Building Patient History Skills

By Melissa Hernandez

In my clinical site (MOB) they already have a set of questions we have to ask the patients. The questions consist of history of: "Cancer, High Blood Pressure, Smoke, Diabetes, and Heart Disease."

To begin my exam was on a Geriatric 75-year-old male whom the doctor had ordered a Chest XR for cancer. I asked all the question that were typed down below for me. For cancer he replied "yes", he had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer that had spread to his liver about 2 years ago. For high blood pressure he responded "Yes", and then I decided to ask when he had been diagnosed, he replied about 15 years ago. Finally, for diabetes he responded "yes" as well, and I asked when he was diagnosed the patient replied about 10 years ago. I also asked if it was being treated and he said "yes", he was on medication. No history of heart disease or smoking.

After his exam I returned my paper filled with the history of my patient to my technician. She then filled in the information I had provided to the patient history in the comments. She then sends the XR and the patient history for the Radiologist to read and dictate. The information will help the Radiologist dictate the XR by seen the history the patient provided and influence how the examination proceeds.

I do not believe I could have asked any more questions that would have benefited the Radiologist more. The ones I asked are pretty much the most basic questions asked. The Radiologist would be impacted if I did not ask the adequate questions for patient history by misdiagnosing and the patient may not be given the adequate treatment.

On a scale from 1-10, I would rate my patient techniques about a 4. I would like to improve my skills by furthering the responses the patient answers to my questions if needed, and not keeping it basic. I know that once I get more confidence as a rad tech student, I will not be so afraid or feel like I'm being too nosy. At the end, the answers to my questions will benefit them in their diagnosis and treatment.