

TB or not TB?

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Learning objectives: In order to reduce the prevalence of diagnostic errors, health-care professionals need to improve the collaboration among them as well as with patients and their families.

Case information: The paper reveals an atypical case of an 87-years-old man with an insidious onset of dry cough, followed by intermittent changes of this symptom, over a period of 4 months. The patient was subjected to regular investigations, including three spirometries and chest x-rays, which turned out to be normal. However, being deeply involved in the diagnostic process, the patient felt that the initial observations did not find his true affliction. Therefore, he insisted on furthering his investigations, which necessitated a bronchoscopy exam that finally led to the correct diagnosis of pulmonary tuberculosis.

Discussion: The increasing number of MDR-TB cases is also due to the diagnostic errors. The presentation of this case outlines that teamwork and perseverance are key factors in reducing diagnostic errors.

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