

Virtual assessment COVID vs CHF exacerbation in patients with known CHF

To preserve healthcare resources and prevent exposure of vulnerable patients to the ER, health care practitioners are increasingly trying to determine the likely source of a patient's symptoms through a virtual assessment, and determine the appropriate diagnostic and treatment approach.

The following tool is designed to guide your clinical reasoning to determine the likely etiology of symptoms for a patient with known CHF. It has not been validated, and there is no threshold score that is positive, the final determination must be made using clinical judgement.

FEATURES THAT WOULD INCREASE THE PROBABILITY OF COVID VERSUS CHF EXACERBATION:

- 1 Increased individual risk of contracting COVID. Risk can be estimated using the following criteria:
 - Degree of isolation
 - Amount of community spread of COVID in local community
 - Traditional COVID risk factors (eg travel/exposure to COVID positive contact, recent large groups especially to centres with high degree of community spread including Toronto)
- 2 Presence of fever
- 3 Absence of typical features of CHF
 - Determine the patient's typical pattern of presentation and screen for key differences. For example:
 - SOB does not feel similar to previous exacerbations of CHF
 - Pattern of symptoms different than other exacerbations (eg PND but no ankle swelling)
- 4 Lack of response to appropriate CHF therapies (diuretics)