

During my first site evaluation, I presented a case of a 30 y/o F non-smoker who came in with a cough x3 days. Her presentation was consistent with a classic viral URI, and I focused my HPI mainly on infectious causes (fever, sick contacts, recent travel, etc.). However, my evaluator pointed out an important area of improvement: I need to broaden my ddx beyond infectious etiologies. While viral URI was most likely, cough can also result from non-infectious causes such as asthma, postnasal drip, GERD, environmental irritants, or allergies. Although I included some of these possibilities in my assessment section, I should have incorporated them into my HPI as well, to provide a more comprehensive and structured patient history.

For my final site evaluation, I presented a 52 y/o F who noticed a growing neck lump in the left submandibular region over the past three months. I think I did a fairly good job with this presentation because I was able to clearly communicate my physical exam findings as well as explain the rationale behind some of my differentials. Interestingly enough, when the patient returned in my final week of rotation for the US report, my top differential was correct. An area of improvement that my evaluator recommended was to include an abdominal exam. Although the primary concern was a neck mass, a brief abdominal exam can provide additional information for systemic signs of malignancy or infection such as hepatosplenomegaly or abdominal lymphadenopathy.

Lastly, the article that I decided to focus on was related to acupuncture and its role in treating tinnitus. I chose this particular article because during my rotation, I had a patient presenting with unilateral tinnitus, and to be honest, I wasn't entirely sure how to approach the workup or management. This article helped me gain a better understanding of the current treatment options for tinnitus, including both conventional therapies like CBT, meds, hearing aids and complementary interventions like acupuncture. In the future, I will be sure to apply the knowledge that I've gained from this article to educate my patients.