

General Practitioner's Section

Do Not Diagnose Biliary Colic if Pain is More Than 6 Hours' Duration

OP Kapoor

Most of the times, gall stones are silent but if they do cause an attack of biliary colic similar to renal colic, there is very severe pain felt in the epigastrium and right hypochondrium and at the back associated with severe vomiting and

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sweating.

However, it is very important to remember that if this pain lasts for more than 6 hours, the patient has either developed cholecystitis or acute pancreatitis. Repeat sonography and blood tests like CBC to see leucocyte count, Serum Bilirubin and Serum Amylase. They will help in the diagnosis.

Prognosis in a Liver Patient

OP Kapoor

When the liver patient becomes serious, do not judge the prognosis

from SGPT. Prothombin time is the best indicator for poor prognosis. Also platelet count and Creatinine levels will help.

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Endogenous Depression

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Endogenous depression is extremely common in private practice. The diagnosis is missed because there is no blood test or imaging showing this illness.

Any patient who complains of feeling low, insomnia, weakness specially early morning when he has no desire to go to work, with spells of crying, has got endogenous depression.

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Do not send these patients to a psychiatrist. Moment the treatment is started by any anti-depression tablets like Amitriptyllin, the patient shows improvement within few days. By the end of 3 weeks he becomes normal but the medicine should be continued for 6 months. However, if the patient does not improve by 3 weeks, never treat the patient further and then he should be referred to a psychiatrist.

Blood Tests of CPK and LDH

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Most of the times in health check up, the most useless tests (which are often abnormal) are CPK and LDH. However, in a fever patient, this test can become useful in giving the diagnosis like a

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very high CPK is suggestive of Leptospirosis and a very high LDH is suggestive of malaria specially falciparum malaria. At other times, an occasional patient consuming statins might show high CPK. Similarly, LDH is raised in macrocytic anaemia.

Podagra and Uric Acid

OP Kapoor

Podagra is an attack of Inflammatory Arthritis (pain, redness, feverish, leucocytosis) usually affecting the big toe or any other area of the foot. If an aspiration of the joint is carried out, there is no pus but yellow pus like liquid which on examination will show uric acid crystals. Blood uric acid levels are normal. Treatment is strong pain killers like Indomethacin in very large doses like 2 hourly or 1 hourly. Steroids can be used.

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No Anti uric acid drugs at all. Such patients can develop gout after few years.

Hyperuriceamia is very common in our population- specially in people having high cholesterol or lipids and does not call for treatment and is usually less than 10mg. Very high levels are seen after using drugs like PZA or Haematological drugs when Uric acid lowering drugs have to be used.

Finally it is worth remembering that if an elderly person is having Rheumatoid Arthritis picture, but Anti CCP test is normal, high uric acid levels will favour the diagnosis of "Chronic Gout"

Cost Effectiveness / Yield / Medical Economics

2 D Echo Against E.C.G. in Myocardial Infarction

OP Kapoor

For so many years, E.C.G. was used as one of the best investigations to confirm myocardial infarction. The time

has come when in addition to Troponin levels in the blood, 2-D Echo is required to confirm the diagnosis of myocardial infarction. In future, all Cardiologists will have to keep 2D Echo machine, preferably the latest portable one equivalent to stethoscope.

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Antiplatelet Therapy after Ischemic Stroke or TIA

The combination of aspirin plus clopidogrel reduces the chance of recurrent ischemic stroke during the high-risk period in the first few weeks after a TIA or noncardioembolic ischemic stroke. However, to confirm the results of the POINT trial, if dual therapy is used, it should be confined to the first 3 weeks after a TIA or minor stroke and then transitioned to monotherapy. If patient follow-up and adherence to therapy are not reliable, then dual therapy perhaps should not be considered. Dual therapy may also not be advisable in patients with an uncertain diagnosis of TIA, who either would have been excluded from the trial or did not benefit. Finally, patients who are at increased risk for bleeding, such as those with cerebral microbleeding or a history of brain or systemic bleeding, were excluded from this trial and may not be appropriate candidates for such dual therapy.

James C. Grotta, The NEJM, 2018, Vol 379, 291-292

New Biologics for Asthma

Dupilumab, a monoclonal antibody directed against the alpha subunit of the interleukin-4 receptor that inhibits interleukin-4 and interleukin-13 signaling, has a salutary treatment effect in severe asthma.

