



Dear Colleague:

In this issue we introduce a new series of brief articles called *The Clinical Picture*. This series will focus on visually accessible physical findings in a variety of clinical conditions. In this issue the subject is gouty arthritis, and the perils of failure to treat prolonged hyperuricemia (page 215).

Helicobacter pylori is a common cause of peptic ulcer disease. Dr. Falk describes the current thinking in testing and treatment methods as well as cost issues related to this infection (page 187).

Asthma. Management of asthma continues to improve. A recent example is the self measurement of peak expiratory flow rate, a cheap and reliable method for monitoring the severity of bronchospasm. Drs. Jain and Kavuru describe the ins and outs of the application of this technique (page 195).

Lyme disease. More than a decade after its recognition as a cause of juvenile arthritis, Lyme disease remains enigmatic to many physicians. It is overdiagnosed by some and missed by others. Dr. Sigal debunks myths surrounding this disease and gives practical tips on diagnosis and management (page 203).

Delivering bad news. One of the hardest tasks for many physicians is delivering

bad news. Dr. Maynard passes on some useful tips that can ease this difficult, but all too frequent, role (page 181).

Acute pancreatitis. Although support is still the mainstay of treatment of acute pancreatitis, there are some new developments under study for management of this condition. Dr. Steinberg reviews these as well as the usual course of the disease, pointing out red flags that should suggest unusual severity (page 182).

Infertility is relatively common, and part of its fallout is stress stemming from loss of control and self-esteem, financial strain, and marital tension. Dr. Schover discusses this aspect of infertility and points out resources that can be invoked to deal with it (page 211).

Cancer risk. Dr. Markman points out that, despite the frequency of cancer, there remains much to be learned about risk factors for its development. He explores the vagaries of statistics and how they can confuse the interpretation of even fairly highly specific tests for malignancies (page 220).

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