

34 – LIGHTNING STRIKE

NORTH CAROLINA



THE STORY:

A three-person party had set up camp among the trees in the mountains. Thunderstorms had been moving through the area all day and into the evening. At approx. 2130 hrs. a lightning strike occurred nearby and one of the party sleeping in his own tent was struck. His partners reported that the 17 y/o male Pt initially presented thrashing but awake in his tent. The Pt was unable to speak, had some difficulty breathing, and all the hairs burned off of his legs. One of the backpackers hiked out two miles (3.2km) to the trailhead and called for help. The rescue team arrived at 0200 hrs. to find the Pt awake and in distress. The Pt primarily complained

of pain in his legs where he had been burned (the tent had a distinct smell of burned hair). The Pt was able to speak at this time and stated he had no allergies, took no regular meds, had no cardiac history, had eaten dinner about six hrs. ago, stating he did not remember being struck though his friends were sure he was. On exam: Pt was sweaty and pale with superficial burns (looking like sunburn) to both legs. The rest of the physical exam was unremarkable. Pulse: 124 and irregular, Resp.: 28 and mildly labored, B/P: 135 / p, Skin: pale and moist, Pt awake and in distress.

Put the appropriate information from the story above into the correct spaces provided in the SOAP note. Develop an Assessment for 0200hrs. with Anticipated Problems and an appropriate Treatment Plan.

QUESTIONS

1. Despite the patient's apparent stability on scene, what are some anticipated problems of significant concern?
2. How might these concerns effect your evacuation plan?

