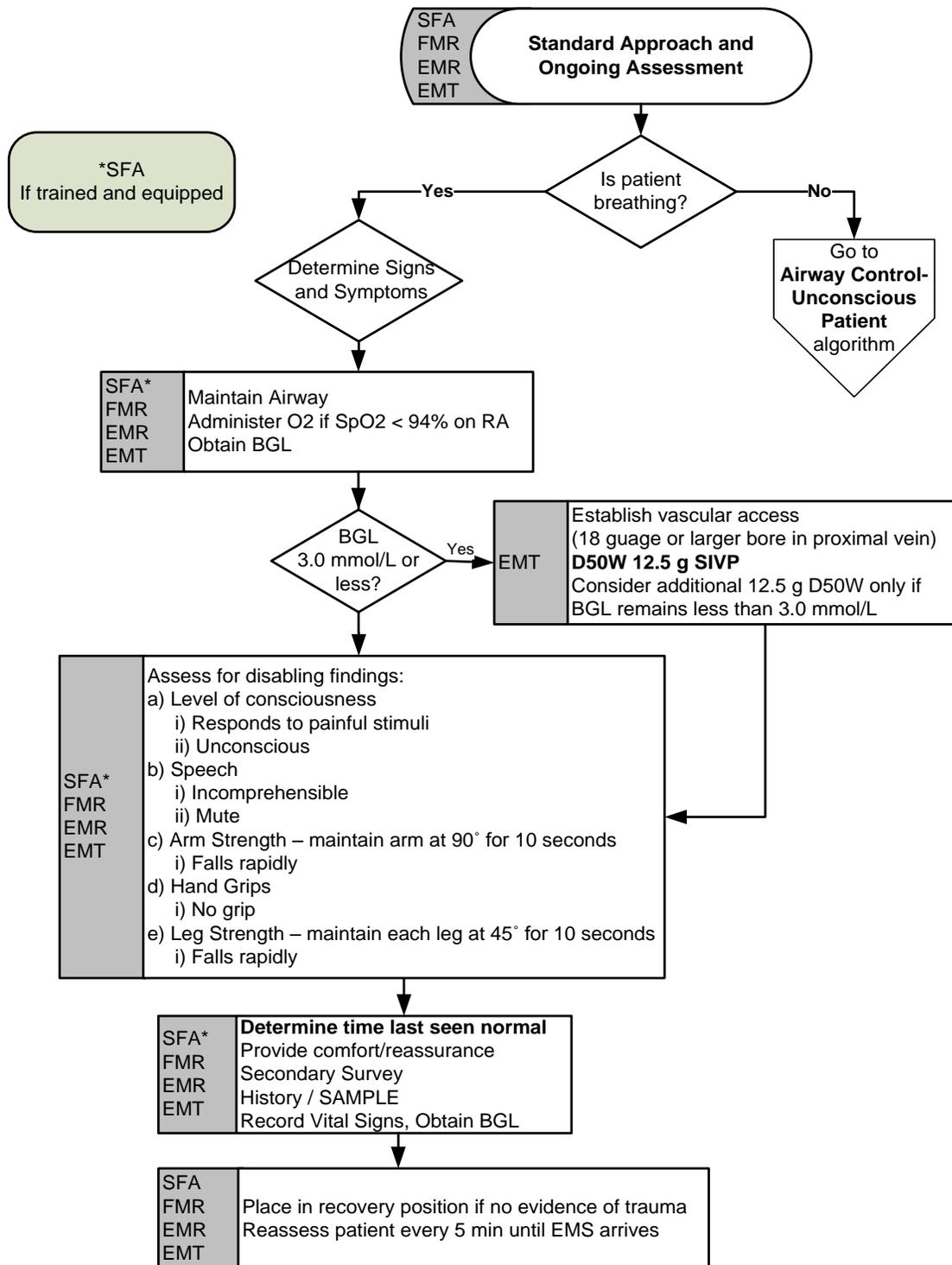


Algorithm 26 Stroke



Stroke (Algorithm 26)

A stroke is a sudden loss of brain function. It is caused by the interruption of flow of blood to the brain (ischemic stroke) or the rupture of blood vessels in the brain (hemorrhagic stroke).

The interruption of blood flow or the rupture of blood vessels causes brain cells (neurons) in the affected area to die. The effects of a stroke depend on where the brain was injured, as well as how much damage occurred.

Symptoms

- **Weakness** - Sudden loss of strength or sudden numbness in the face, arm or leg, even if temporary.
- **Trouble speaking (aphasia)** - Sudden difficulty speaking or understanding or sudden confusion, even if temporary.
- **Vision problems** - Sudden trouble with vision, even if temporary.
- **Headache** - Sudden severe and unusual headache.
- **Dizziness** - Sudden loss of balance, especially with any of the above signs.

Stroke Treatment

In the last few years, important new advances have been made in stroke treatment. However, these new treatments must be started within a few hours of the onset of symptoms in order to be effective. That's why it's so important to recognize the warning signs of a stroke as soon as they appear and immediate medical assistance is activated.

Ensure an effort is made to capture the time patient was last seen well and communicate this to the EMS Crew.

Patient Care

Establish a timeline for "last seen normal"

Ensure adequate breathing

Provide appropriate airway management with oxygen

Keep a witness at scene or obtain contact information

Provide comfort measures until EMS arrival

Obtain blood glucose level

Oxygen

Oxygen should be administered if response personnel are trained and equipped:

- If required, as early as possible.
- To all multiple trauma patients
- To all patients whose mechanism of injury or physical findings suggest the potential for shock
- To all patients with difficulty breathing

- To patients with chest pain if SP02 is less than 94% or patient is short of breath
- To all patients with an altered or diminished LOC

O₂ Delivery

If oxygen is warranted, provide the following:

- If possible, acquire oxygen saturation prior to oxygen administration
- Use a non-rebreather mask with oxygen at 12–15 litres/min for patients who require high-flow oxygen