

The image features two red flags on a black pole, positioned diagonally. The flags are slightly overlapping and have a wavy, fabric-like texture. The text is centered over the flags.

RED FLAGS
in
case history taking

DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS AND RED FLAGS

Red flags are embedded and integrated throughout the syllabus so that you may practice:

1st Safely
2nd Competently
3rd Effectively

This ensures that, by the end of this module, students are able to recognise and explain the presence of signs and symptoms, which in the appropriate clinical setting can signify serious pathologies – known as red flags - and to take timely and appropriate action.

RED FLAGS

General non-system specific questions

- ☞ Cachexia
- ☞ loss of appetite
- ☞ sudden weight changes
- ☞ unexplained or persistent fatigue
- ☞ fever
- ☞ night sweats
- ☞ night pain

Cont..

RED FLAGS

General non-system specific questions

- ✚ unexplained aches and pains
- ✚ unexplained rashes or changes in skin lesions
- ✚ unexplained swelling, lumps or bumps
- ✚ bleeding
- ✚ accidental ingestion of unknown or toxic substances
- ✚ Trauma esp. to head and abdomen

Red Flags of the cardiovascular system

- **Chest pain**
- **Breathlessness**
- **Irregular heart rhythm**
- **Fainting**
- **Very high or very low blood pressure**
- **Very high cholesterol levels**
- **Oedema**
- **Cyanosis**
- **Painful / hot / swollen calves muscles**
- **Chronic chest infections**
- **Frothy sputum with/without blood**
- **Acute abdominal and spinal pain**
- **Positive family history**

Red Flags for the abdominal system

- **Dysphagia**
- **Hoarse voice**
- **Haematemesis**
- **Melena**
- **Altered bowel habit**
- **Rectal bleeding**
- **Steatorrhoea**
- **Jaundice**
- **Persistent abdominal tenderness and swelling and pain**
- **Haematuria**
- **Bruising**
- **Spider naevi**
- **Gynaecomastia**

Red Flags for the respiratory system

- **Dyspnoea**
- **Haemoptysis**
- **Lymphadenopathy**
- **Cyanosis**
- **Persistent cough with / without stained sputum**
- **Frothy sputum with / without blood**
- **Cyanosis**

Red Flags for the nervous system

- Visual disturbances
- Olfactory disturbances
- Dizziness / vertigo
- Fainting / loss of consciousness
- Numbness
- Paraesthesiae
- Dysarthria
- Dysphagia
- Hoarseness
- Muscle weakness, fasciculation, wasting or spasms
- Paralysis
- Reflex changes

Red Flags for the Musculoskeletal System

- Symptoms lasting longer than the expected timescale for the particular injury
- Chronic back pain alongside systemic symptoms, such as a fever and malaise
- Neurological deficit affecting the saddle area
- Persistent numbness
- Unexplained weakness, whether focal or generalised
- Muscle wasting and fasciculations
- Unsteadiness or loss of balance
- Hot swollen joint esp in children

Red Flags for the Genito-urinary System

- Haematuria or proteinuria
- Dysuria
- Anuria
- Abnormal urinary characteristics – changes in colour, odour, volume, flow or frequency of urine
- Abnormal lumps over the genitals or groin
- Spontaneous uterine bleeding after menopause
- Perineal pain or fluctuating pain into testes, labia and pelvic area



**End
of
red flags**