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Which Patients with Acute Exacerbation of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Benefit from Noninvasive Positive-Pressure Ventilation? 861

A Systematic Review of the Literature

S.P. Keenan, T. Sinuff, D.J. Cook, and N.S. Hill

Patients receiving standard therapy for severe exacerbations of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) benefit from noninvasive positive-pressure ventilation (NPPV). However, hospitalized patients with milder COPD exacerbations do not benefit from NPPV.

Spinal Manipulative Therapy for Low Back Pain. A Meta-Analysis of Effectiveness Relative to Other Therapies 871

W.J.J. Assendelft, S.C. Morton, E.I. Yu, M.J. Suttrop, and P.G. Shekelle

This meta-analysis found no evidence that spinal manipulative therapy is superior to other standard treatments for patients with acute or chronic low back pain.

Accepting Critically Ill Transfer Patients: Adverse Effect on a Referral Center's Outcome and Benchmark Measures 882

A.L. Rosenberg, T.P. Hofer, C. Strachan, C.M. Watts, and R.A. Hayward

Accepting transfer patients can adversely affect measures of efficiency and quality of care, even after use of the most thorough, precise methods to adjust for case mix. If organizations that collect and publish measures of hospital quality of care fail to account for this phenomenon, referral centers may have an incentive to refuse to accept very sick patients in transfer from other hospitals.

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Relationship between Cigarette Smoking and Novel Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease in the United States 891

L.A. Bazzano, J. He, P. Muntner, S. Vupputuri, and P.K. Whelton

Inflammation and hyperhomocysteinemia may be important mechanisms by which smoking promotes atherosclerotic disease.

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A Review of the Evidence for the Effectiveness, Safety, and Cost of Acupuncture, Massage Therapy, and Spinal Manipulation for Back Pain 898

D.C. Cherkin, K.J. Sherman, R.A. Deyo, and P.G. Shekelle

Massage seems to be effective for persistent back pain, spinal manipulation has small clinical benefits equivalent to those of other common back pain therapies, and the effectiveness of acupuncture remains unclear. All of these treatments seem to be relatively safe.

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The Epidemiology of "Asymptomatic" Left Ventricular Systolic Dysfunction: Implications for Screening 907

T.J. Wang, D. Levy, E.J. Benjamin, and R.S. Vasan

Asymptomatic left ventricular systolic dysfunction (LVSD) precedes congestive heart failure in many patients. While several landmark trials have enrolled patients with asymptomatic LVSD, those patients make up only a subset of the people who are possible candidates for screening. The available evidence is inadequate to decide about screening for LVSD in the general population.

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M.G. Shlipak

Patients with heart failure and renal insufficiency have been underrepresented in clinical trials of drugs for congestive heart failure. This paper reviews the evidence and suggests ways to balance benefit and harm when treating heart failure in the presence of renal insufficiency.

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U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

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M. Boustani, B. Peterson, L. Hanson, R. Harris, and K.N. Lohr
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**Applying Evidence to Patient Care: From Black and
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F.A. McAlister

This editorial focuses on the dilemma at the heart of Dr.
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