

## Clinical diagnoses and autopsy findings: discrepancies in critically ill patients.

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Autopsies are an important tool for detecting [diagnostic errors](#) and improving clinicians' diagnostic performance. Review of autopsy case series over the past half century demonstrates a [persistently high](#) rate of clinically significant missed diagnoses, but despite this, autopsies are becoming [increasingly uncommon](#) in the United States. This Spanish study reviewed autopsies of patients who died in the intensive care unit of a teaching hospital over a 25-year period and found a missed diagnosis that would have affected therapy while the patient was alive in 7.5% of patients. Similar error rates have been found in other [contemporary series](#), indicating that despite more advanced diagnostics, diagnostic error rates have likely not decreased significantly. Of note, in this series, 30.3% of patients who died underwent autopsy, a rate that is much higher than at most US institutions. A fatal missed diagnosis detected at autopsy is discussed in this AHRQ WebM&M [commentary](#).