



Evaluating ED Patients with a Transient Ischemic Attack: Inpatient vs Outpatient Strategies

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Learning Objectives

- Define the necessary diagnostic evaluation of patients presenting with Transient Ischemic Attack.
- Develop strategies for the completion of the diagnostic evaluation of TIA patients, including options for an expedited outpatient evaluation protocol.

Background

Transient ischemic attacks (TIA) have posed a diagnostic and disposition question for years. TIAs have traditionally been treated as strokes with the same comprehensive work up. With rising healthcare costs physicians are under increasing pressure to avoid admitting patients that can have workups completed in the outpatient setting. Many institutions have begun diagnostics tests for TIAs in the ED and completed them as outpatients.

Dr. Ross will discuss the necessary diagnostic work up for patients presenting with a TIA. He will risk stratify patients into those that can be worked up on an outpatient basis and those that require admission. Lastly, he will describe his management paradigm for the diagnostic workup of TIA patient in an observation unit model.

Key Clinical Questions

- What is the outcome of patients with TIA that present to the emergency department?
- Which TIA patients are likely to do worse? After examining a patient with a TIA, can I just send them home from the emergency department for an office workup?
- Could a rapid “rule-out” program for TIA be part of a “brain attack” (stroke center) program, just as is done for low risk chest pain patients in a “chest pain center”? What are the necessary components of an ED TIA diagnostic protocol?