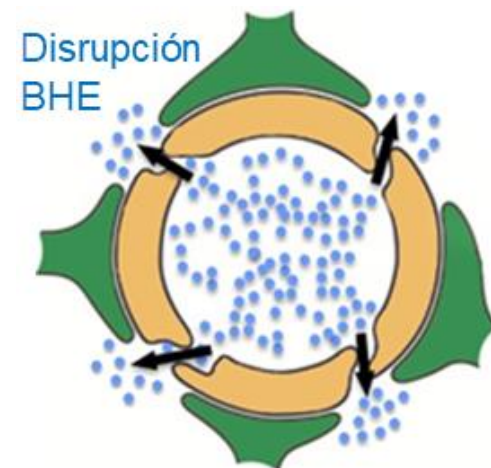
*Haemorrhagic contusion (black) + vasogenic edema (white)*

## • Vasogenic edema

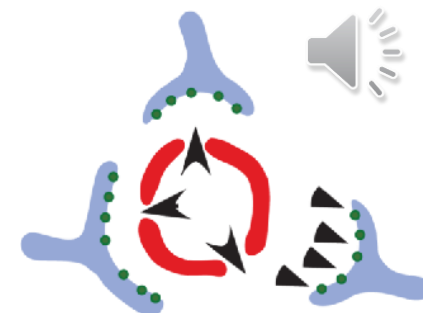
- Endothelial damage with BBB disruption (cerebral contusion, intraparenchymal haemorrhage tumours, abscesses)
- “Leak” due to BBB malfunction  $\rightarrow$   $H_2O$  in extracellular space
- MRI: hyperintense signal in T2 and Flair series



**Blood brain barrier**



**Disruption blood brain barrier**



**$H_2O$  leak to interstice**

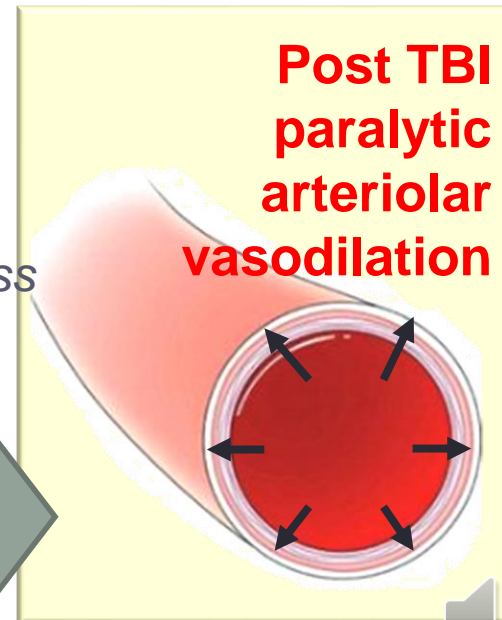


# Cerebral congestion

- Cerebral hyperemia = pathologic  $\uparrow$  of blood in the cerebral intravascular compartment
  - Arterial vasodilation (cerebral autoregulation)
  - Venous congestion (venous drain obstruction)
- Intracerebral vascular response
  - Normal = adapts to metabolic needs and stimuli (autoregulation)
    - *pCO<sub>2</sub>, pO<sub>2</sub>, hydrostatic pressure, sympathetic innervation...*
  - Pathological = maintained arterial dilation
    - *Global ischemia, prolonged hypercapnia, seizures, loss of autoregulation*



**Post TBI  
paralytic  
arteriolar  
vasodilation**



Loss of cerebral autoregulation

# Cerebral congestion: aetiology

- Loss of **cerebral autoregulation**
  - Dysfunction of the brainstem vasomotor centres (mesencephalic reticular substance) + nerve endings of the cerebral vessels
  - Brain inflammatory biochemical changes → alt regulatory response of vascular endothelium
- Metabolic factors:
  - Hypoxemia → hypoxia (local  $\downarrow pO_2$ )
  - Hypoventilation / alt blood gas exchange → local  $\uparrow pCO_2$
  - Acidosis  $\downarrow pH$  (respiratory and metabolic)
- Venous congestion
  - Mechanical ventilation with PEEP (*positive end expiratory pressure*)
  - Compression of jugular veins (head position, endotracheal tube fixation) or superior vena cava



# Normal cerebral autoregulation

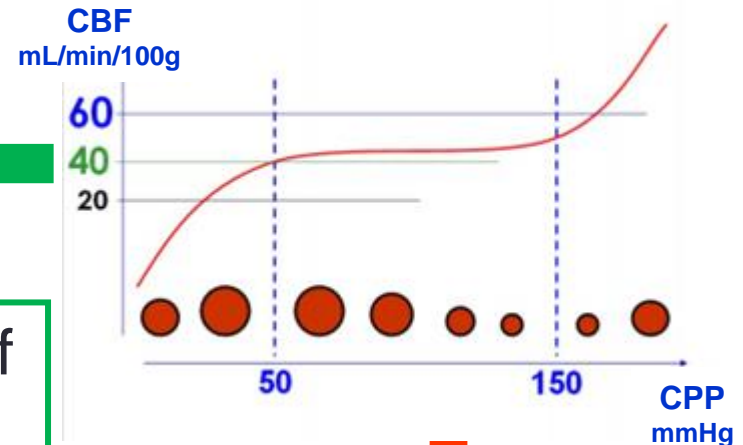
**REMEMBER?**

The brain needs a CBF of  
45-50 mL /100 g/min

➤  $CBF = CPP / CVR$

*When CPP ↑ (~MAP),  
response is ↑ CVR (VC) to  
maintain CBF within an  
adequate range.*

*The other way round, when  
CPP ↓, the response is a  
↓CVR (VD) to keep CBF.*



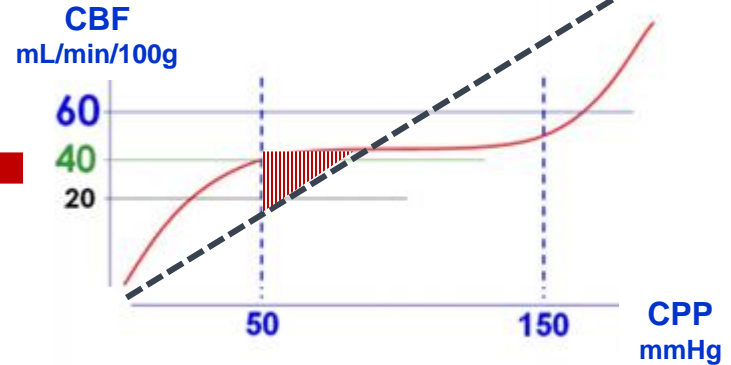
Circulation autoregulates to  
maintain flow... but only in the  
range of CPP 50-150 mmHg

➤  $CPP = MAP - ICP$



# Lost cerebral autoregulation

**REMEMBER?**



**A normal CPP does not result in an adequate CBF (ischaemia)**

**We need to reach a  $MAP \geq [75 \text{ mmHg} + PIC]$  to maintain CBF**

- If ICP 20 mmHg, we need  $MAP \geq 95 \text{ mmHg}$  to maintain adequate CBF
- Consider  $pCO_2$ , temperature...

**Direct relation CPP/CBF (higher pressure, higher flow)**

... But it only results in an adequate CBF when  $CPP > 75-80 \text{ mmHg}$

- TBI, ischemia, tumours, inflammation, deep hypothermia...

