

Cost Effectiveness / Yield / Medical Economics

6 Minutes Exercise Test

OP Kapoor

Six minutes exercise test is a very simple test. Only pulse oximeter is required. The patient's oxygen is noted. Then he is made to walk for 6 minutes. If at the end of walk, the SPO2 reading falls by more than 4, then the test is positive.

This test should be done whenever a patient complains of dyspnoea on exertion. If the patient's E.C.G. and 2-D Echo is normal, heart conditions are ruled

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out. Bronchial asthma is ruled out by the history. A C.B.C. blood test will exclude anaemia. X-ray chest is normal.

If this patient also complains of cough, 6 minute exercise test should be done. If positive, the patient should be sent for HRCT of the Chest. I.L.D. (Interstitial fibrosis of the lung) is picked up when the X-ray chest was more or less normal! The patient should be sent to a Pulmonologist. Do not start the treatment because the prognosis of this illness is bad.

Degenerative cervical myelopathy

A 54 year old man presents with neck stiffness for about a year. He complains of numbness in his fingers and difficulty buttoning up his shirt, which has not improved following surgery for carpal tunnel syndrome. Of late, he has experienced unsteadiness and has started to use a walking stick after sustaining falls. He sees a neurologist who identifies hyperreflexia in his arms and legs. An MRI scan shows multilevel cervical spondylosis and disc herniation causing cord compression. He is diagnosed with degenerative cervical myelopathy and referred to spinal surgery for operative decompression.

Benjamin M Davies, Oliver D Mowforth, Emma K Smith, Mark R N Kotter, The BMJ, Feb 2018, 330

Are we ready for the “new chest X ray?”

What would we need if we seriously contemplated replacing chest radiography with CT scanning in acute care?

Unlike the traditional alternative - the perfusion lung scan - CTPA can suggest or exclude a range of other possible diagnoses.

Chest radiography has been around for a long time, and familiarity can perhaps blind us to its deficiencies, of which the inability to diagnose pulmonary embolism is only one. For example, about a quarter of lung cancers and half of all rib fractures are not detected by radiography.

Giles Mastell, The BMJ, Feb 2018, 316