

ADVANCED TRAUMA LIFE SUPPORT (ATLS)



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About

ATLS is an accredited course for doctors dealing with trauma patients, developed by American College of Surgeons trauma committee.

History

The ATLS course was created by an American orthopaedic surgeon James K. Styner after a tragic airplane accident in 1976, as he crashed in his private plane in the wastelands of Nebraska. Dr. Styner tragic experience it has imposed on developing a program for improving life saving actions in trauma patient. In 1978 it was proposed the first version of this program. So that in 1980 the program was taken over by American College of Surgeons and implemented in USA and Canada. Currently this program is considered one of the most successful programs for saving the lives of trauma patients and is implemented in over 60 countries. The principle of the program is based on primary and secondary survey.

First aid is provided based on firmly structured vertical algorithm of ABCDE. «A» means airway maintenance with cervical spine protection, «B» is ensuring breathing and ventilation, «C» is circulation with haemorrhage control, «D» means disability/neurologic assessment, and «E» is exposure and environmental control.

ABCDE operates according to a strict structure: if «B» does not work, one may not take «C» first, nor jump from «B» to «D» etc. Once the initial algorithm is passed, the patient may be further examined.

According to literature data implementing the ATLS principles lowers severely traumatized patient hospital mortality by up to 30%.

ATLS principles are constantly improving and are reinforced by reprinting single manual that now reached the ninth edition. In conclusion from the above it is clear that adherence to the principles of ATLS is beneficial for all health systems.