

## Me-Oh-Myalgia!

### A missed case of Polymyalgia Rheumatica



PRESENTER:

**Valerie Gobao, MD**

#### CASE

- 70 year old woman presented with 3 weeks of **severe muscle pain in the shoulders, neck, and thighs** radiating down her legs.
- **Exhaustion, decreased appetite**, difficulty walking and dressing herself, no AM stiffness.
- No vision loss, jaw pain, or headache.
- Went to several emergency departments with no diagnosis or relief.
- Repeatedly diagnosed with viral URI, tested for COVID and Lyme disease with negative results.

#### OBJECTIVE DATA

- **Exam: Exquisite tenderness to light palpation of the shoulders, neck, hip girdle.** No pain or swelling at the joints. **Unable to abduct arms** above 90 degrees. **Strength full** throughout despite pain. No rashes.
- **Labs:**
  - **ESR: 63mm/hr**
  - **CRP: 6.0mg/dL**
  - **CPK : 16 IU/L**
  - *Lyme screen positive, western blot negative for acute Lyme infection*
  - *COVID/flu/RSV: negative*

#### HOSPITAL COURSE

- Started on Prednisone 15mg PO and had **90% pain relief within hours.**
- Pain worsened at night. Steroid dose was split into twice daily dosing with improvement of nighttime symptoms.
- Sent home on steroid taper (dosed BID) feeling much improved.

# Polymyalgia Rheumatica is an uncommon inpatient diagnosis.

## Recognition of less classic features and a careful physical exam can facilitate diagnosis.

### Classic Symptoms

Severe muscular shoulder pain

Involvement of neck, pelvic, proximal leg muscles

AM stiffness



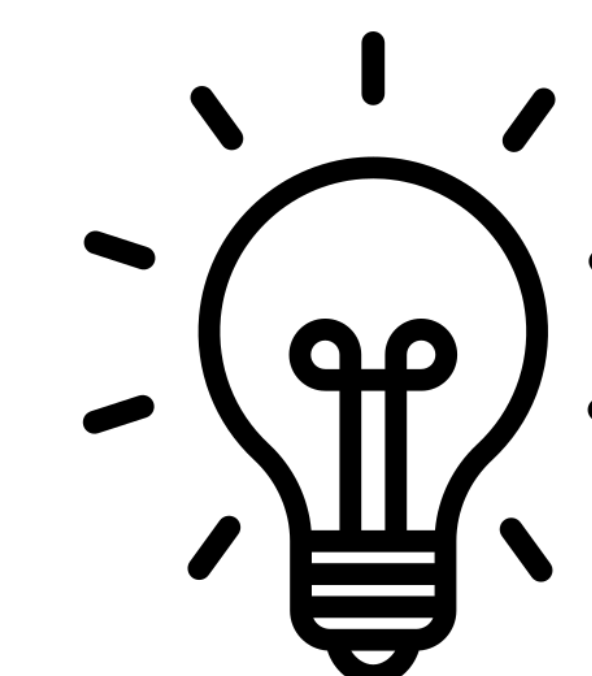
### Other Symptoms

Fatigue, malaise, loss of appetite, weight loss in up to 50% of people, and especially in adults > 70.



### What cognitive errors contributed to delayed diagnosis ?

- Availability heuristic – more common causes of myalgias in inpatient/ED settings.
- Premature closure – “just a URI.”



### Clinical Pearl

Consider BID dosing of steroids to relieve nighttime symptoms

#### REFERENCES

1. Eric L. Matteson, Christian Dejaco. Polymyalgia Rheumatica. Ann Intern Med.2017;166:ITC65-ITC80. [Epub 2 May 2017]. doi:[10.7326/AITC201705020](https://doi.org/10.7326/AITC201705020)
2. Morrison, M. A. (2019, May 8). #betterposter. Retrieved from [osf.io/ef53g](https://osf.io/ef53g)

Valerie Gobao MD, Anisha Das MD, Ansen Burr BS, Thomas Radomski MD, MS