

Head trauma to patients using anticoagulants

Manuel fell down the stairs in his house. "I am getting older- he tells the doctor- and so it is not unusual for my legs or even my head to fail me; it's a good thing I was able to get up by myself without having to tell anyone."

Dr. Turégano examined him; he had no symptoms of alteration of consciousness or other associated symptoms, but his case was cause for concern; he determined that Manuel had suffered a slight head trauma and had a bruise in the right ciliary region, and is being treated with oral anticoagulants.

Head traumas are a common cause of visits to any Emergency Room, especially by people like Miguel, men over 65 years of age who are seen because of a fall. When such an incident is combined with the use of an oral anticoagulant, the situation becomes more complicated as it involves a greater risk of intracranial hemorrhage, which can also be of greater magnitude.

Whenever a patient is discharged from the Emergency Room after a trauma, he or she should be given a protocol for the observation of symptoms in the home.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Vigilance of traumas and prevention of falls



Observe the patient for 24 to 48 hours after the head trauma.

If the patient is at home, go to the hospital if there are any behaviors or facts that are cause for concern.



The following are alarm signals:

Alteration of consciousness, vomiting, altered eye movements, seizures, worsening headache, pupils of different sizes, changes to vision or speech, difficulty walking, other unusual signs.



A fall can permanently affect the life of an elderly person.

Causing consequences:
Physical: fractures, trauma.
Mental: anxiety or depression.
Social: increased burden on family.



The physiological changes associated with age

Increase the likelihood of falls, since muscle strength decreases and reflexes are slower.



Preventing falls is very important

Can be accomplished with a few simple measures: placement of rails, handrails and hand grips, proper illumination of spaces, safety barriers.



Elimination of obstacles in rooms and hallways

Like rugs, decorations, flowerpots, cables, grandchildren's toys, etc., avoiding slippery floors and footwear, etc.