

# ⚠ Clinical Deterioration

**Clinical deterioration** refers to a measurable or observable decline in a patient's physiological or neurological status, indicating worsening of the underlying condition or development of new complications.

## □ Key Features

- **Neurological signs:** ↓ Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS), new focal deficits, seizures, agitation, loss of consciousness
- **Vital sign changes:** hypotension, bradycardia/tachycardia, desaturation, altered respiratory rate
- **Other red flags:** new onset vomiting, pupillary asymmetry, posturing, confusion

## □ Context-Specific Examples

- After traumatic brain injury:
  - Drop in GCS  $\geq 2$  points
  - Development of anisocoria
- In postoperative patients:
  - Sudden confusion, restlessness, or motor decline
- In ICU monitoring:
  - Escalation in oxygen or vasopressor requirements

## □ Clinical Implications

- May require:
  - Immediate imaging (e.g., urgent CT)
  - Escalation of care (e.g., ICU transfer)
  - Activation of rapid response or code teams
  - Re-evaluation of diagnosis or treatment plan

## □ Best Practice

- Define deterioration criteria clearly in protocols
- Train staff to recognize early warning signs
- Ensure structured handovers include baseline status

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