

# Ottawa SAH Rule-Out

## 1. Is your patient suitable?

- Alert
- Over 15 years old
- New acute severe non-traumatic headache
- Headache reaches maximum intensity within 1 h of onset
- No: history of similar headaches ( $\geq 3$  episodes over  $\geq 6$  m)
- No: New neurological deficits, Previous aneurysms, SAH or Brain tumors
- No: Anaemia Hb $<$ 100 (Low Hb makes finding blood on CT very difficult)

All

Not All

STOP!

Not suitable seek senior advice

## 2. Clinical Rule-Out

- Symptom of neck pain or stiffness
- Over 40 years old
- Witnessed loss of consciousness
- Onset during exertion
- Thunderclap headache (peak pain instantly)
- Limited neck flexion upon exam

Any

None

GO!

NO further Ix required for SAH

## 3. Arrange CT Head

**Remember:** if you are considering other diagnosis (e.g. Sinus thrombus) discuss with the radiologist regarding the best imaging modality

No Bleed

Bleed

STOP!

Ref. Neurosurg  
Reverse Anticoag  
Normalise ABC

## 4. CT $>$ 6hrs from ONSET

OR

## 5. Ultra High Risk (UHR)?

- Age  $>$  40 yr
- Thunderclap headache (peak pain instantly)
- Family History of SAH

None

Any

STOP!

Ref. to AAU/AMU  
Medical Review  
LP @ 12hr  
UHR - CTA/MRA?

GO!

No further Ix is required for this patient for SAH  
Ensure other diagnoses have been considered and patient has advice sheet

Ottawa  
SAH  
Rule