Figure 1

Algorithm for Approaching the Patient with Severe Head Injury

Severe Head Injury
GCS 8 or less

Diagnostic and
Therapeutic Procedures
as Indicated ←→ Trauma
Evaluation

Intubation
Fluid Resuscitation
Mechanical Ventilation
(PaCO₂ 35-38 mm Hg)
Oxygenation
Sedation ± Paralysis

Neurologic Deterioration?
or
Evidence of Herniation? — Yes → Short-term
Hyperventilation
and/or
Mannitol (1 g/kg)

Yes → CT Scan

No

Intensive Care Unit
Monitoring ← No ← Operative Lesion?

Yes

Operating
Room

Monitor ICP

Treat
Intracranial
Hypertension