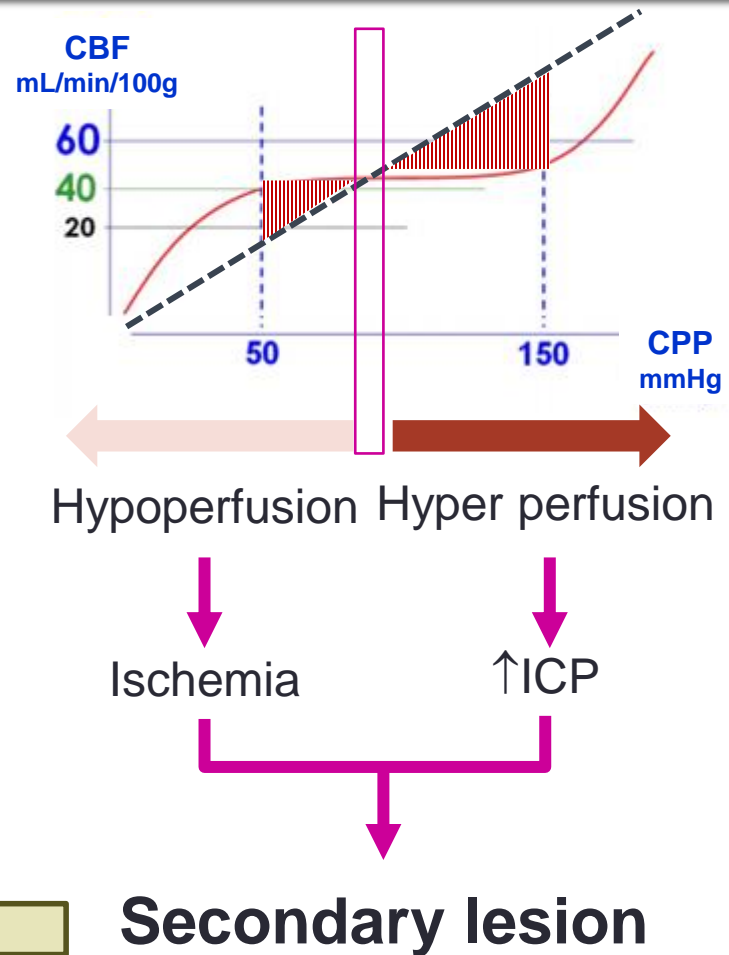


# Lost cerebral autoregulation

REMEMBER?

Cerebral hypoxia  
Cerebral herniation

Cerebral ischemia  
Cerebral congestion  
↑ICP



# Cerebral congestion: evolution

- After a TBI:

- First hours, and up to days 1-3 = hypoperfusion phase (CBF ↓) ⇨  
Regional and global ischemia
  - *Autoregulation fails → CBF depends on MAP*
  - *Neuronal ischemia: cytotoxic oedema and ↑ ICP*
- First weeks, and until days 7-10 = hyperemia phase (25-30 %) ⇨  
Possible vasogenic edema
  - *Treatment to maintain CBF may produce hyperemia and ↑ ICP*
- Vasospastic phase (10-15%), days 4-14 ⇨ Regional and global ischemia
  - *Patients with severe primary or secondary damage, or SAH*
  - *Hypoperfusion due to vasospasm, hypometabolism, and impaired autoregulation*
- Day 14 onwards = chronic state with normal CBF

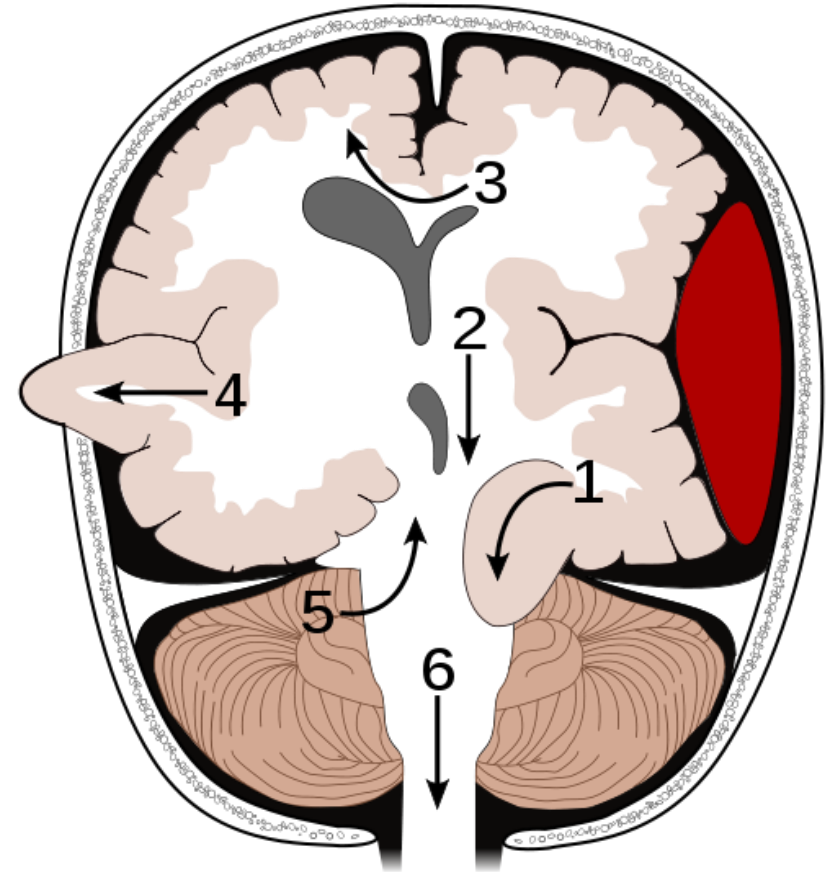
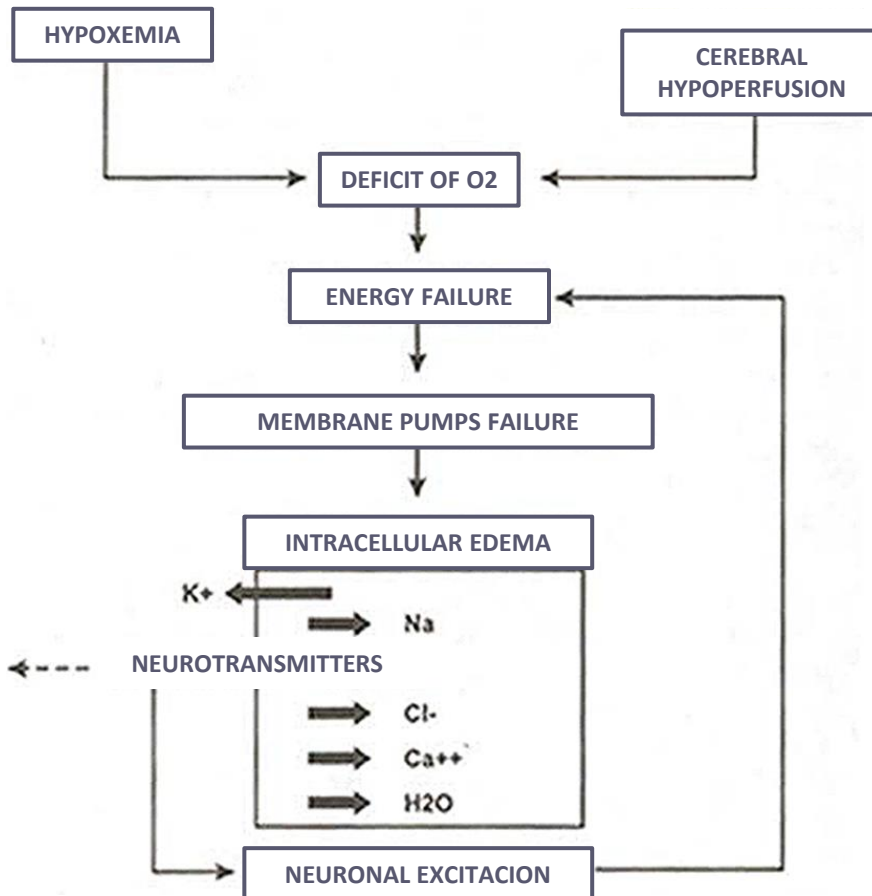




