

Triage in the Field

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Objectives

- List the triage categories used to describe casualties and describe each.
- Identify simple physiologic parameters that can be used to determine a casualty's need for a life-saving intervention, and estimate his/her probability of survival.
- Given appropriate physiologic information, place a casualty in the proper triage category.

Acknowledgements

- *Triage in Tactical Combat Casualty Care in Pre-hospital Trauma Life Support, 7th edition (military), Chapter 30, pp. 671-6.*
- Dr. John Holcomb, Mr. Dom Greydanus
- Dr. Paul Cordts
- Committee on Tactical Combat Casualty Care

Triage

- A process for sorting casualties into groups based on their need for or likely benefit from immediate medical treatment.

Triage Categories for Combat Casualties

- Minimal
- Delayed
- Immediate
- Expectant

Minimal

- Minor injuries
- Self-aid, buddy-aid usually sufficient
- Can help with care of others, scene management, etc

Delayed

- May need surgery, but general condition allows for delay in surgical treatment without endangering life or limb
- Sustaining treatment will likely be required (fluids, splinting, antibiotics, analgesia)

Immediate

- Includes those who require Life-Saving Intervention and/or surgery right away.

Expectant

- Obvious signs of death
- Wounds so extensive that even if he/she were the only casualty and optimal medical assets were at hand, survival would be highly unlikely.

Triage in Austere, Combat, or MCI Settings

- Iterative process repeated within every level of care.
- Resources for treatment and transport are limited
- Determines order of treatment and movement.

Triage in Austere, Combat, or MCI Settings

- Weighs relative need for LSI.
- Weighs probability of survival.
- Evaluates potential benefit of given interventions.

