

SAQ 4

You receive a Priority 1 call from the ambulance service. They are en route with a 24 yr old male in cardiac arrest following chest trauma.

a. List 2 indications for emergency thoractomy in penetrating chest trauma (2 Marks)

1 Mark each up to 2 marks from:

- *Previously witnessed cardiac activity (Pre- or In-hospital)*
- *Unresponsive hypotension (SBP <70mmHg despite vigorous resuscitation)*
- *Traumatic cardiac arrest without witnessed cardiac activity (Relative indication)*

b. List 2 indications for emergency thoracotomy in blunt chest trauma (2 Marks)

1 Mark each up to 2 marks from:

- *Rapid exsanguination from chest tube (>1500 ml immediate return)*
- *Unresponsive hypotension (SBP <70mmHg despite vigorous resuscitation)*
- *Traumatic cardiac arrest with previously witnessed cardiac activity (Relative indication)*

c. List 4 contraindications for emergency thoracotomy (4 Marks)

1 Mark each up to 4 marks from:

- *Blunt injury without witnessed cardiac activity (pre-hospital)*
- *Penetrating abdominal trauma without cardiac activity (pre-hospital)*
- *Non-traumatic cardiac arrest*
- *Severe head injury*
- *severe multisystem injury*
- *Improperly trained team*
- *Insufficient equipment*

d. List 4 objectives of performing an emergency thoractomy (2 Marks)

1/2 Mark each up to 2 from:

- *Haemorrhage control*
- *Release of cardiac tamponade*
- *Internal cardiac massage*
- *Cross-clamping descending thoracic aorta*

Answers taken from Life in the Fast Lane ED Thoracotomy: Is it Just the First Part of the Autopsy? (<http://lifeinthefastlane.com/ed-thoracotomy-is-it-just-the-first-part-of-the-autopsy/>) and Trauma.org Emergency Department Thoracotomy (<http://www.trauma.org/index.php/main/article/361/>)