# ↑ICP (haemorrhage, biochemical alt)

## • Cerebral hypoxia

## • Brain herniation



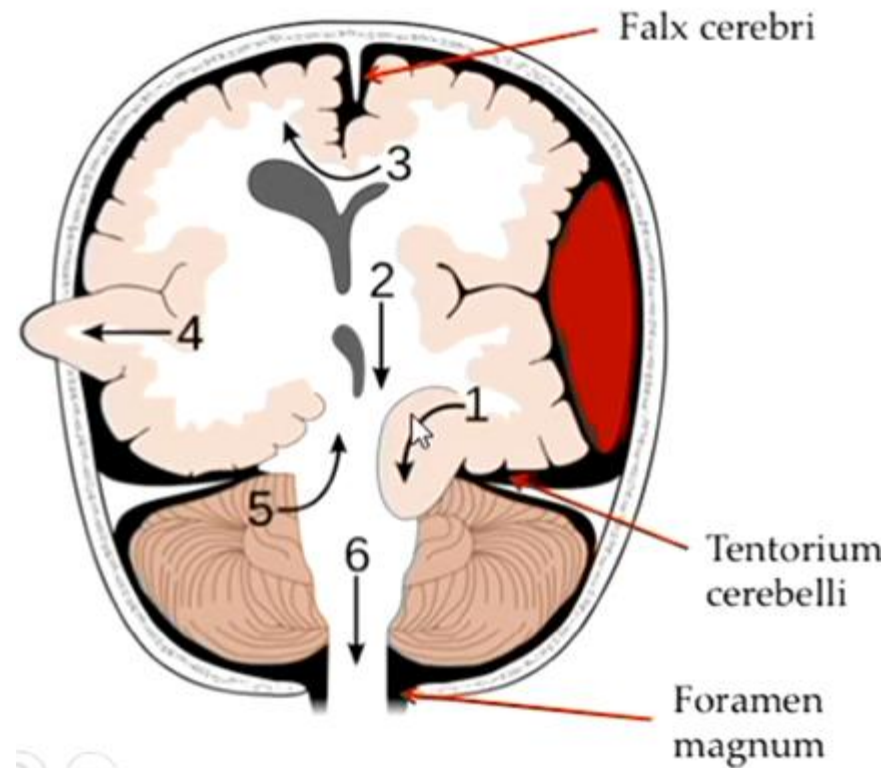
# CEREBRAL HYPOXIA

- Hypoxemia ( $\downarrow pO_2$  in blood)
  - Airways obstruction, thoracic trauma, bronchial aspiration, pneumonia
- Regional or global cerebral hypoperfusion
  - $\uparrow CMRO_2$  (cerebral metabolic rate of oxygen)
  - $\downarrow CPP$  (=  $MAP - ICP$ ): hypotension (hypovolemia, shock),  $\uparrow ICP$  (haemorrhage, edema, brain congestion)
- Other factors that worsen the prognosis
  - Altered  $pCO_2$ 
    - $\downarrow pCO_2 \rightarrow VC \rightarrow$  cerebral ischemia
    - $\uparrow pCO_2 \rightarrow VD \rightarrow$  brain congestion and  $\uparrow ICP$
  - Hyperthermia, hyperglycaemia



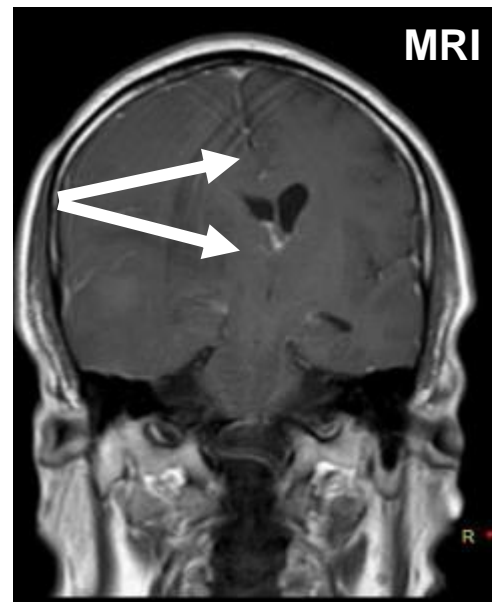
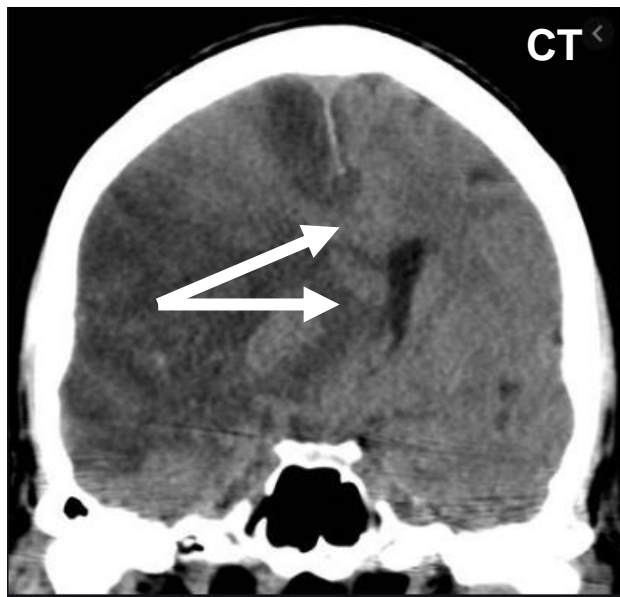
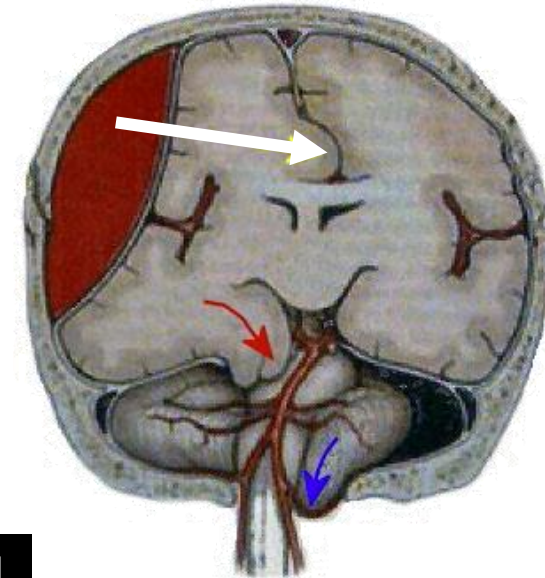
# BRAIN HERNIATION

- *“Displacement of portions of the brain through the openings left by the falx and tentorium”*
- Progressive symptoms
  - Rostral-to-caudal deterioration
- Types
  1. *Transtentorial downwards or uncal*
  2. *Central*
  3. *Subfalcine*
  4. *Transcranial or external*
  5. *Transtentorial upward*
  6. *Tonsillar*



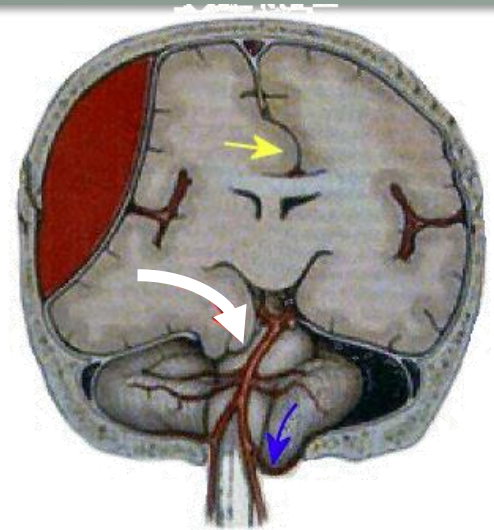
# Brain hernias

- Subfalcine hernia (most common)
  - Under the falx, it may be asymptomatic
  - May compress anterior cerebral artery
- Transtentorial herniation
- Central or diencephalic hernia
- Tonsillar herniation



