

## 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 |
|------------|---|----------|
| <b>I</b>   | <b>Are the results valid?</b>   |          |
| 1          | Did the study patients represent the full spectrum of those with this clinical problem?                       |          |
| 2          | Was the diagnostic evaluation definitive?   |          |
| <b>II</b>  | <b>What were the results?</b>   |          |
| 1          | What were the diagnoses and their probabilities?  |          |
| 2          | How precise are these estimates of disease probability?   |          |
| <b>III</b> | <b>Will the results help in caring for my patients?</b>   |          |
| 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? |          |