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ARTICLES

D-Dimer for the Exclusion of Acute Venous Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism. A Systematic Review 589

P.D. Stein, R.D. Hull, K.C. Patel, R.E. Olson, W.A. Ghali, R. Brant, R.K. Biel, V. Bharadia, and N.K. Kalra

Excluding a diagnosis from consideration requires a test result that will reduce its probability to below a threshold. Among tests for D-dimer, enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISAs) had the highest sensitivity and lowest negative likelihood ratio, which makes ELISA the best D-dimer test for excluding deep venous thrombosis and pulmonary embolism.

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Alcohol Intake and Colorectal Cancer: A Pooled Analysis of 8 Cohort Studies 603

E. Cho, S.A. Smith-Warner, J. Ritz, P.A. van den Brandt, G.A. Colditz, A.R. Folsom, J.L. Freudenheim, E. Giovannucci, R.A. Goldbohm, S. Graham, L. Holmberg, D.-H. Kim, N. Malila, A.B. Miller, P. Pietinen, T.E. Rohan, T.A. Sellers, F.E. Speizer, W.C. Willett, A. Wolk, and D.J. Hunter

Alcohol intake, measured at one point in time, is associated with a modest relative elevation in colorectal cancer rate. This effect occurs mainly at the highest levels of alcohol intake.

Summary for Patients 1-55

The Spectrum of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome-Associated Coronavirus Infection 614

T.H. Rainer, P.K.S. Chan, M. Ip, N. Lee, D.S. Hui, D. Smit, A. Wu, A.T. Ahuja, J.S. Tam, J.J.Y. Sung, and P. Cameron

During an outbreak in Hong Kong, the authors searched for subclinical or mild forms of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) coronavirus infection. They found no evidence for widespread occurrence of a mild form of SARS that would escape detection when patients present for clinical evaluation.

Summary for Patients 1-65

REVIEWS

Induced Abortion: An Overview for Internists 620

D.A. Grimes and M.D. Creinin

Focusing on early induced abortions, the authors describe the numbers and characteristics of women having abortions, review the methods used, summarize safety data, explain

how internists can respond to patients' requests for referral to abortion providers, and describe costs.

Alzheimer Disease: Mechanistic Understanding Predicts Novel Therapies 627

D.J. Selkoe

In the last several years, Alzheimer disease researchers have come to agree that certain biochemical changes in the hippocampus and association cortices occur many years or decades before clinical symptoms. We can now describe a rough outline of the cascade of events leading to disease.

PERSPECTIVE

Health Care System Chaos Should Spur Innovation: Summary of a Report of the Society of General Internal Medicine Task Force on the Domain of General Internal Medicine 639

E.B. Larson, for the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) Task Force on the Domain of General Internal Medicine

Today's chaotic health care scene gives general internal medicine an opportunity to innovate and move beyond its current state of confusion. The field must adapt to a new world of consumerism, rising public expectations, widespread information dissemination, and pressures to hold down costs at a time when the demand for services is increasing because more people are surviving to live with chronic disease in old age.

CLINICAL GUIDELINES

Lipid Control in the Management of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: A Clinical Practice Guideline from the American College of Physicians 644

V. Snow, M.D. Aronson, E.R. Hornbake, C. Mottur-Pilson, and K.B. Weiss, for the Clinical Efficacy Assessment Subcommittee of the American College of Physicians

The American College of Physicians makes 4 recommendations for lipid control in patients with type 2 diabetes: 1) Use lipid-lowering therapy for secondary prevention of cardiovascular mortality and morbidity for all patients with known coronary artery disease and type 2 diabetes; 2) use a statin for primary prevention of macrovascular complications in patients with type 2 diabetes and other cardiovascular risk factors; 3) patients with type 2 diabetes who take statins should take at least moderate doses; 4) for patients with type 2 diabetes who are taking statins, routine monitoring of liver function tests or muscle enzymes is unnecessary except in specific circumstances.

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Pharmacologic Lipid-Lowering Therapy in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: Background Paper for the American College of Physicians

650

S. Vijan and R.A. Hayward

In patients with type 2 diabetes, treatment with lipid-lowering agents reduces the risk for cardiovascular disease. Statins reduce cardiovascular disease risk in most patients, including those whose baseline low-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels are below 2.97 mmol/L (<115 mg/dL), and possibly below 2.59 mmol/L (<100 mg/dL). Most patients with diabetes should receive at least moderate doses of these drugs.

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EDITORIALS

Starting a Conversation about the Future of Internal Medicine

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The Editors

We hope that the report by the Society of General Internal Medicine Task Force on the Domain of General Internal Medicine in this issue will spur conversations among internists and their colleagues, patients, and others with a vested interest in seeing health care safely through dangerous waters. To start those conversations, we have asked 5 individuals to respond to different aspects of the report.

Generalism as Intention

659

R.J. Baron

I agree with the thrust of the Society of General Internal Medicine Task Force report, but it left out an essential feature of daily practice: We connect, interpret, personalize, and customize medical care.

Working Together—That's Innovation!

660

H.K. Rabinowitz

The combined force of all generalists who care for adults (internists and family physicians) could collectively speak with a much more powerful voice to address the critical issues about the important role of primary care in the health care system.

Making It Possible for General Internal Medicine To Survive

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R.B. Copeland

The Society of General Internal Medicine Task Force on the Domain of General Internal Medicine has reaffirmed that breadth and depth is the fundamental strength of internal medicine.

Reforming Payment for Primary Care: Making It Happen

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G.R. Wilensky

The Task Force's proposals for payment reform will fall on deaf ears if they increase the total costs of care. Evidence to the contrary is essential.

Customizing Residency Education

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H.J. Humphrey

The Task Force recommends using residency training to prepare for the requirements of a specific practice: subspecialist or generalist, rural or urban, and predominantly outpatient or inpatient setting. I concur, but with reservations.

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Cheaper Drugs in Foreign Markets Increase the Focus on Domestic Drug Prices 677

J. Fisher Wilson

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