# Brain hernias

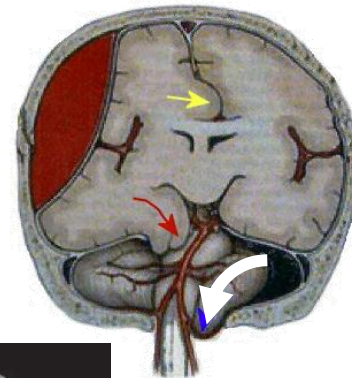
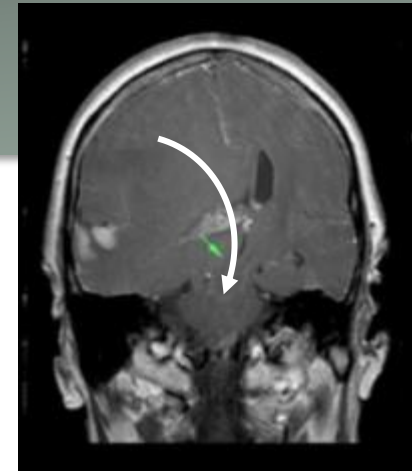
- Subfalcine hernia
- Transtentorial herniation
  - **Central:** Caudal displacement of diencephalon and midbrain through the tentorial notch
  - **Uncal:** Displacement of the medial part of temporal lobe towards the tentorial notch
  - Compression III cranial nerve (unilateral mydriasis), posterior cerebral art (contralateral homonymous hemianopsia), peduncles (contralateral hemiparesis, coma, and decerebration posture - ARAS -)
  - *If brainstem is pushed against tentorium, then contralateral mydriasis or ipsilateral hemiparesis (Kernohan's or false localizing sign) occurs*
- Central or diencephalic hernia
- Tonsillar hernia





# Brain hernias

- Subfalcine hernia
- Transtentorial hernia
- Central or diencephalic hernia
  - Displacement of diencephalon and midbrain through the tentorial notch
  - Impaired CSF circulation (hydrocephalus) → depressed LOC
- Tonsillar herniation
  - Displacement of cerebellar tonsils towards the foramen magnum, compressing the brainstem
  - Possible cardiorespiratory arrest



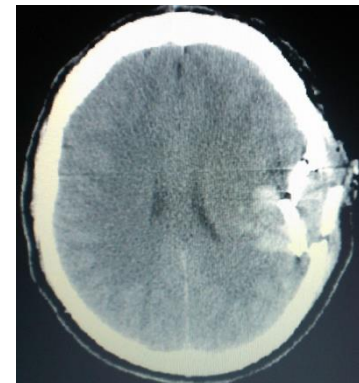
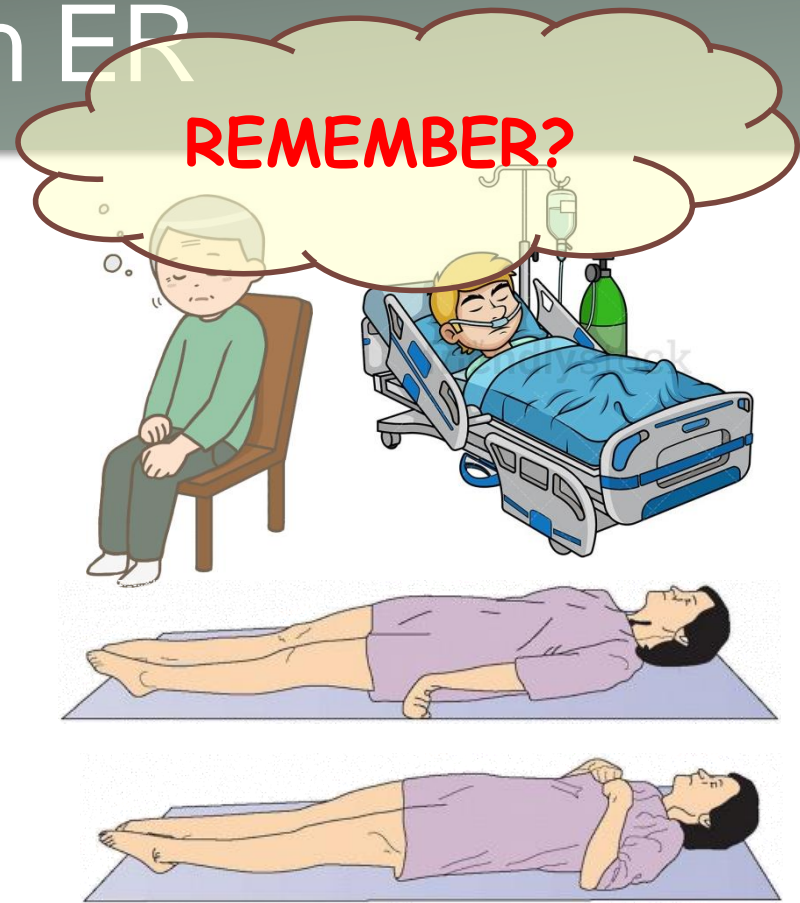
CT: Brain edema and tonsillar herniation





# TBI management in ER

- Low-risk patients
- Moderate-risk patients
- High-risk patients
  - Decreased or decreasing level of consciousness
  - GCS < 14
  - Neurological focal signs
  - Penetrating traumatic brain injury, depressed fractures
  - *CT scan + admission (ICU?)*
  - *Evaluation: neurosurgery*



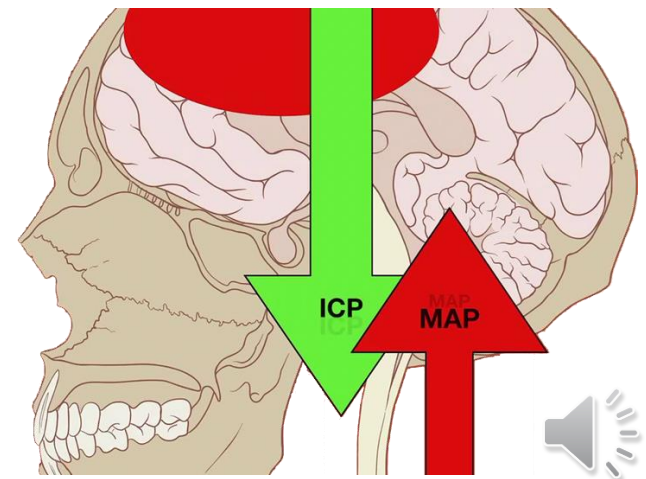
# INITIAL MANAGEMENT OF SEVERE TBI

- Primary fast exam + resuscitation if necessary
  - **Airway** = Free airway, early intubation
  - **Breathing** = Ventilation O<sub>2</sub> 100%
  - **Circulation** = Adequate iv access, correct hypotension
  - **Disability** = neurological evaluation (awake – speaks – responds to pain – no response), GCS, pupillary reaction.
- Secondary exam (head to toes)
  - Causes of hypoxia, haemorrhage, spine lesion, other injuries
- Specific cerebral resuscitation – **ICU GOALS**
  - Maintain pCO<sub>2</sub>, pO<sub>2</sub> (250-300 mmHg), volemia, glycemia, MAP, temperature – **all within normal limits**
- Image: CT
- ICU management