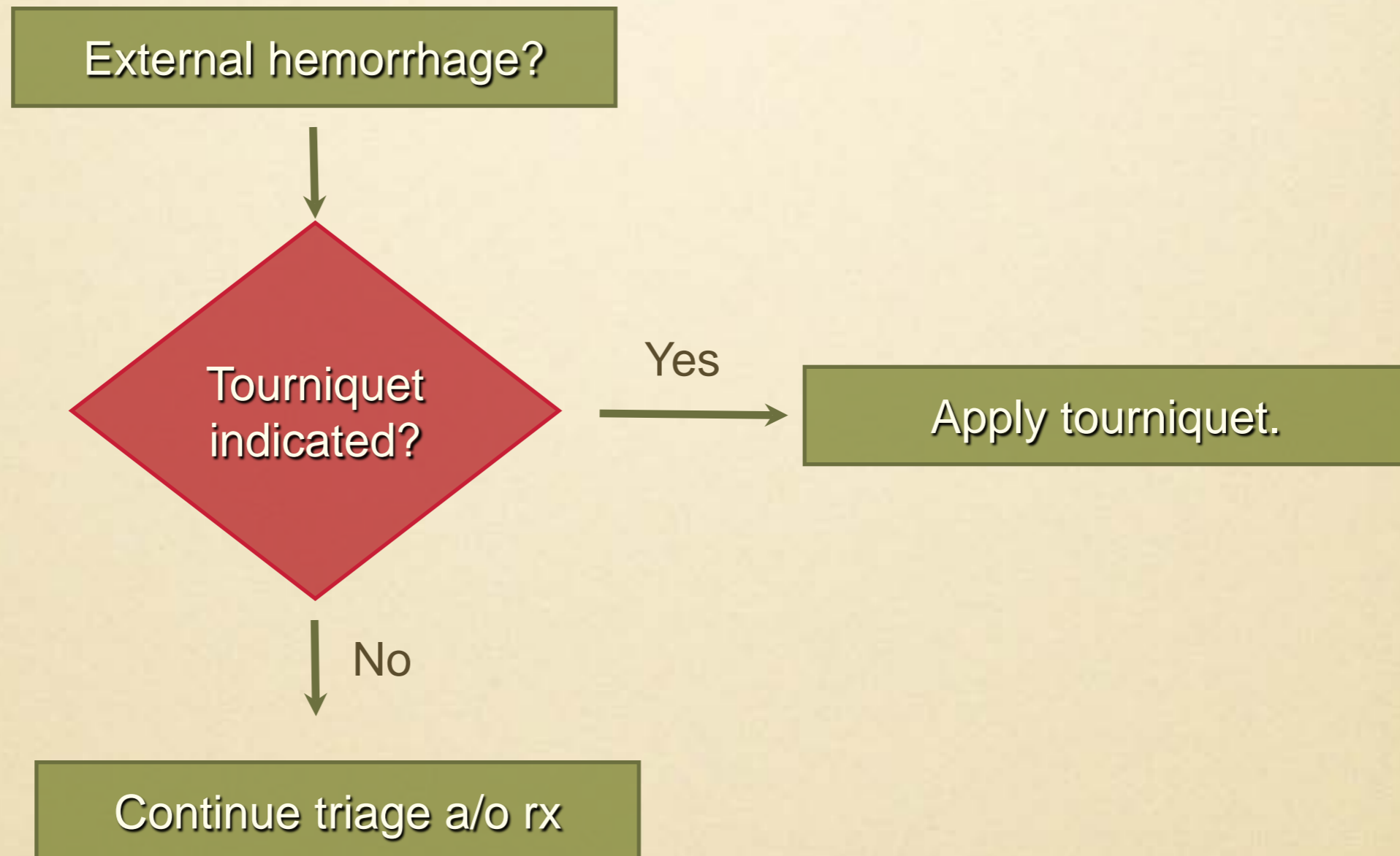
Triage in the Field

- Monitoring equipment is limited or ineffective.
- Some physiologic data correspond poorly with survival.
- Some physiologic data are unavailable in tactical situations.
- Triage tools must be simple.

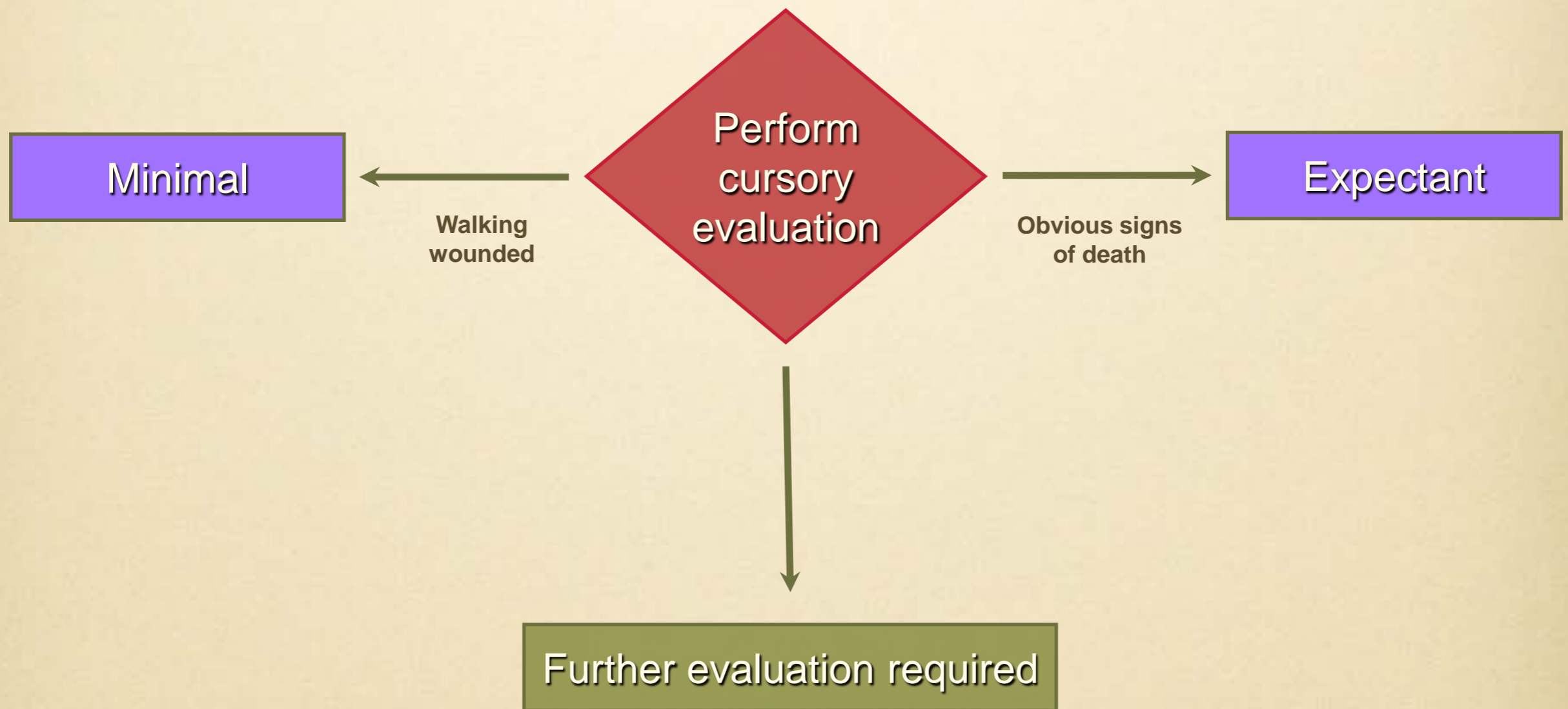
Field Triage Markers

- Ability to ambulate.*
- Obvious signs of death.
- Ability to follow commands.
- Respiratory distress.
- Peripheral pulse character.

