Diagnostic Accuracy Studies
Study Questions

- Description of study population, setting (e.g. primary care or academic referral center).

- Recruitment of patients (e.g. based on symptoms, clinical suspicion, results of another diagnostic test).

- Definition of reference standard which establishes the diagnosis for which the test is to be used.

- Interpreters of diagnostic test unaware of results of reference standard.

- Specifies what clinical information was furnished to interpreters of diagnostic test.

- Reports how many test results were equivocal or indeterminate.

- Spectrum of patients reasonably represents those expected to undergo the test in clinical practice to resolve diagnostic uncertainty (i.e. does not compare diseased patients with clearly healthy subjects).

- When applicable, estimates sensitivity and specificity of test with measures of uncertainty (e.g. 95% confidence intervals).

- Time interval between application of diagnostic test and application of gold standard reference test.

- Sponsorship and funding source stated with competing interests specified.

Value Issues:

- Are the authors' conclusions convincingly supported by methods and results, or are alternative interpretations of the same data also plausible? What else might the results mean?

- Is the study equal to, or possibly better than the "gold" standard used?

- How invasive is it? Is it less painful? Lower risk? Easier to administer? Less costly?

- Will the study decrease use of a more costly (or otherwise disadvantageous) 2nd Standard?

- Relevance and application to workers' compensation population.

Conclusions: adequate, inadequate, high-quality, not applicable