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Association of Renal Insufficiency with Treatment and Outcomes after Myocardial Infarction in Elderly Patients 555

M.G. Shlipak, P.A. Heidenreich, H. Noguchi, G.M. Chertow, W.S. Browner, and M.B. McClellan

Renal insufficiency was an independent risk factor for death in elderly patients after myocardial infarction. Targeted interventions may be needed to improve treatment for this high-risk population.

Acute Myocardial Infarction and Renal Dysfunction: A High-Risk Combination 563

R.S. Wright, G.S. Reeder, C.A. Herzog, R.C. Albright, B.A. Williams, D.L. Dvorak, W.L. Miller, J.G. Murphy, S.L. Kopecky, and A.S. Jaffe

Patients with renal failure are at increased risk for death after acute myocardial infarction and receive less aggressive treatment compared with patients who have normal renal function.

Prevalence of *bcl-2* Rearrangement in Patients with Hepatitis C Virus–Related Mixed Cryoglobulinemia with or without B-Cell Lymphomas 571

A.L. Zignego, C. Ferri, F. Giannelli, C. Giannini, P. Caini, M. Monti, M.E. Marrocchi, E. Di Pietro, G. La Villa, G. Laffi, and P. Gentilini

Patients with chronic hepatitis C and mixed cryoglobulinemia had increased frequency of *bcl-2* rearrangement. The frequency was greatest in patients with type II mixed cryoglobulinemia. The high ratio of Bcl-2 to Bax in patients with *bcl-2* rearrangement and the disappearance of the rearrangement with antiviral therapy suggest that the translocation is associated with the antiapoptotic function of Bcl-2 and that hepatitis C is linked to inhibition of B-cell apoptosis.

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P.S. Phillips, R.H. Haas, S. Bannykh, S. Hathaway, N.L. Gray, B.J. Kimura, G.D. Vladutiu, J.D.F. England, and the Scripps Mercy Clinical Research Center

Some patients who develop muscle symptoms while receiving statin therapy have demonstrable weakness and histopathologic findings of myopathy despite normal serum creatine kinase levels. These findings resolve after discontinuation of statin therapy and recur with resumption of therapy.

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J.G. Jarvik and R.A. Deyo

The authors review evidence on the diagnostic accuracy of clinical information and imaging for patients with low back pain in primary care settings.

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S.A. Mulherin and W.C. Miller

Spectrum bias is a term commonly used to describe the heterogeneity that occurs when diagnostic test performance varies across patient subgroups and a study of that test's performance does not adequately represent all subgroups. This paper proposes the use of the term *spectrum effect* rather than spectrum bias, and it outlines strategies for using stratified sensitivity and specificity estimates, likelihood ratios, and receiver-operating characteristic curves.

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The Genetics of Colorectal Cancer 603

P.M. Calvert and H. Frucht

Understanding of the epidemiology and molecular genetics of colon cancer is rapidly advancing. With these advances come opportunities for clinically applicable genetic tests. These tests are not perfect and are still prone to false-positive and false-negative results. Thus, the clinical understanding of colon cancer remains the basis for management decisions, with genetic testing having a potentially important supporting role.

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E.J. Huth

Joseph Russell Elkinton, the fourth editor of *Annals of Internal Medicine*, died on 6 April 2002. He was a diligent, valuable servant of the American College of Physicians–American Society of Internal Medicine and merits a clear place in its history.

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In this issue, Shlipak and Wright and colleagues address the role of impaired kidney function as a risk factor for myocardial infarction. Their findings suggest that clinicians underuse available treatments in patients presenting with acute myocardial infarction and impaired kidney function.

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S.M. Grundy

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L.J. Schneiderman

What good is empathy? The closer we get to the feelings of our patients, goes the argument, the better we can understand them and the more likely we will be able to diagnose and treat correctly. This is what novels, stories, and other works of art are supposed to help us with. As a physician and writer I both believe and doubt this.

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Cover photograph by Nicole Massone

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