Under Immediate Threat (Scene Unsafe)



Scene Secured



Scene Secured

Further evaluation required

* Examples: applying a tourniquet to control life-threatening extremity hemorrhage, packing a wound with Combat Gauze™ for life-threatening hemorrhage where a tourniquet cannot be applied, needle thoracentesis for tension pneumothorax.



No



Yes

Immediate

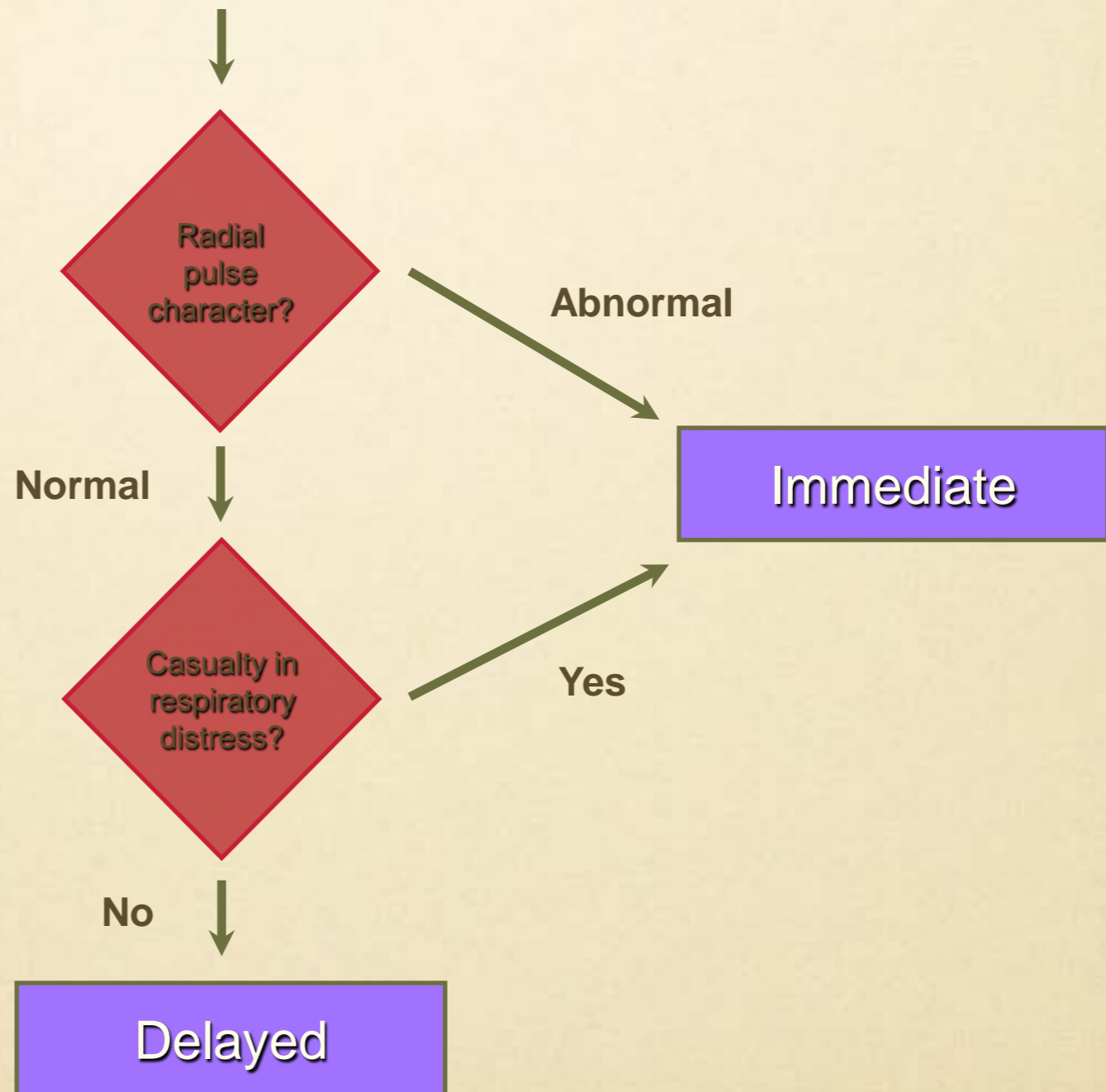
No

If a casualty is unable to obey commands and has weak or absent radial pulses, the risk of mortality is 92%

Yes

Scene Secured

If a casualty is unable to obey commands and has weak or absent radial pulses, the risk of mortality is 92%



Triage in the Field

- Using a simple algorithm:
 - Casualties have been sorted into all four triage categories.
 - Minimal equipment was required.

Pearls for Mass Casualty Triage

- **Secure the scene**
- **Establish Casualty Collection Points and routes of access**
- **Estimate initial number and severity of casualties, and additional hazards (smoke, NBC, etc.)**
- **Re-triage with extended 2° survey as time permits**

Triage in the Field

- Practical Exercise