It is likely that these data will lead to approval of dupilumab for the indication of severe asthma. If so, in the past few years four new biologics - namely, mepolizumab, reslizumab, benralizumab, and dupilumab - that are directed largely against type 2 inflammation, broadly writ, will have been introduced for the treatment of asthma.

Although we are doing the research to find these markers, how will we decide which of these treatments should be used now?

We envision a trial in which patients meeting specific asthma and biomarkers criteria would be enrolled and assigned randomly to one of the four active treatments.

Jeffrey M. Drazen, David Harrington, The NEJM, 2018, Vol 378, 2533

Vestibular Neuronitis Recovery

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Vestibular neuronitis is quite common in young and middle aged patients. The attack could be very severe with intense vertigo, vomiting and imbalance

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while walking. Very important to note that the patient recovers from the illness within 24 to 48 hours. Thus, the patient may not need any investigation though the relatives are frightened and would like to go for some tests.

Barium Swallow with Video Fluoroscopy

OP Kapoor

Motility disorder of the oesophagus is quite a common cause of dysphagia.

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This illness is always missed on endoscopy. Always send such patients for Barium bolus examination of the oesophagus under video fluoroscopy.

Why Are Small Ill Equipped ICCU Units in the Suburbs Surviving?

OP Kapoor

Most of the population has shifted to suburbs. Every suburb has a population of 1 lac to 10 lacs. You do not expect these patients to come to the city when they get a heart attack. Every suburb has a number of ICCU units very ill

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equipped. More important is the man power. No Intensivists at all!!

Even then many patients survive, Why? Because these patients are survivors of the storm. Most of the patients who are going to die, do so within 2 hours of the attack. Thus, if the patient reaches the hospital after two hours, his chances of survival are good.

Disease Pattern In India

High Normal BP and Not Hypertension

OP Kapoor

The diagnosis of "hypertension" carries sentence of life time medication and therefore disliked by the patients. Therefore, whenever you have a patient less than 50 years old and if the BP is not

more than 150/90 constantly, it is better to tell the patient that he has high normal BP and advise him to lose weight, start low salt diet and start regular exercises. There is nothing wrong in waiting for few months. Also see that the patient becomes conscious of his BP for which he will not mind starting medicines later on whenever required.

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Four Months of Rifampin or Nine Months of Isoniazid for Latent Tuberculosis in Adults

A 9-month regimen of isoniazid can prevent active tuberculosis in persons with latent tuberculosis infection. However, the regimen has been associated with poor adherence rates and with toxic effects. The 4-month regimen of rifampin was not inferior to the 9-month regimen of isoniazid for the prevention of active tuberculosis and was associated with a higher rate of treatment completion and better safety.

D. Menzies, M. Adjobimey, R. Ruslami, et al, The NEGM, 2018, Vol 379, 440

Time to rethink exercise for fibromyalgia care

Chronic widespread pain is a complex biopsychosocial medical condition that is associated with substantial mental health comorbidities. Tai chi integrates physical, psychosocial, and behavioural elements, and may be especially suited to tackling the psychological and somatic symptoms associated with chronic pain.

We found patients may be more likely to enjoy, manage, and continue to practise tai chi

It might be time to rethink what type of exercise is most effective for patients with fibromyalgia. More importantly, what types or combinations of exercise would patients embrace in the long term?

The BMJ, 2017, 481

Heart Disease More after the Age of 75

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It is very important to remember that in a patient more than 75 years old, coronary disease is not the only cardiovascular illness. You should also look

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for :-

1. Atrial fibrillation which is present in 10% of patients at this age
2. Aortic stenosis which can be picked up only by 2-D Echo
3. Aneurysm of the aorta picked up by x-ray, T.E.E. or CT Angiography.

Symptoms and Signs/Obsolete/Evergreen/New
Allergic Rhinitis and Sinus Not the Same

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It is the ENT specialists who have introduced these names of the illnesses (sinus) so that the option of surgery remains open. It is worth remembering that patients who have severe sneezing

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with watery discharge and nose block are suffering from allergic rhinitis. They may develop bronchial asthma. While sinusitis, should be diagnosed in a patient who has thick yellow nasal discharge with nose block and pain and tenderness over the frontal or maxillary sinuses.