

# Transient Global Amnesia

A.J. Larner

# Transient Global Amnesia

From Patient Encounter to Clinical  
Neuroscience

 Springer

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# Foreword

It is a great pleasure to write a foreword for this outstanding book dealing with a subject which has been close to my heart for over 30 years. When I undertook my studies on transient global amnesia (TGA) in the 1980s under the mentorship of Charles Warlow at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford, little was known concerning the aetiology or outcome of TGA. I had the amazing experience of seeing several people in the throes of their episode and was encouraged to undertake an MD thesis on the topic by Charles. It also struck me that TGA was an unexplored model of amnesia which might teach us something of the cognitive architecture and organisation of memory.

So much more has been learnt since the 1980s with a brief survey of PubMed revealing almost 1000 papers. This literature has been admirably reviewed by Andrew Larner whose scholarship and ability to summarise large volumes of information are second to none.

As well as covering the core topic of TGA, Andrew has embraced variants of TGA and disorders which can be confused with TGA, notably transient epileptic amnesia which has become a fascinating topic with an active literature in its own right.

The book provides an up-to-date overview of the literature on transient amnesia, but in addition it is a down-to-earth guide for clinicians managing patients with these perplexing disorders which are encountered by all neurologists as part of their general neurological practice.

Professor John R. Hodges  
Professor of Cognitive Neurology  
Co-Director Frontotemporal Dementia Research Group  
Brain & Mind Centre  
The University of Sydney  
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# Preface

This book has evolved from more than 15 years of personal experience in seeing patients with transient global amnesia (TGA) as one component of work in a dedicated cognitive disorders clinic based at a regional neuroscience centre (Larner 2014), as well as in general neurology clinics and on ward consultation visits in district and teaching hospitals served by the centre and to which I have been assigned. However, my interest in TGA dates back around 30 years to medical student days in Oxford (1984–1987) which happened to coincide with the time that John Hodges' studies of the condition were in progress. Twenty-five years on, his monograph (Hodges 1991) remains a seminal work in the field, even though it predates the explosion of neuroimaging studies using various modalities which were unavailable at that time. The only other book-length treatments of TGA are, to my knowledge (largely confined as it is to the English language), those of Markowitsch (1990) and, most recently, Daniel (2012).

Nevertheless, despite the paucity of books, many reviews have been (e.g. Whitty 1977; Caplan 1985; Kritchevsky 1992; Zeman and Hodges 1997) and continue to be published on the subject (e.g. considering only the past 10 years or so, Sander and Sander 2005; Butler and Zeman 2006; Quinette et al. 2006; Owen et al. 2007; Marin-Garcia and Ruiz-Vargas 2008; Shekhar 2008; Veran et al. 2008; Klötzsch 2009; Bartsch and Deuschl 2010; Urban 2010; Hunter 2011; Kirshner 2011; Forman 2012; Bartsch and Butler 2013; Marazzi et al. 2014; Szabo 2014; Wilkinson and Derry 2014; Arena and Rabinstein 2015), including brief accounts from this centre (Larner 2008a, b, 2013; Larner et al. 2011; Williamson and Larner 2015). These publications attest to the interest in the condition of not only neurologists but also general physicians, emergency room specialists (Brown 1997; Harrison and Williams 2007; Faust and Nemes 2016), psychiatrists, occupational health physicians, and even practitioners involved in medicolegal work (Griebe et al. 2015), all of whom may encounter TGA patients. Moreover, amongst neurologists, not only those with an interest in cognitive neurology but also specialists in headache disorders, epilepsy, and stroke may need to consider TGA in the differential diagnosis of their typical patient cohorts. Hence, a broad constituency of clinicians may require access to a ready source of information about TGA, presenting a lacuna for a further

synoptic account of the condition. This is supplemented by my own clinical experience, with illustrative case material summarised in occasional case study text boxes.

This is a book by a clinician for clinicians which also delves a little into the brain-behaviour implications (the neuropsychology of mental structure) of the condition; hence, the arrangement of the chapters is as follows: after a brief overview of the historical perspective (Chap. 1), the clinical aspects are covered (Chaps. 2–5) before a review of the epidemiology and aetiopathogenesis (Chaps. 6 and 7, respectively). The book does not aim to review, far less to catalogue, every paper ever written on the subject of TGA, and in view of previous extensive reviews (e.g. Quinette et al. 2006) the focus is particularly on material published in the past 10 years. Although the book builds on the work of many clinicians, any remaining errors and misconceptions are my own.

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All errors or misconceptions which remain are entirely my own work.



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