

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL: Emergency Department Diagnostic Error



IDENTIFYING YOUR VULNERABILITIES

Our in-depth review of [ED malpractice cases](#) uncovered key vulnerabilities in the care process that contribute to diagnostic error and harm. The following self-assessment identifies crucial best practices that address the contributing factors identified in our data. How consistently does your ED follow the data-driven recommendations in each of these areas?

History & Physical (H&P) and Test Ordering: Complete and timely information for full assessment.

Always Sometimes Unsure

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|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our H&P process requires gathering and documenting relevant clinical information from the patient, family, other providers, and medical records when indicated. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our team communicates sufficient clinical data to radiologists so they can achieve the best imaging and accurate interpretation of the findings. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We have a process for monitoring timeliness of test results , including standard practice for reporting critical and emergent results. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We have a clear process for communicating incidental findings to ensure providers and patients are properly notified. |

Diagnostic Processing and Differential: Robust differential diagnosis, free from cognitive bias.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We have established specific clinical pathways for high-risk presentations , such as infection, stroke, and MI, and review them regularly to ensure adherence. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We have access to and have optimized the use of decision support tools to assist with the differential diagnostic process and documentation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our team has a process, such as a diagnostic timeout , to ensure all data/input is reviewed and all possibilities/team perspectives have been considered before a final diagnosis or discharge. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our team recognizes the potential for cognitive bias to limit the differential diagnosis and is comfortable raising concerns about such pitfalls as anchoring or confirmation bias. |

Ongoing Monitoring: Consistent reassessment and escalation for change/decline in status.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We have a standard process for monitoring and communicating repeat vital signs and other clinical data. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We have a defined practice for communicating and escalating changes in patient status and/or decompensation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We have a robust culture of teamwork and communication in which team members feel comfortable speaking up, identifying diagnostic red flags, and escalating lack of treatment response. |

Discharge and Follow-Up: Clearly expressed plan for follow-up communication/next steps.

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|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our policies and procedures require reassessment and recording of vital signs prior to discharge. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our discharge instructions are written in plain language and include findings and specific instructions for follow-up and return instructions for unresolved and worsening symptoms. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We follow a standard process for communicating findings when results are received (or updated) after patient discharge, including establishing specific contact information for patients who lack a fixed address, phone number, or email address. |