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METHODS OF ESTIMATING PRETEST PROBABILITY IN PRIMARY CARE SETTING

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Proper estimating of pretest probability (PTP) by primary care physicians is the main precondition for applying Evidence Based Medicine in clinical setting. PTP of a patient is not equal to the prevalence of the disease. Proper estimation of PTP depends on a valid history taking, physical examination and simple tests like urine analysis. In this review, the methods for estimating PTP will be discussed. These methods mainly include statistical modeling and using patients' data bank. The role of patients' signs and symptoms in calculating PTP is discussed. Researches regarding estimating pretest probability for acute appendicitis in patients with abdominal pain and estimating PTP for cancer in patients with solitary pulmonary nodules will be reviewed.