

Diagnostic Errors Case Studies

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Multiple Missed Opportunities for Suicide Risk Assessment in Emergency and Primary Care Settings

Jane L. Erb, MD, Sejal B. Shah, MD and Gordon D. Schiff, MD | January 7, 2022

An 18-year-old man with a history of untreated depression and suicide attempts (but no history of psychiatric hospitalizations) was seen in the ED for suicidal ideation after recent gun purchase. Due to suicidal ideation, he was placed on safety hold...

Coming up for Err – Missed Diagnosis in a Patient with Recurrent Pneumothorax

Narath Carlile, MD, MPH, Soheil El-Chemaly, MD, MPH, and Gordon D. Schiff, MD | August 25, 2021

A 31-year-old woman presented to the ED with worsening shortness of breath and was unexpectedly found to have a moderate-sized left pneumothorax, which was treated via a thoracostomy tube. After additional work-up and computed tomography (CT) imaging...

Paroxysmal Supraventricular Tachycardia Masquerading as Panic Attacks

David T. Martin, MD and Diane O'Leary, PhD | June 30, 2021

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Saul N. Weingart, MD, MPP, PhD, Gordon D. Schiff MD, and Ted James, MD, FACS | December 23, 2020

After a breast mass was identified by a physician assistant during a routine visit, a 60-year-old woman received a diagnostic mammogram and ultrasound. The radiology assessment was challenging due to dense breast tissue and...

Endometriosis: A Common and Commonly Missed and Delayed Diagnosis

Malcom Mackenzie, MD and Celeste Royce, MD | June 24, 2020

Endometriosis is a common clinical condition that is often subject to missed or delayed diagnosis. In this case, a mixture of shortcomings in clinicians' understanding of the disease, diagnostic biases, and the failure to validate a young woman's...

Anemia and Delayed Colon Cancer Diagnosis

Mythili P. Pathipati, MD, and James M. Richter, MD | August 10, 2019

An elderly man had iron deficiency anemia with progressively falling hemoglobin levels for nearly 2 years. Although during that time he underwent an upper endoscopy, capsule endoscopy, and repeat upper endoscopy and received multiple...

Spinal Epidural Abscess

Yi Lu, MD, PhD, and Douglas Salvador, MD, MPH | August 8, 2019

A woman with a history of prior spine surgery presented to the emergency department with progressive low back pain. An MRI scan of T11–S1 showed lumbar degenerative joint disease and a small L5–S1 disc herniation. She was referred for physical...

Renal Failure Due to Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia

Michael J. Barry, MD, and Marc B. Garnick, MD | August 10, 2019

Referred to urology for a 5-year history of progressive urinary frequency, nocturnal urination, and difficulty initiating a stream, a man had been reluctant to seek care for his symptoms because his father had a "miserable" experience with treatment...

Strongyloides: A Hidden Traveler and Potentially Lethal Missed Diagnosis.

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