Prognosis Module
Short Term Outcomes after TIA

Objectives:

To assess the validity and applicability of an article attempting to predict the prognosis
associated with a given condition.
These include:
• Acquire the skills necessary to appraise the methodology of a case control or cohort study
  examining an issue of prognosis.
• Determine how information from a prognosis study can be incorporated into clinical reasoning
  and hence decision-making.

Assignment:

1. Read the attached scenario.
2. Read the attached guidelines for reading articles concerning prognosis.
3. Critically appraise the attached article using the accompanying worksheet.
4. Describe how you would address the patient’s concerns and management options taking into
   account your review of the article.

Clinical Scenario:

You are working a busy evening shift in the Emergency Department (ED) of a university
affiliated tertiary care hospital. You see a 64 year old right-handed male patient who presents
with a history of a 5 minute episode of right sided numbness affecting his upper and lower
extremity, not associated with weakness or dysarthria. The episode occurred while he was
driving and caused him to slow down without pulling over. There was no associated headache,
diplopia or dysarthria. He has a history of hypertension, which he states has been ‘fairly well
controlled on diet’ but no history of previous episodes similar to this one or of stroke. Physical
examination reveals a healthy looking male in no distress, with BP 170/95 and otherwise normal
vitals. He has no carotid bruits or cardiac murmurs on cardiovascular exam and the neurological
exam is normal. Laboratory tests, ECG and head CT are normal. Your plan is to discharge the
patient on daily ASA and a diuretic and to arrange for follow-up with the neurologist on call
within the next two weeks. However, his wife is apprehensive. Her elderly father presented in a
similar fashion and 6 hours after being sent home from the ED developed a hemiplegic stroke
from which he did not recover. You try to reassure her but she is becomes increasingly adamant
about him being admitted. You are not completely certain about her husband’s prognosis and
decide to admit the patient, but subsequently decide to explore the issue. A narrow search of
PubMed Clinical Queries using ‘transient ischemic attack early’ under the ‘Prognosis’ category
yields several recent relevant citations among the first 197 citations. You select an additional
article to review. Searching PubMed Clinical Queries under Systematic Reviews, still using the
same search terms and the Prognosis question type yields 47 recent meta-analyses. For the
purpose of this exercise we are concentrating on 2 of the individual studies included in that
review.
Citations:


6. Worksheet for evaluating an article on prognosis.