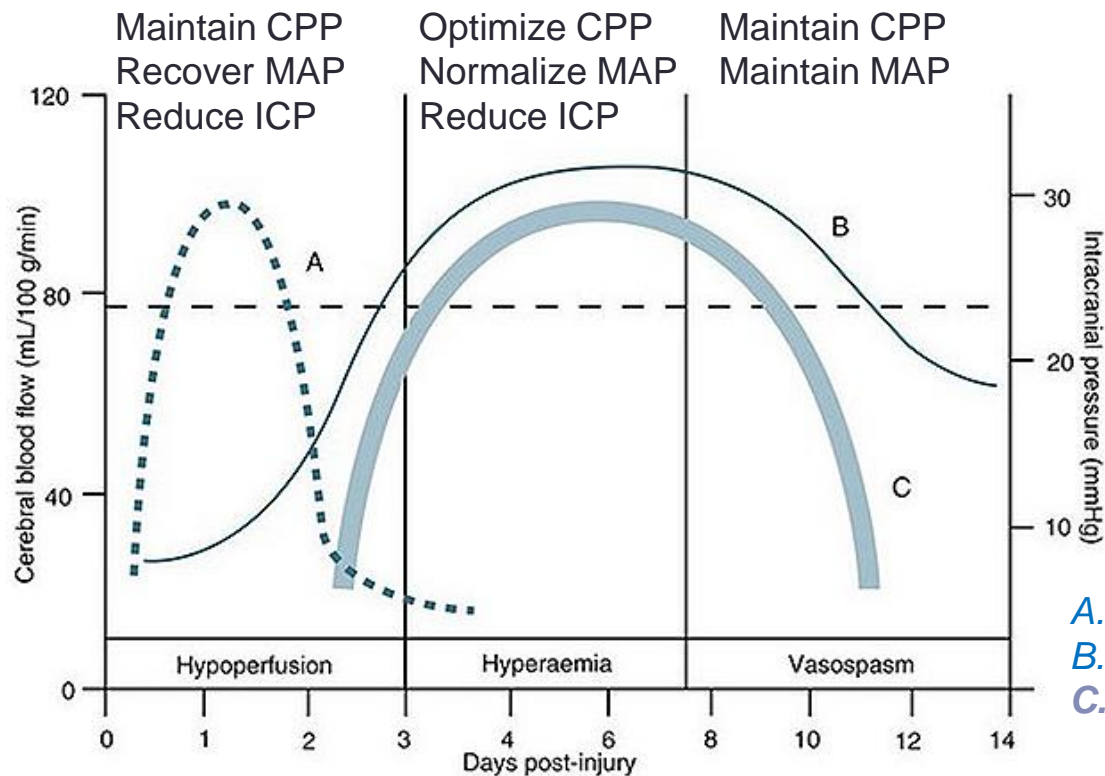
# INITIAL MANAGEMENT OF SEVERE TBI

- Primary fast exam + resuscitation if necessary
- Secondary exam (head to toe)
- Specific cerebral resuscitation
- Image: CT
  - Rule out or confirm surgical lesions
  - Evaluation of secondary lesions (haemorrhage, edema, congestion, brain herniation) and plan a treatment
- ICU management – goals:
  - Maintain CPP and ICP within normal limits
  - Maintain homeostasis
  - Avoid biochemical / metabolic damage
  - Avoid systemic damage



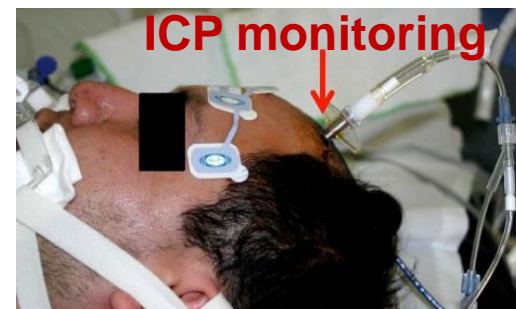
# ICU management of severe TBI

- Targets evolve over time, as does damage.
  - Avoid secondary biochemical – metabolic damage
  - Maintain CPP and reduce ICP



# ICU management of severe TBI

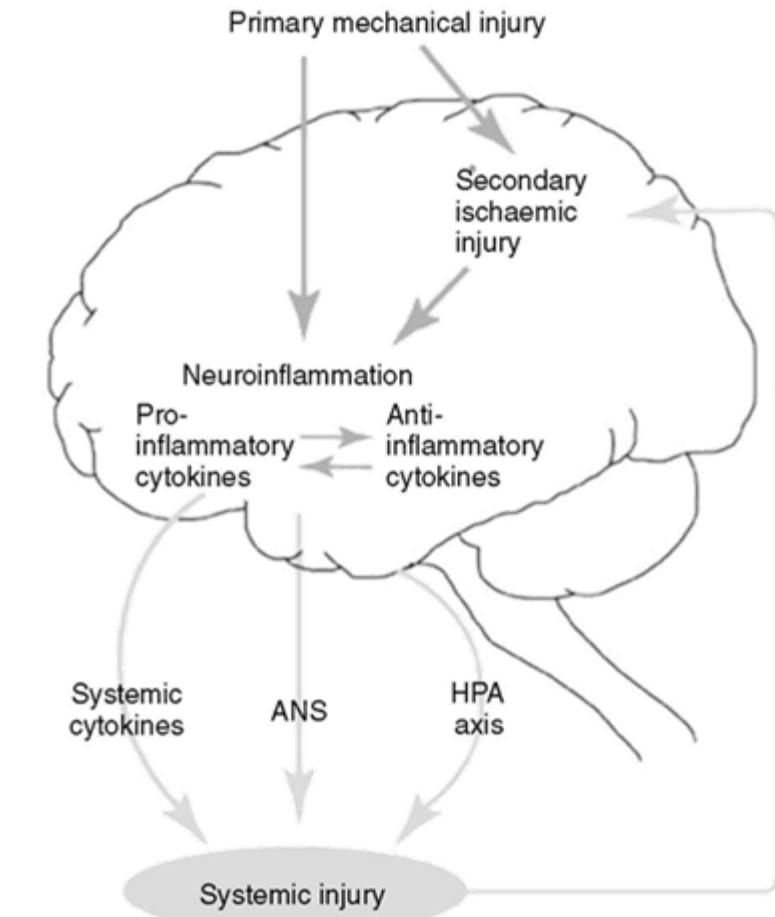
- Head section raised by 20-30° to improve drainage
- Ensure a MAP high enough to achieve CPP > 60 mmHg to guarantee adequate CBF (45-50 mL / 100g / min)
  - Vasoactive drugs (*Norepinephrine*)
  - Avoid cerebral vasospasm (*Nimodipine*)
- Reduce ICP to normal limits
  - ICP monitoring → evaluate response to treatment
  - Ventricular CSF drain
  - Treatment of brain edema
    - Hypertonic saline 3% or Mannitol 20%
    - Decompressive craniectomy?
- Consider subclinical *status epilepticus* (→ edema)
- Anticonvulsants and antibiotic prophylaxis?





# ICU management of severe TBI

- Enteral protection
  - Early nutrition to duodenum
    - *↓ mortality, morbidity and infectious complications*
- Maintain haematocrit 33-38 %
  - *Haemodilution, haemorrhage, chronic disease, coagulopathy...*
- Avoid systemic damage
  - *Anti-inflammatory drugs?*
  - NSAIDs?
    - *In study*
  - Glucocorticoids? **NO!!**
    - ✓ *EXCEPTION: VASOGENIC EDEMA*



ANS - Autonomous nervous system  
 HPA - Hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal





# ICU management of severe TBI

- Avoid early complications

- *Medical complications = main cause of secondary brain damage ⇒ PROGNOSIS*

- Most common medical complications: ↑ glucose, fever, SIRS (*systemic inflammatory response syndrome*)

- Most common neurological complications: ICHT, brain herniation and ↑ haematoma

- Complications related to bad prognosis:

- ↓ MAP that requires vasopressors (*hemodynamic instability*)
- *Cerebral edema and brain herniation*
- *Pneumonia (fifth most frequent complication). Early tracheostomy (< eighth day) is associated to lower morbidity, although does not modify hospital mortality*
- *Hypoxia and hyperoxia (↑ cerebral glutamate)*

