

Correspondence

QJM

Laboratory risk factors for hospital mortality

Sir,

The work by Asadollahi *et al.*¹ is interesting, but far from novel. They state that there has been little robust research into early predictive factors of hospital mortality. However, they fail to acknowledge the considerable body of work already addressing this problem, much of which incorporates laboratory data to some extent.^{2–10} They also suggest that risk assessment on the basis of laboratory investigations has been concentrated on specific diagnostic categories or high-risk groups of patients, and that there are no specific mortality prediction systems for general acute admissions.¹ In addition, they claim that the findings of their research raise the possibility of developing a laboratory-based predictive scoring system to estimate risk of hospital mortality.

It is surprising that Asadollahi's literature search did not identify any of the above papers,^{2–10} but specifically a prospective study published in 2005.¹⁰ This paper presented results for nearly 10 000 unselected medical admissions, was not limited to specific diagnostic categories or risk groups, and offered a suitable algorithm for calculating risk of in-hospital death.¹⁰ The study identified that the risk of hospital death could be predicted using routinely available data very early on after hospital admission, and raised the possibility that the surveillance and treatment of patients might be categorized by risk assessment means.

G.B. Smith
D.R. Prytherch
Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust &
University of Portsmouth
Portsmouth
UK
email: david.prytherch@googlemail.com

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