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# Workshop

# Clinical Exam of the Foot & Ankle

Presented by the Podiatric Sports Medicine SAG

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A thorough clinical examination  
is essential to diagnose foot  
and ankle disorders accurately

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# Today we will cover...



Importance of history-taking in confirming a diagnosis and considering differential diagnoses.



Importance of performing specific tests for specific conditions.



Importance of using validated tools to classify and assess conditions.

# Importance of a Detailed History

## Primary Objective:

- understand patient symptoms
- identify potential causes
- guide examination


## Key Aspects:

- medical history
- surgical history
- social history
- Onset
- mechanism of injury
- location of pain
- associated symptoms
- psychological impact

NILDOCART or other

*A detailed history provides a framework for identifying likely diagnoses and ruling out other possibilities.*

# Differential Diagnoses

- History helps generate a list of possible conditions, and the clinical examination refines this list.
  - Skin, soft tissue, bone, joint, nerve, infection, tumour
  - Red flags
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# Importance of Specific Tests

## For Example:

- **Anterior Drawer Test:**
  - a. Check anterior talofibular ligament (ATFL) instability
  - b. Helps differentiate between mild and severe sprains.
  
- **Thompson Test:**
  - a. Test for Achilles tendon rupture
  - b. Key for identifying complete ruptures of the Achilles tendon.

## Why Specific Tests Matter:

1. **Confirm Diagnosis**
2. **Exclusion of Other Diagnoses**
3. **Guides Treatment**

# Case Study: Ankle Sprain

- **History:** A 25-year-old athlete presents with pain after an inversion injury to the ankle.
- **Examination:** Swelling over the lateral malleolus and tenderness upon palpation. Ottawa ankle rules negative.
- **Special Test:** Positive anterior drawer test.
- **Diagnosis:** Lateral ankle sprain with possible ligamentous injury.
- **Differential Diagnoses:** Peroneal tendon injury, fracture (anterior process calcaneus, tibia, fibula, 5<sup>th</sup> metatarsal)

# Importance of Using Validated Tools

## **Consistency:**

- Ensures that diagnoses are made based on evidence and standard criteria.

## **Objective Classification:**

- Tools help classify the severity of conditions to guide treatment.

## **Reliability and Validity:**

- Improves the accuracy and reproducibility of diagnoses.

# Examples of Validated Tools

## **Ottawa Ankle Rules:**

- Used to determine whether an X-ray is necessary in the case of acute ankle injuries.

## **Clinical Relevance:**

- Reduces unnecessary imaging while identifying patients who may need further investigation.

## **The Coughlin and Shurnass grading system:**

- One method to grade osteoarthritis of the first metatarsophalangeal (MTP) joint.

## **Clinical Relevance:**

- Helps Guide Treatment Decisions
- Conservative vs. Surgical Management
- Predicts Surgical Outcomes
- Guides Surgical Decision-Making,

# Summary and Conclusion

- **A detailed history** helps guide the clinical examination and identifies differential diagnoses.
- **Performing specific tests** is essential for confirming diagnoses and ruling out other conditions.
- **Validated tools** enhance diagnosis accuracy, help classify conditions and monitor treatment progress.
- **Take-Home Message:** A structured, evidence-based approach is critical for effective management of foot and ankle disorders.

Discussion and  
practical!

