

CRITICAL REVIEW FORM: DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS

Citation:

C.B. Golden, J.H. Feusner, Malignant abdominal masses in children: quick guide to evaluation and diagnosis. *Pediatr Clin N Am* 2002; 49: 1369-1392.

Discussion: There are severe limitations to this article. Can you think about how this paper doesn't fit the normal format for a differential diagnosis article. This is a case of a clinical question where the clinician wants to know the relevant frequency of aetiologies, both benign and malignant, in order to ascribe a pre-test probability for subsequent testing. The clinical question in this case would be: "In children presenting with abdominal masses, what is the ultimate distribution of diagnoses?" However, this paper addresses the question: "In children ultimately diagnosed with cancer, how did they present?"

- 1) What do you think that clinicians can gain from this kind of article?
- 2) How well do you think that this differential diagnosis worksheet works for this kind of article?
- 3) How would an optimal study to answer the question look? What barriers do you see to this kind of study?

Guide		Comments
I	Are the results valid?	
1	Did the study patients represent the full spectrum of those with this clinical problem?	
2	Was the diagnostic evaluation definitive?	
II	What were the results?	
1	What were the diagnoses and their probabilities?	
2	How precise are these estimates of disease probability?	
III	Will the results help in caring for my patients?	
1	Are the study patients and clinical setting similar to mine?	
2	Is it unlikely that the disease possibilities or probabilities have changed since this evidence was gathered?	