The ABCD of resuscitation

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Reanimation is divided into two phases. The first phase, primary ABCD, consists of verifying the patient’s responsiveness, activating the emergency system, requesting a defibrillator, establishing and maintaining the airway's patency, checking respiration, initiating artificial respiration when necessary, checking the circulation, in the absence of a pulse beginning with chest compressions, and identifying the heart rhythm on the monitor. In particular, one should determine if the rhythm is ventricular fibrillation. Ventricular fibrillation is the most frequent cause of sudden cardiac arrest, estimated to occur in 70 to 80% of cases. The basic measures should not delay the earliest possible use of defibrillation. Only then follows the second phase, secondary ABCD, consisting of intubation, adequate ventilation, intravenous infusion, medications, further defibrillation when appropriate and the determination of treatable causes.