



## **NAPCRG Annual Meeting Distinguished Papers Summaries**

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*Three papers were selected from all submissions to the NAPCRG Annual Meeting and given the special designation of “Distinguished Paper”. This title highlights excellence in research and is selected by a NAPCRG Review Subcommittee from submissions that include a full paper. Several selection factors are considered, including overall excellence, quality of research methods, quality of the writing, relevance to primary care clinical research, and overall impact of the research on primary care and/or clinical practice.*

### **FOUR SYMPTOMS ARE THE BEST PREDICTORS OF FLU**

The likelihood of having the flu can be determined by four simple symptoms: fever, cough, rapid onset of symptoms, and body aches. This data analysis found that these four symptoms were the best predictors of a positive flu diagnosis and may help both patients and physicians use a few simple symptoms to determine their likelihood of having the flu. Utilizing these flu predictors may help physicians in determining diagnostic tests and treatment options for patients with flu symptoms.

*Development and Validation of a Clinical Decision Rule for the Diagnosis of Influenza*  
Mark Ebell, MD, MS, University of Georgia; Anna Afonso, MPH; Ralph Gonzales, MD; John Stein, MD; Nicolas Senn, MD; Blaise Genton, MD

### **NOCTURNAL LEG CRAMPS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH CERTAIN DRUGS**

A study recently accepted for publication in the Archives of Internal Medicine, strongly suggests that the use of certain drugs, most notably, inhaled long-acting beta-agonists (a treatment for COPD or asthma) and potassium sparing diuretics (a treatment for high blood pressure), are associated with a significantly increased likelihood of treatment for rest cramps. Rest cramps (also known as nocturnal leg cramps) are painful muscle contractions, typically in the legs or feet, that occur during prolonged periods of rest - most often while in bed at night. As such, modification of these medications in sufferers of frequent nocturnal leg cramps (i.e. reducing the dose or switching to other agents) might be an effective treatment option for some patients.

*Nocturnal Leg Cramps and Prescriptions That Precede Them: A Sequence Symmetry Analysis*

Scott Garrison, MD, BSc, University of British Columbia; Colin Dormuth, PhD; Richard Morrow, MA; Greg Carney, BSc; Karim Khan, MD, PhD

## **STROKE RISK SCORES IN ELDERLY PATIENTS WITH ATRIAL FIBRILLATION ARE LIMITED IN PREDICTING STROKE**

Based on this single trial population, current risk stratification schemes in an elderly atrial fibrillation population have only limited ability to predict the risk of stroke. Given the systematic under-treatment of the elderly with anticoagulation, and the relative safety of warfarin versus aspirin over the age of 70, there may be a rationale for pragmatically classifying all patients over 75 as 'high risk' until better tools are available. Atrial fibrillation is a major cause of avoidable stroke for which evidence-based treatments that reduce this risk exist, but their reliability in general atrial fibrillation populations vary.

*Are Stroke Risk Scores in Patients With Atrial Fibrillation Predictive in the Elderly? A Comparative Cohort Study of the Performance of Stroke Risk Scores in Patients Not Taking Warfarin in the Bafta Trial*

Richard Hobbs, FRCP, University of Oxford; Andrea Roalfe; K Fletcher; David Fitzmaurice; Jonathan Mant

### **EDITOR'S NOTE**

To arrange an interview with one of the authors of any of the studies to be presented at the NAPCRG Annual Meeting, contact Kristin Robinson at (913) 568-8043 or via e-mail at [krobinson@napcrg.org](mailto:krobinson@napcrg.org).

### **ABOUT NAPCRG**

The North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) is a multidisciplinary organization for primary care researchers in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and throughout the world. Founded in 1972 and oriented to family medicine, NAPCRG welcomes members from all primary care generalist disciplines and related fields, including epidemiology, behavioral sciences, and health services research. More information can be found at [www.napcrg.org](http://www.napcrg.org)

### **ABOUT PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH**

At its simplest level, primary care research can be defined as research conducted in the context of primary care. It is research that is directed toward the better understanding and practice of the primary care function.

It includes:

- Basic research to develop research methods in the discipline
- Clinical research to inform clinical practice
- Health services research to improve health service delivery
- Health systems research to improve health systems and policies
- Educational research to improve education for primary care clinicians

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