**Normoglycemia**

**Euvolemia**

**MAP ↑ (CPP ok)**

**Avoid infection**

**Normothermia**

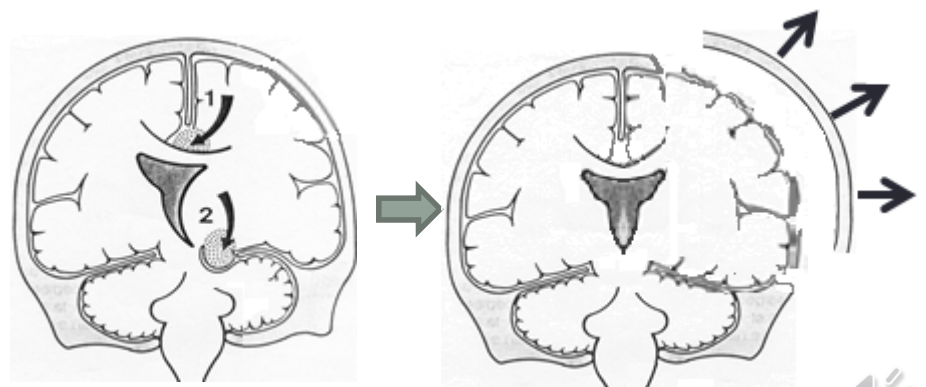
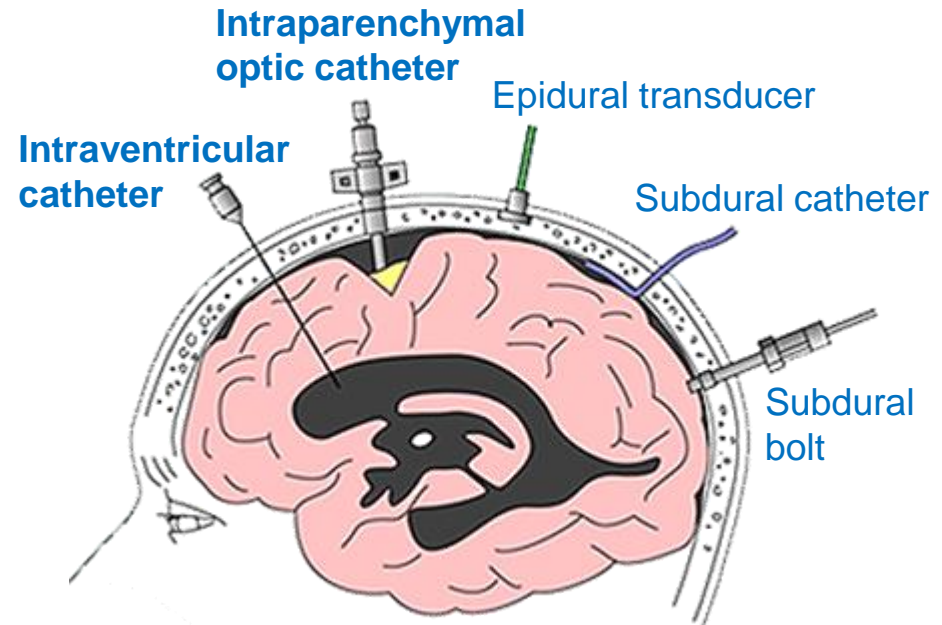
**pO<sub>2</sub> 250-300  
mmHg**

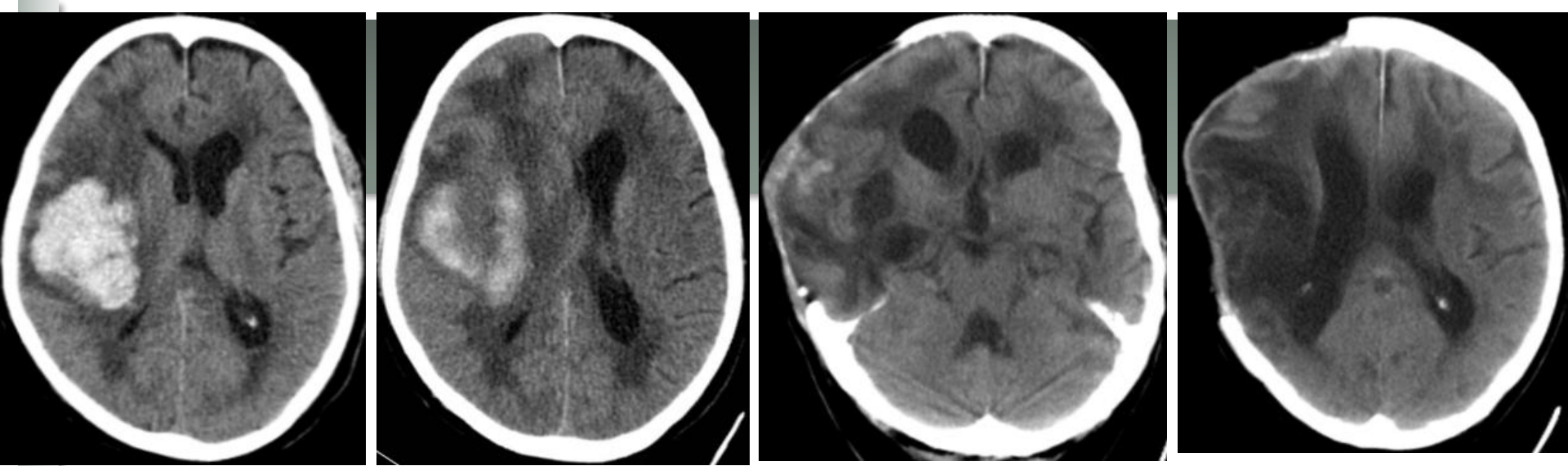
**Normocarbia  
(pCO<sub>2</sub> 30-35  
mmHg)**



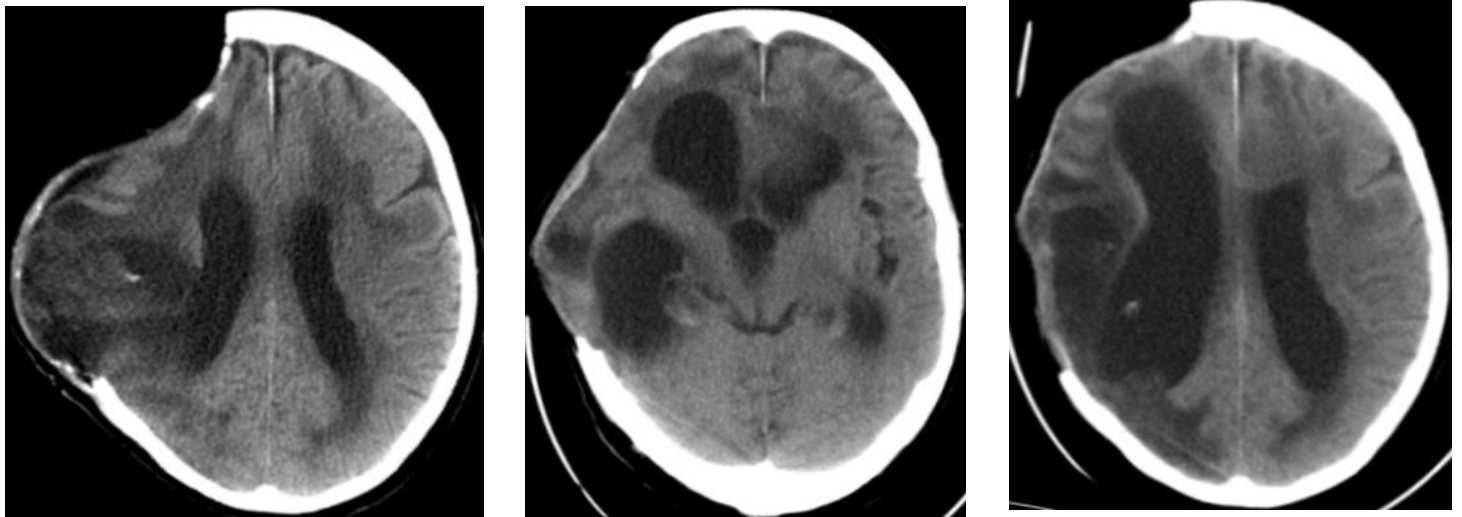
# Neurosurgical management of severe TBI

