A GENERAL CHECKLIST FOR DIAGNOSIS - Mark L Graber et al

HIGH RISK SITUATIONS FOR DIAGNOSTIC ERROR

☐ Have I ruled out must-not-miss diagnoses?
☐ Did I just accept the first diagnosis that came to mind?
☐ Was the diagnosis suggested to me by the patient, nurse or another MD?
☐ Did I consider other organ systems besides the obvious one?
☐ Is there data about this patient I haven’t obtained and reviewed?
   Old records? Family? Primary care provider?
☐ Are there any pieces that don’t fit?
☐ Did I read the X-ray myself?
☐ Was this patient handed off to me from a previous shift?
☐ Was this patient seen in the ER or clinic recently for the same problem?
☐ Was I interrupted/distracted excessively while evaluating this patient?
☐ Am I feeling fatigued right now, or cognitively overloaded?
☐ Is this a patient I don’t like for some reason? Or like too much? (a friend, relative)

What to Do in High Risk Situations:

1. Pause to reflect - Take a diagnostic “time out”
2. Consider the universal antidote: What else could this be?
3. Make sure the patient knows when and how to get back to you if necessary: if their symptoms change or worsen or don’t resolve