

Medical Malpractice: Diagnostic Errors Tied to Common Complaints

Written by David Rosenthal

Even common medical complaints can lead to diagnostic errors. Every year, new articles document how doctors are spending less and less time talking with their patients. While it can be difficult to protect ourselves from many diagnostic errors, we can all still benefit from reviewing some of the most frequently misdiagnosed medical ailments.

The following list references number of these more complicated medical conditions. After reviewing this list, you may become more proactive about (1) securing a second opinion about some of your current medical issues and (2) questioning whether medical malpractice has played a role in your currently declining health. Everyone deserves to be properly diagnosed and treated, even if they're just in the early stages of a particular illness.

Frequently Misdiagnosed Conditions

- **Autoimmune Disorders:** Multiple Sclerosis (MS) remains one of the most difficult diseases to diagnosis accurately. However, a number of more precise diagnostic tests are now available that can help your doctor properly evaluate your symptoms. Patients with MS often complain of muscle spasms, poor coordination, blurred vision and balance issues. Since there are [more than 80](#) different types of known autoimmune disorders, only a few are named here. (*Others include: Type 1 Diabetes, Lupus, Celiac disease and Rheumatoid arthritis.*)
- **Migraine Headaches:** While many painful headaches are tied to stress, inadequate sleep and environmental triggers like flashing lights and loud

noises, others can involve more serious origins. If you've been following all of your doctor's treatment orders and nothing seems to help, ask your doctor if a brain MRI and other comprehensive tests should be run to make sure you don't have a benign or malignant tumor causing your pain.

- **Fibromyalgia:** Many patients with this illness often complain about painful joints, muscles and tendons. Sleep disturbances are also common among those with Fibromyalgia. Doctors are often puzzled by how this illness mimics many others and often includes such symptoms as fatigue, headaches, anxiety and depression.
- **Kidney Ailments:** Contrary to what some doctors believe, serious kidney diseases do *not* always involve pain (or a burning sensation) during urination. Furthermore, they do *not* always cause a high fever. Some rather deadly kidney ailments may actually manifest themselves so suddenly that surgery will be one of your few treatment options.
- **Lung Diseases:** Extensive testing may be necessary to distinguish between problems caused by airway blockages, defective blood vessels and unhealthy tissue structures. Some lung conditions may even initially appear to only involve the heart.
- **All Forms of Cancer, Especially Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma:**

Patients with Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma often present with such confusing symptoms as night sweats, swollen lymph nodes in the neck, fever, chills and weight loss. Some doctors have actually prescribed antibiotics for this illness, thinking their patients were just suffering from bacterial infections. Since various cancers can create rather confusing symptoms, always remain proactive when pain persists, even if it's hard to find a doctor who will take your complaints seriously.
- **Other Frequently Misdiagnosed Illnesses:** Some of the other commonly misdiagnosed ailments include: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Parkinson's disease, Lyme disease, certain types of strokes and various heart ailments.

Conclusions Regarding Medical Malpractice

Rest assured, most American doctors are competent and truly want to do right by their patients. If you'll do your part and eat properly, stop smoking, exercise regularly and avoid drinking excessive amounts of alcohol, you probably won't even need much medical care. Just be sure to always obtain a thorough annual check-up from a doctor who maintains a good reputation in your community. If you'll take care of all of your responsibilities, you'll be much less likely to encounter medical malpractice than those who only seek out help when suffering from serious pain.

(Interested readers can read more about various medical conditions at such leading Web sites as: [PubMedHealth](#), the [Mayo Clinic](#) and the [National Institutes of Health](#).)