Please Gather Up Front

(so we can keep each other awake)
Considering Key Components of Clinical Diagnosis

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How to Teach EBCP   McMaster Univ. June 2019
Disclosures

• I have no financial or non-financial conflicts of interest

• However, I do sport a southwestern drawl honed in West Texas ...

• My passion past 30yrs: Create learning opportunities for resident/fellow physicians to become better than their faculty
Wagons from Kocs, Hungary
Overarching Directions View
(e.g. from google maps app)

• Inspire all of us to explore – & pursue mastery – in diagnostic reasoning ... through teaching slices

• Practice Simple Math & English
• Practice Avoiding Formulas
• Enjoy Fun Interaction
Granular (Paper) Road Map View

- Differential Diagnosis & thresholds
- Why address muddled diagnostic thinking
- Tackle 2x2 tables
- Explore LRs as
  1. Doctor’s Friend
  2. Ratio of likelihoods
- Consolidation Case
- Kocs, Hungary
Probabilities & Thresholds

Probability of Diagnosis

- 0% Test threshold: Probability below test threshold; no testing warranted
- Probability between test and treatment threshold: further testing required
- Treatment threshold: Probability above treatment threshold; testing completed; treatment commences

We Can Learn A Lot from Real Life Dilemmas
My Car Won’t Start

WHY???
I Call Mechanic #1

“Oh boy, it could be a lot of things”

• No gas / Too much gas / Bad gas / Blocked gas
• Blocked air intake
• Dead battery / Disconnected battery
• Shorted ignition system / Failed spark plugs
• Ungrounded starter / Cellanoid / Other electrical short

“I’ll send over a tow truck, and we’ll run a bunch of tests to figure it out”
I Call Mechanic #2

#2: “When you turn the key, does it crank or not make any noise?”

Me: “Why do you ask?”

#2: “If it cranks, it’s a fuel or air problem, and if it doesn’t it’s an electrical problem”
I Call Mechanic #3

#3: “Did you run out of gas again?”

Me: “Uhh ... I didn’t look at the gas gauge; let me go check ...”

“Yep, it’s on empty”

#3: “I’ll be right over with a gallon of gas”

Me: “Please don’t tell my wife”
Why Such Different Responses?

- Mechanic #1 (just starting out)
- Mechanic #2 (mid-career & smart)
- Mechanic #3 (old, crusty, & savvy)
## When Considering Ddx

### Is Differential Diagnosis …

**a List** or **an Active Process**?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>‘Possibilistic’ List</th>
<th>‘Probabalistic’ Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physician Effort</strong></td>
<td>Memorize all possibilities</td>
<td>Thoughtfully regard the list based on …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Type of Thinking**   | Consider all known causes | Actively reorder list based on:  
  • Patient Context  
  • Probabilistic  
  • Prognostic  
  • Pragmatic |
Let’s put these notions into action with a real patient
Let’s have a think-about

Walter is 27y/o thin cook

- Presents to ER with fatigue and abd pain & n/v
- Afebrile, 150/85, HR 115, RR 20, Abd soft & NT
- Fatigue, polydipsia, nocturia & 20# wt loss past month

- UA 3+ gluc, 2+ ketones
- WBC nl; Gluc – 405; HCO3 – 6; Anion Gap – 28
  ABG – 7.02 / 12 / 125
  B-Hydroxybutyrate – 8
Let’s have a think-about

Consensus is 99+% certainty of IDDM

• And already past treatment threshold for insulin b/o clinical predicament

• After discharge, surprisingly I received the result of a ‘send out lab’ result (i.e. >$400!)

• Glutamic acid decarboxylate antibody (GAD-Ab) >250

Did we still have diagnostic uncertainty?
Dx tests most useful when results push probability across one of the thresholds, leading to a specific action:
wait… test further… or treat
Must consider if a difference in clinical care plans can still be gained … by attempting to keep trying to minimize uncertainty

“A difference, to be a difference, must make a difference.”

