THERAPY UNIT
Internal Medicine, Chiropractic, and other

Goal:

At the completion of this unit, participants will be able to critically appraise an article, addressing therapy, using the “Users’ Guides”

Instructional Objectives:

At the completion of this unit you will be able to:

1. Assess the validity of an article on Therapy.
2. Interpret the measures of effect of the intervention for both magnitude, precision, and clinical relevance (e.g. RR, RRR, ARR, NNT, and 95% CI of these measures).
3. Determine the applicability of the Results to your patients.
4. Evaluate the trade-offs between Benefits and Harms of the interventions.

Reference (further readings):


Therapy
1. Chapter 7, p.59, Therapy (Randomized Trials)
2. Chapter 9, p.87, Does Treatment Lower Risk? Understanding the Results
3. Chapter 10, p.95, Confidence Intervals
4. Chapter 11, p.103, Advanced Topics in the Risk of Bias of Therapy Trials
5. Chapter 12, p.189, Advanced Topics in the Results of Therapy Trials
6. Chapter 13, p.235, Advanced Topics in Applying the Results of Therapy Trials

Problem Based Educational Strategy:

1. Read the Clinical Scenario
2. Compose a well-built clinical (foreground) question about the clinical problem.
3. Complete a literature search using the headings from your well-built clinical question, and bring the results to the session.
4. Read the Users’ Guides to the Medical Literature reference articles.
5. Complete the attached Users’ Guides to the Medical Literature Worksheet.
6. Decide whether you will use “Rapid Magnetic Resonance Imaging” in this patient (Evan).
**Scenerio:**

Evan is 27 years old and has been experiencing low back pain for the past month. This is his first experience with low back pain. He reports no unexplained weight loss or fever; he is not taking oral steroids and reports no history of malignancy, tuberculosis, or injecting drug use. Evan presents with no signs suggestive of neurological involvement.

Evan has been taking a wait-and-see approach with his low back pain, managing by limiting his activities and taking over the counter analgesics. He is frustrated with his lack of improvement over the past month and wants to know if there something ‘serious’ going on with his back. Specifically, he has seen an advertisement for private clinic offering “rapid Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)” and wants to know if he should pay privately to acquire an MRI of his low back.

You are aware of a previous trial that found no benefit to use of radiographic imaging in low back pain patients without signs of possible ominous underlying pathology, but are uncertain as to whether there is benefit to advanced imaging – specifically an MRI.

Using PubMed and Clinical Queries you use the search terms “low back pain” and “magnetic resonance imaging” and restrict your search to “therapy”. You identify the following trial which you decide to explore further:


The abstract indicates it is relevant to your patient and you decide to critically appraise this paper using the “Users’ Guides” for a Therapy paper.

After critically appraising this paper, will you recommend “rapid MRI” for Evan?

**Enclosed Materials:**