

Timely information for your busy practice



Concerned about the latest public health threat, whether monkey pox or tuberculosis? Interested in evidence-based medicine, but really don't know what concepts such as the "number needed to treat" mean? Wondering whether new software programs and systems to improve care are really worth the expense?

If you are like me, you find the practice of medicine growing increasingly complex and welcome timely advice to keep up. New features in *THE JOURNAL OF FAMILY PRACTICE*—*Practice Alert*, *Language of Evidence*, and *Reinventing Practice*—offer just such advice, and I'm hopeful they will start enhancing your practice today.

Practice Alert. Current clinical issues that affect patient care and public health is the focus of this feature, co-edited by Eric Henley, Chair of the Department of Family Practice, University of Illinois, Rockford, and Doug Campos-Outcalt, Director of the Maricopa County Department of Health in Arizona. They will keep us abreast of critical public health issues. This month's article, "What FPs need to know about West Nile virus disease" (page 711), arrived for review around the time a patient of mine was complaining of headache and myalgias following a mosquito bite.

Language of Evidence. In this issue, you will read about the accuracy of the physical examination in assessing anterior cruciate ligament ruptures. In the accompanying *Language of Evidence*, "What is an ROC curve?" (page 695), Goutham Rao, the Predoctoral Director at the Department of Family Practice, University of Pittsburgh, demystifies the concept of receiver-operator characteristic (ROC) curves, which is discussed in the Applied Evidence article on anterior cruciate ligament rupture (page 689).

Reinventing Practice. Finally, in *Reinventing Practice*, Gary Fox—our longtime software editor and informatics guru—provides us a splendid review of a useful electronic tool in "UpToDate: A comprehensive clinical database" (page 706). If you are in the market for a clinical reference library, this product may be just what the doctor ordered.

Let me know what you think of these new features. I can be reached, as always, at jfp@fammed.uc.edu.

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