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Building Patient History Skills

I performed an upper and lower KUB exam on a 24 year old female patient. It is an x-ray image of the kidneys, ureters, and bladder. This patient was complaining of abdominal pain for the past two months.

When I call the patient back for the exam I start with a warm welcome “hey, how are you doing today?” I introduce myself and explain that I will be doing her x-rays today. It is important to make the patient feel as comfortable as possible, a big part of that is being friendly and welcoming. On the way to the exam room I ask for her full name and date of birth. By law we need two forms of identification and this is how we verify. I like to make small talk and work patient history into the conversation. I start off by just asking about her day. Then I lead to questions about what brings her in today. This helps for me to get a history about the patient and her injury. Before I perform the x-rays I ask if there is any chance of pregnancy. This patient is in her reproductive years so I want to be sure she is safe. I observe her clothing and ask if she has any metal on her clothing. Such as buttons on jeans or a metal in her bra. This is to make sure nothing shows up during the exam that does not need to be there. Then I ask the patient to lay supine on the table for her KUB exam.

All of the information gathered is recorded on the note section for the radiologist. The patient history collected helps the radiologist by giving them more information to best diagnose that patient. Because they only view the x-ray films Radiologist don't interact with the patient so we are their eyes.

After reflecting how I served this last patient I thought of better questions that could help in knowing more of the patient's history. I could ask if it was a recurring injury. Or if they are on any medication. I hear other tech ask their patients if it's their annual. For this procedure I believe it would be beneficial to ask where the pain is located. Such as what side of the abdomen is she feeling pain?

If these were important questions I didn’t ask or left out then it doesn't help the radiologist to provide the best services to the patient. I believe the radiologist could still give a diagnosis but it wouldn't be the most effective way to serve the patient and other technicians.

On a scale of 1 to 10 I would rate my techniques as a 6. I could improve in many ways such as being more familiar with common injuries that occur. This is so that I can elaborate when engaging with patients. This last patient helped me realize I could be more personal and make my patients feel welcomed. I can have more age related conversations depending on if it's an older lady or a little kid. The biggest thing I want to improve on is feeling more natural when asking the patient questions.