

## **Hypothermia**

### **History and examination**

- **Hypothermia is a core temp of <35C. Severe hypothermia is <32C**

The majority of hypothermic patients that you will encounter will be either elderly or alcoholic who have had hypothermia induced over a number of hours. These patients are often physically injured as well and this needs to be taken into account when resuscitating them.

- For those patients who have become suddenly severely hypothermic ( usually by near drowning) the situation is quite different with . These patients are usually either in a arrest or peri-arrest rhythm

### **Treatment**

#### **Handle hypothermic patients gently as they are prone to hypotension and arrhythmias**

A: airway with C spine control if there has been a history of diving

B: if there is near drowning there may be water inhalation.

C: the physiological response to progressive hypothermia is severe bradycardia leading to EMD. This resolves as the patient rewarms

### **Investigations**

FBC

U&E

Clotting

CXR

ECG

Always call for help and start with simple rewarming procedures first. Gradual rewarming over a period of hrs is the key to success with urban gradual hypothermia. The core temp should rise by 0.5-1.5 c/hr. In severe cases the patient may have DIC and massive clotting disturbance. This usually improves as the temp increases.

In sudden severe hypothermia the key to success is rapid rewarming and continued CPR until temp is near normal. This can lead to a prolonged resuscitation particularly in children.

Cardiopulmonary bypass is available at the LGI and should be considered in ALL cases of rapid immersional hypothermia unless the patient is clearly dead. Contact the Cardiothoracic Registrar on call. It is by far the best method of raising core body temperature rapidly

The following guideline will help to manage the hypothermic patient

### **Key Points**

- **Ascertain how long the hypothermic process was over.**
- **Invasive rewarming may be required .**
- **If your patient is significantly hypothermic (<28C and standard rewarming could take a prolonged time, consider cardio-pulmonary bypass.**
- **Get senior help**

