

QUESTION

A 65-year-old man with a long history of hypertension and hyperlipidemia presents to the emergency department with a 2-hour history of severe, crushing chest pain. He is diaphoretic and has a heart rate of 110 beats per minute, blood pressure of 180/100 mmHg, and oxygen saturation of 92% on 2L oxygen. ECG shows ST-segment elevation in leads V1-V4.

Which of the following is the most appropriate initial management step?

- A) Administer aspirin 162 mg chewed
- B) Administer morphine 4 mg IV
- C) Administer nitroglycerin 0.4 mg IV
- D) Administer tPA 100 mg IV over 30 minutes
- E) Administer clopidogrel 75 mg PO

ANSWER

The correct answer is A) Administer aspirin 162 mg chewed. This patient is presenting with symptoms and signs of an acute myocardial infarction (MI), specifically ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI). The initial management of a STEMI involves rapid reperfusion therapy. Aspirin is a cornerstone of the initial management, and it should be given as soon as possible, ideally within the first hour of symptom onset. The recommended dose is 162 mg to 325 mg of aspirin, chewed, to ensure rapid absorption. Other options listed, such as morphine, nitroglycerin, and clopidogrel, are also important in the management of STEMI but are not the most appropriate initial step. tPA is a thrombolytic agent that is used for reperfusion therapy, but it is not the first step in the management of a STEMI.

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