

2018-09-20

# A Primary Care Problem

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## Recommended Citation

Gupta A. A Primary Care Problem. *Streams of Consciousness* 2018; 2(1):Article 5. DOI: 10.7191/soc.2018.1031.

Available at: <https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/soc/vol2/iss1/5>.

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## A Primary Care Problem

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The triage note said:  
43 year old man  
Chief complaint:  
Back pain, four months

In the Emergency Department  
Back pain, four months is met with  
'What are we supposed to do? This is a  
Primary care problem.'

I went to see him  
A pleasant homeless man  
Covered in the smell of poverty that persists  
Even after a change of clothes  
"Doc, my back hurts. Can you help me?"

I examined and found no 'red flag' signs  
To suggest an 'emergency'  
Only subjective back pain  
Probably muscle strain

My resident and attending agreed  
And we planned for discharge after a CT scan  
Just to be sure since he had poor follow-up  
"But really, this is a primary care problem"

Critical finding  
The report blared  
Widespread lytic lesions from T4-L5  
Malignancy versus metastasis

"It may be cancer spread to your back"  
I tried to explain  
"We have to admit you to find out"  
I tried to explain

He nodded  
"Well that is something"  
Yet did not understand  
"But, doc, my back hurts. Can you help me?"