

Study IDs recurring diagnostic pitfalls and points to ways that uncovering pitfalls can help improve medical diagnosis

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When it comes to medical errors, diagnostic errors are the most common type of error reported by patients and the leading cause of malpractice

claims. Brigham and Women's Hospital investigators compiled and analyzed data from a diverse group of sources looking at data from 2004 to 2016 to identify patterns of diagnostic pitfalls.

Data collected from 4,352 patient safety incident reports, 403 closed [primary care](#) diagnostic error malpractice claims, 24 ambulatory morbidity and mortality rounds, and 355 focus group responses found a total of 836 [diagnostic errors](#), which the researchers use to characterize patterns of what went wrong. The findings were then used to compile a list of disease-specific diagnostic pitfalls and create a taxonomy of the generic types of errors occurring in primary care.

"Progress in understanding and preventing diagnostic errors has been modest, and clinicians could benefit from the knowledge of both disease-specific and generic cross-cutting pitfalls," said Gordon D. Schiff, MD, of the Brigham's Center for Patient Safety Research and Practice. "Our findings can help inform educational and quality improvement efforts to anticipate and prevent future errors."

This research is published in *JAMA Network Open*.

More information: Gordon D. Schiff et al, Characteristics of Disease-Specific and Generic Diagnostic Pitfalls, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.44531](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.44531)

Provided by Brigham and Women's Hospital

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