Defining Characteristics

A loved one, war, or violent personal assault. Accident, terrorist incident, witnessed a natural disaster, serious condition. PTSD can occur in people who have experienced or as psychomotor agitation occurring immediately after procedures requiring general anesthetics.

Historical Significance

Nurses first provided anesthesia during the Civil War. The profession has grown significantly since, serving both military and civilian personnel. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been a very recently recognized healthcare issue. Emergence delirium was first noted as psychomotor agitation occurring immediately after procedures requiring general anesthetics.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Affects 7.7 million Americans over the age of eighteen. Post-traumatic stress disorder is a serious potentially debilitating condition. PTSD can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a natural disaster, serious accident, terrorist incident, sudden death of a loved one, war, or violent personal assault.

Characteristics of GA:

◆ Complete loss of consciousness
◆ Amnesia
◆ Analgesia
◆ Loss of reflexes

After achieving balanced anesthesia involves use of:

◆ Anticholinergics to lessen secretions
◆ Sedatives to relax the patient
◆ Antiemetics to prevent nausea
◆ Antihistamines to reduce chance of allergic reaction
◆ Narcotics to create analgesia

Changes in levels of consciousness can alter perceptions of reality

◆ Major concern with patients with PTSD because they could be over-stimulated

Emergence Delirium

Emergence delirium occurs immediately as the patient transitions from general anesthesia to a wakeful state. The hallmark signs include:

◆ Agitation
◆ Confusion
◆ Violent behavior

Emergence delirium is induced by the combination of:

◆ General anesthesia
◆ Noxious stimuli

Patients with existing anxiety, PTSD, or depression are at increased risk for emergence delirium.


