

THE MEDICAL HOME MEETS MENTAL HEALTH

When the Problem is Not the Problem



CC Stomachache

10 year old female presents with stomachache for 2 months.

Stomachache

Previous visit to Pediatrician she was given Nexium for suspected GERD.

- daily stomach pain
- Periumbilical and sometimes in the lower quadrants
- Worse in the am and after dinner before bed
- Parents are concerned that she is eating less but no weight loss
- No vomiting, diarrhea or blood in the stool but intermittent constipation since toilet trained
- No pain on voiding or flank pain

Work up

Pediatrician recommends clean out and starting Miralax , increasing fiber.

- CBC, UA normal
- KUB large amount of stool

Trip to the ED

CBC, UA repeated and still normal.

IV started during lab draw.

CT Abdomen also normal but appendix not well visualized. Surgery consultation did not reveal acute abdomen.

- Pain VERY severe that evening prior to going to bed and question of RLQ pain.
- “Something has to be done.”
- Patient discharged ‘feeling better after IV fluids for 3 hours’.

2 days later at Pediatric Recheck

Anxiety disorders are very common in childhood and like depression often lead to somatic complaints.

- Parents note that she is “stressed out” about school and are concerned that she is being bullied.
- She doesn’t want to go to school and has started crying in the am.
- On further questioning she is worried about her grandmother that has cancer and that there will be violence in her school ‘like the ones on TV’ and she admits to thinking that others don’t like her at school. When her parents argue she thinks they are going to get divorced ‘like my friend’s parents did’.

You Get What You Pay for.

Could physicians be overlooking mental health issues in part due to their relative devaluation, patient's lack of benefits/coverage or both?