

## Rheumatology 101

James A Engelbrecht, MD  
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## Objectives

- Incorporate key historical and physical findings in your assessment of patients with musculoskeletal or rheumatic complaints
- Achieve more focused and cost effective approaches to diagnosis
- Utilize observational and practical “pearls” in your approach to rheumatologic diagnosis

## The Process

Different teaching points for different people in the audience:

Different strokes for different folks equals:  
TAKE NOTES

## Start at the Beginning: The Chief Complaint

- Age/sex
- Look and see
- Listen and hear

*In taking histories follow each line of thought; ask no leading questions; never suggest. Give the patient's own words in the complaint.*

*Sir William Osler  
Aphorisms 1903*

*There is only one cardinal rule: one must always listen to the patient.*

*Oliver Sacks, MD  
"Migraine" 1972*

## History of the Present Illness: The key questions

- When it started...really started....
- How it started

*I keep six honest serving men,  
(They taught me all I knew)  
Their names are What and Why and When  
and How and Where and Who.*

*Rudyard Kipling  
"The Elephants Child" 1902*

## The Present Illness: Patterns

- Which joints, muscles, what area, regional or system
- Don't "buy into" the diagnosis the patient tells you....
- Putting the history together...think ROS here

## Family History: Key rheumatologic points

- Autoimmune and other rheumatic diseases often have some degree of inheritability...some very little and some very much
- Real family history vs other

## Physical Exam: Where to look and what to look for

*Learn to see, learn to hear, learn to feel, learn to smell, and know that by practice alone can you become expert.....See, and then reason and compare and control. But see first.*

*Sir William Osler 1919*

*Many look, but few see.*

*Maxwell M Winthrope,*

*"Blood, Pure and Elegant" 1980*

*One finger in the throat and one  
in the rectum make a good  
diagnostician.*

*Sir William Osler  
Aphorisms 1900*

## Laboratory and X-Ray

- Expensive
- Almost limitless possibilities
- When is it likely to help?
- Most bang for the buck?
- Does it change anything?

*I have been surprised to note the readiness with which high grade graduates from medical institutions which are models of our time, yield to the temptation of machine-made diagnosis.*

*William J Mayo  
Surgery, Gynecology, and Obstetrics 1923*

*The less the indication there is for a test, the more likely a positive result will be a false positive.*

*Joseph E Hardison, MD  
New England Journal of Medicine 1979*

## Impression and Plan

- Putting it all together
- Developing plan
- When do I need help?
- How do I ask for help?

*“The most valuable diagnostic instrument is the passage of time.”*

*Henry George Miller, MD  
“World Neurology” 1968*

## Comments and Questions