Gertrude Stein
(1874 – 1946)
## The 2 X 2 Table

### TRUTH ($D_z$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dx Test</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neg</td>
<td></td>
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From what perspective do Docs get to gaze into this box?
Neurohormone SAD levels in 200 dazed Iowans after a tough winter

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Depression</th>
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<th>Absent</th>
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<td>&gt;150 SAD Level</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
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- **Sensitivity (Sen)**: $\frac{50}{50+40} = \frac{50}{90} = 56%$
- **Specificity (Spec)**: $\frac{105}{105+105} = \frac{105}{210} = 50%$
- **Positive Predictive Value (PPV)**: $\frac{50}{50+5} = \frac{50}{55} = 91%$
- **Negative Predictive Value (NPV)**: $\frac{105}{105+105} = \frac{105}{210} = 50%$
Neurohormone SAD levels in 200 dazed Iowans after a tough winter

### Depression

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;100</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>85</td>
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We Need a 2\textsuperscript{nd} Generation Diagnostic Test Performance Measure ... 

The Noble Likelihood Ratio
2nd Generation Measure ... LR

(No Formulas; just these 2 tenets)

1. LRs are the Doctor’s Friend

2. LRs are just a Ratio of Likelihoods
You’re Cranking Out Notes on the Wards …
A Tired Lady:

- 71F, ↑fatigue, ↓exercise tolerance
- Pale conjunctivae
- Cough, sput, fever
- RLL crackles
- Hgb 8.7 g/dL
- Does she have iron deficiency anemia?
What was Helpful that You Could Try in Your Own Teaching?
Mr. Cox – 80y/o

- Exasperated daughter brought to ED because “he hurts all over and can’t hardly move”
- Doctors & PT not helping with his C3-4 spinal stenosis (mod to severe) or known bilat rotator cuff disease
- Hgb 11; Na 126; LFTs nl, but Alb 2.2
- ESR = 120
- RF = 774 IU/ml
- ED also got Anti-CCP = 300U/ml (nl <3)
Mr. Cox – 80y/o

- New Rheum Fellow called by ED …
  “Sounds like he’s got RA; we’ll see him in consult”

- **Overnite Admitting Assessment:** RA, needs NHP

- **At 7:30am:** Diffuse aches, especially in shoulders and some hips; Fell on ice & broke left humerus; managed with immobilization; Declining, especially past 2 months

- Retired machinist for John Deere; Lives alone; HTN; DM; No h/o periodic joint swelling
Mr. Cox – 80y/o

- 40# wt loss past 6mon
daughter wonders maybe: “cause he can’t barely feed himself”

- Difficulty raising hands out of lap; hurts to gently shake hands; some thenar wasting; Dupuytren contracture

- Moderate tenderness across shoulder muscles, but NT with gentle passive ROM; no effusions or warmth

- No other joint warmth, swelling, or chronic changes of RA; DTRs 2+

- We started therapeutic trial 15mg pred/d; CXR; & requested outside cervical MRI
Mr. Cox – 80y/o

**Rheum Evaluation:** Believes all from spinal stenosis, rotator cuff, fracture, immobility. Agrees no synovitis, but “worried about the high Anti-CCP so consider starting hydroxychloroquine”. “Doubt PMR.”

**Results of Therapeutic Trial of Steroids**
- **Next morning:** Best night of sleep; Helped feed himself.
- **Following morning:** bright affect & feeds self; can raise hands to shoulders without pain
- **Following days:** while awaiting Rehab placement, eating like a horse; takes laps in hallways with walker
- **Daughter tearfully exclaims:** “It’s a miracle”
Mr. Cox – 80y/o

Think Out Loud with Me …

WHY was it so hard for our rheum colleagues to let go of RA?

What aspects of diagnostic reasoning in this case would you teach about?
Mr. Cox – 80y/o

- Anti-CCP has a sensitivity of 58% and specificity of 96%
- LR(+) = 14.5
- Remember LR > 10 Result in large changes in post-test probability

Systematic Review: Accuracy of Anti-CCP for Diagnosing RA
Ann Int Med 2010; 152:456-464
Pre-test probability 1%

Post-test probability ~10%

Pre-test probability 40%

Post-test probability >90%
Wagons from Kocs, Hungary
The Word ‘Coach’

Arises from horse-drawn wagons or carriages
- 1830s Oxford
- 1860s Athletic Coaches appeared

• To help take or move someone from *where they are to where they want to be*

• It’s a guiding process to improve performance

• Focused on *specific* skills/tasks/capabilities
Key Take Home Messages

Patients and learners deserve clinicians with rational diagnostic reasoning

1. Ddx should be an active process
2. Orient 2x2 box; Know Doc’s perspective
3. For Sen/Spec/PPV/NPV … name denominator first
4. LRs are the Doctor’s friend
5. LR are just a ratio of likelihoods
6. Coach ourselves, colleagues, & learners
Savor Your EBM Learning & Teaching in Tasty Slices