

Enigma in the ED: Tracking a Puzzling Illness

by

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The Situation

The mayor of Metrotown was alerted by local health providers that a concerning cluster of patient cases have been flagged as “unusual.” Six new patients have presented to the two local hospitals within the last 24 hours with similar symptoms. All patients have tested negative for influenza and group A *Streptococcus*. A virus is the suspected cause. The mayor has appointed you to develop a team to work as a taskforce for this puzzling new infection. You have a two-phase mission to complete.

Phase One

(1) Develop your taskforce team. (2) Identify the illness cause. (3) Recognize the signs, symptoms, and tests required to diagnose this illness. (4) Explain how this illness is spread.

Phase Two

(1) Identify methods to break the chain of infection of this illness. (2) Create an implementation proposal to prevent the spread of the illness. (3) Reflect on the entire process.

Table 1. Six “unusual” presenting patients.

Patient	Temperature	Pulse	Respirations	Blood Pressure	Oxygen Level	Subjective data
Case 1 12 y/o Male	102° F	112 bpm	28/min	90/40	93% RA	Dry cough and fatigue
Case 2 68 y/o Female	101° F	96 bpm	24/min	112/68	90% RA	Dry cough and headache
Case 3 80 y/o Male	103° F	88 bpm	22/min	130/80	91% RA	Dry cough and fatigue
Case 4 2 y/o Female	101.5° F	120 bpm	28/min	80/40	95% RA	Shortness of breath
Case 5 22 y/o Female	104° F	108 bpm	22/min	128/60	96% RA	Fatigue, frequent fevers, and cough
Case 6 81 y/o Female	100° F	98 bpm	26/min	130/80	92% RA	Fevers and cough
Agency Normal ranges	97–99° F 36.1–37.2° C	60–100 bpm	12–20/min	120/80– 139/89	95%–100% RA	

bpm = beats per minute RA= Room Air F = Fahrenheit C = Celsius y/o = year old

<i>Patient</i>	<i>Vital Signs</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Objective Data</i>	<i>Subjective Data</i>	<i>Notes</i>