- Surgery of haematomas and contusive foci
- ICP monitor
  - Ventricular or intraparenchymal
- Decompressive craniectomy?
  - Lower mortality, higher mild and severe disability
  - Only in areas with limited access to advanced medical treatment, in the first 5 hrs after TBI, and young patients with GCS >5





## CT images of the evolution of the brain after decompressive craniectomy



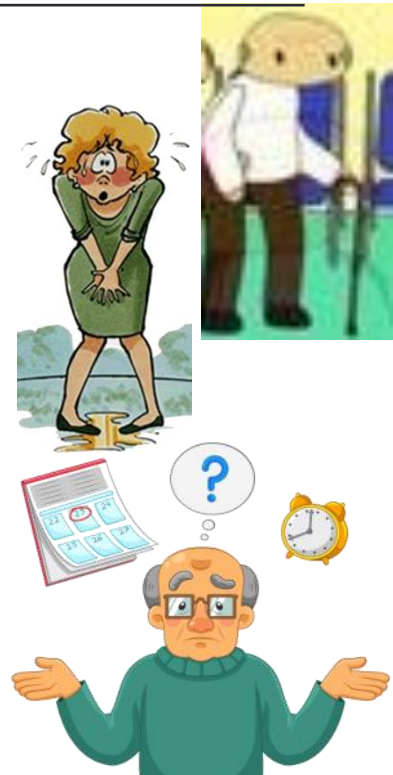
# COMPLICATIONS AND SEQUELAE

- Tertiary (complications and sequelae)
  - Hydrocephalus
  - Epilepsy
  - CSF fistula
  - Septic (meningitis, empyema, and abscess)
  - Post-traumatic encephalopathy

Sometimes detected by General Practitioner

## • Post-traumatic hydrocephalus

- Variable incidence: 4 % TBI (1-80%, according to definition criteria)
- Usually *communicans* (arachnoiditis)
- Patients with intraventricular or subarachnoid haemorrhage, cranial base fractures, long stay in ICU
- Hakim-Adams triad = cognitive impairment (slow thinking), gait impairment (apraxia), urinary incontinence (urgency)
- Surgical treatment (VP shunt)



# COMPLICATIONS AND SEQUELAE

## • Post-traumatic epilepsy

- TBI = common cause of epilepsy in adolescents and adults
- Type of crisis: focal with or without secondary generalization
- Usually severe TBI (cortical lesion), incidence 4 %
  - *Maintain anticonvulsant therapy for 3 months*
  - *Afterwards, if no crisis, withdraw meds*
- Timing presentation of epileptic seizures
  - *First 24-48 h = not related to a later epilepsy*
  - *Days 3-14 = related to development of epilepsy*
  - *Development of “post-traumatic epilepsy”: 75 % within the first year*
    - *May appear 10 years after TBI*
- Treatment:
  - *Anticonvulsants*
  - *Surgery? If focus is clearly identified, and crisis is not controlled*

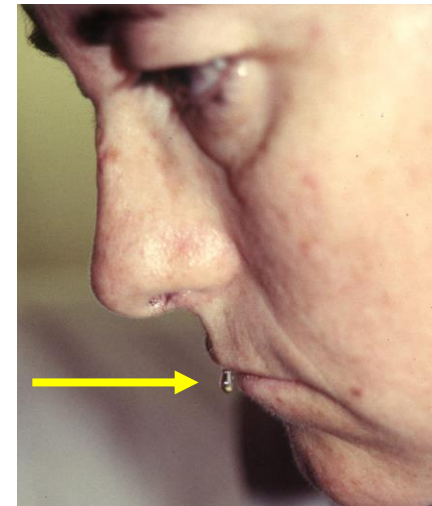




# COMPLICATIONS AND SEQUELAE

## • CSF leak

- TBI with skull base fracture
- Presentation: otorrhea and/or rhinorrhoea that ↑ with Valsalva
- Diagnosis
  - *Is it CSF? Glucose > 30 mg/dL and presence of beta-2-transferrin*
  - *Origin?*
    - *Intrathecal fluoresceine and isotopic cisternography*
    - *MRI: sequences CISS 3D (T2W high resolution) with MIP reconstruction (\*)*
- Treatment
  - *Bed rest + antibiotics*
  - *Surgery: dural tear repair*
- Complications:
  - *Bacterial meningitis (pneumococcus), may be recurrent*
  - *Intracranial hypotension*



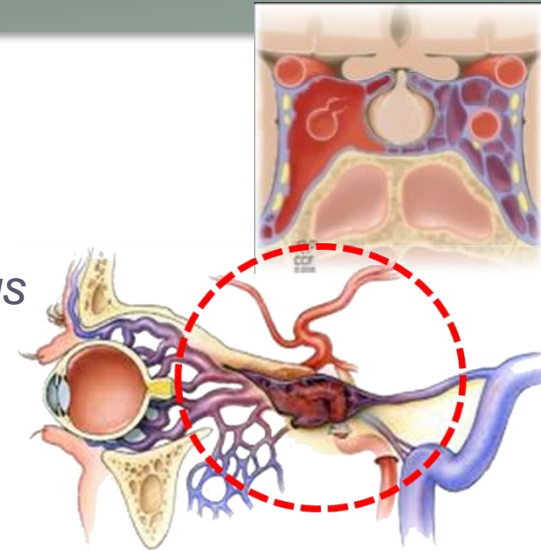
(\*) T2-weighted, MIP maximal intensity projection



# COMPLICATIONS AND SEQUELAE

## • Carotid-cavernous fistula (CCF)

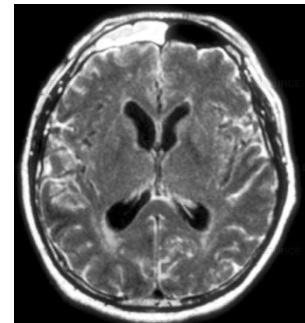
- TBI with skull base fracture or penetrating
  - *Partial rupture of carotid artery inside cavernous sinus*
- Presentation
  - *Diplopia, unilateral loss of vision, “hears a murmur”*
  - *Pulsatile exophthalmos, conjunctival chemosis*
  - *Possible lesion III, IV, VI > V (1<sup>a</sup>-2<sup>a</sup> branches) cranial nerves*
  - *↑ IOP + fundoscopy venous stasis, haemorrhage and papilledema*
- Diagnosis
  - *Cerebral angiography = gold standard*
    - *May be therapeutic: irritation in veins and carotid compression may close the fistula*
- Treatment
  - *Endovascular: trans-arterial embolization*



# COMPLICATIONS AND SEQUELAE

## • Infections

- Most common causes
  - *TBI: open, scalp injury, ↓ immunity*
  - *ICU: instrumentalization, intubation*
- Localization
  - *Intracranial:*
    - *Meningitis, subdural empyema, cerebral abscess*
    - *Labyrinthitis, mastoiditis*
    - *Venous sinus thrombosis*
  - *Extracranial*
    - *PNEUMONIA ⇒ **BAD PROGNOSIS***
    - *Sepsis*
- Treatment: **AVOID INFECTION + antibiotics**
  - *Profuse cleaning of the scalp wound*
  - *Maximal asepsis when handling the patient*
  - *Dural tear repair*



# COMPLICATIONS AND SEQUELAE

## • Post-traumatic encephalopathy

- Long term deterioration (PCS, *post-concussion syndrome*)
  - *Affects personal, family, work, social environment*
- Subtle and sometimes the cause of disability
- EARLY NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL REHABILITATION

### **Cognitive deficits**

Bradypsychia, memory loss



### **Motor deficits**

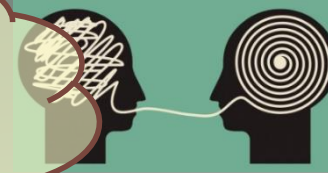
Cerebellar dysfunction, parkinsonism, cortico-spinal pathway lesion

