

## **Missed serious neurologic conditions in emergency department patients discharged with nonspecific diagnoses of headache or back pain.**

October 30, 2019

Dubosh NM, Edlow JA, Goto T, et al. Missed Serious Neurologic Conditions in Emergency Department Patients Discharged With Nonspecific Diagnoses of Headache or Back Pain. *Ann Emerg Med*. 2019;74(4):549-561. doi:10.1016/j.annemergmed.2019.01.020.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/missed-serious-neurologic-conditions-emergency-department-patients-discharged-nonspecific>

---

Misdiagnosis of a neurologic emergency such as stroke can lead to serious morbidity or mortality. Using a large multi-state database, this study examined the likelihood of readmission or inpatient mortality among patients who were initially discharged with nonspecific diagnoses of headache or back pain and found that 0.5% of headache and 0.2% of back pain patients experienced an inpatient death or serious neurological event after ED discharge. Extrapolated to a national level, this translates to over 55,000 patients with adverse outcomes due to a missed diagnosis for headache or back pain.