

Diagnosis of Acute Pancreatitis

Tips & Tricks from ESTES Education in collaboration with the visceral section

The Problem

- Diagnosis of acute pancreatitis often relies only on amylase/lipase
- An abdominal CT scan is usually performed, but it does not change the management of patients

The Challenge

How to correctly diagnose acute pancreatitis and when to ask for a CT scan

The Evidence



Diagnosis is made with at least 2 out of 3 criteria:

- Typical pain
- At least a 3-fold increase in blood pancreatic enzyme
- Imaging suggestive of pancreatitis



A contrast-enhanced abdominal CT scan should be performed at 48-72 hours in the following cases:

- Diagnosis is uncertain
- Severe acute pancreatitis is suspected

Conclusion

Diagnosis of acute pancreatitis should not be made only on increased blood pancreatic enzyme values.

Not all patients with acute pancreatitis need an abdominal CT scan