### **Emotional deficits**

Personality disorders



# Sequelae

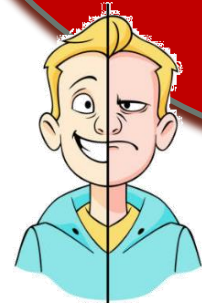


**COGNITIVE DEFICITS**  
Short term memory deficit, concentration problems, slow thinking, limited attention, deterioration of different cognitive abilities

**PHYSICAL DEFICITS**  
Speech, visual, hearing, deficits. Low motor coordination, spasticity, paralysis, epilepsy, loss of balance, and fatigue

**TBI**

**EMOTIONAL DEFICITS**  
Mood swings, egocentrism. Anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, sexual dysfunction, nervousness, loss of motivation, uncontrolled emotions







**PREDISPOSING FACTORS**

**PRE-TBI**

**RELATED TO TBI**

**POST-TBI**

**Severity of damage**  
**Extension of white matter damage**  
**Localization of lesion**

Psycho-social status in the moment of injury

Rehabilitation

**Age**

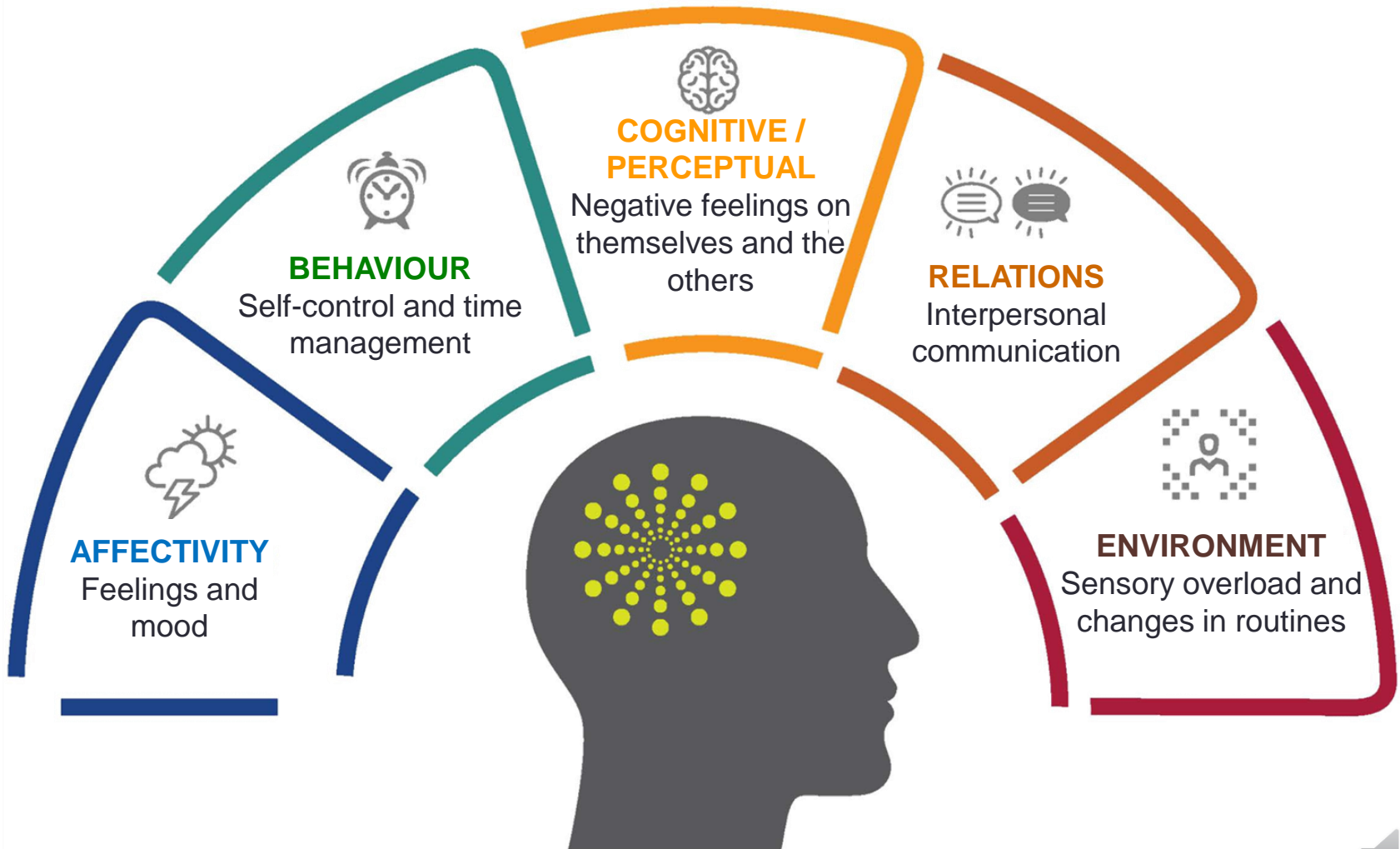
**Education level**  
**Economic status**  
**Genetic susceptibility**

Socio-economic status  
 Family environment  
 Mental health

**Access to resources**  
**Social environment**  
**Co-morbid deficits**



# Sequelae: irritability





# COMPLICATIONS AND SEQUELAE

## • Chronic traumatic encephalopathy

- *Chronic traumatic encephalopathy, CTE*
  - 1928 “punch drunk” in boxers → 1954 pathology dementia pugilistica → 1957 CTE → 2005 American football(\*)
  - Repeated TBI (concussion): boxing, American football, ice hockey... ⇒ Neurodegenerative disease
- Behaviour and mood disorders, including dementia in relatively young people
- NEURONAL lesion
  - *NFT (neurofibrillary tangles) and neurites, with or without p-tau immunoreactive astrocytes*
  - *Loss of neurones, with cortical atrophy (frontal, temporal, temporo-medial), white matter changes, amyloid plaques*
- No treatment



(\*) “Concussion” (Life of Dr Bennet Omalu), Will Smith 2015



# SUMMARY KEY CONCEPTS TOPIC 4

## (1/2)

- **Secondary lesion: metabolic / biochemical damage**
  - Microglia activation and inflammation, free radical release, excitotoxicity, cell death
  - Hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy:  $\downarrow pO_2$  /  $\downarrow MAP$  /  $\uparrow ICP$
- **Cerebral edema**
  - Cellular – cytotoxic – membrane failure –  $\uparrow$ glutamate
  - Extracellular – vasogenic – disruption BBB – water leak to interstice
- **Cerebral congestion**
  - Loss of autoregulation (paralytic VD) and/or venous congestion
  - Hyperemic phase: days 4-10 TBI (vasogenic edema)
- **Cerebral hypoxia**
  - $\downarrow pO_2$  and/or  $\downarrow CPP$  (due to  $\downarrow MAP$  and/or  $\uparrow ICP$ )
  - Membrane failure
- **Brain herniation**
  - Transtentorial hernia and possible Kernohan's sign



# SUMMARY KEY CONCEPTS TOPIC 4 (1/2)

- Management of severe TBI
  - Maintain CPP and ICP
    - *Keep MAP high enough (monitor invasive PA)*
    - *Monitor ICP if suspicion of ICHT*
  - Maintain homeostasis: pO<sub>2</sub> 250-300 mmHg, normocarbia, normovolemia, normoglycemia, normothermia
  - CT: diagnosis of complications
  - Avoid biochemical – metabolic – systemic damage
- Complications related to bad prognosis
  - ↓MAP, edema/brain herniation, pneumonia, hypoxia/hyperoxia
- Sequelae (sometimes detected by GP)
  - Suspect hydrocephalus, CSF fistula, carotid-cavernous fistula
  - Post-traumatic encephalopathy: disfunction personal, family, work, social environment ⇒ Early neuropsychological rehabilitation



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