Improve diagnostic performance to improve safety and reduce diagnostic errors

Primary Drivers

- Acquire and effectively use a relevant knowledge base
- Acquire enough medical knowledge to skillfully construct an appropriate differential diagnosis
- Acquire a working knowledge of biostatistics and epidemiology
- Acquire a working knowledge related to diagnostic testing: Radiology and laboratory medicine

Secondary Drivers

- Optimize clinical reasoning to reduce cognitive error
  - Improve rationality
  - Recognize and avoid cognitive and affective bias
  - Know the conditions under which clinical decision making is likely to be compromised
  - Emphasize must-not-miss diagnoses

- Understand system-related aspects of care
  - Improve learning through feedback and performance monitoring
  - Improve communication; Be especially careful at handoffs
  - Use second opinions and consultation
  - Leverage health care informatics in the diagnostic process; take advantage of decision-support resources

- Effectively engage patients and the diagnostic team
  - Include the patient in co-producing and monitoring the diagnosis
  - Engage nursing staff as members of the core diagnostic team
  - Communicate directly with radiology and laboratory medicine professionals
  - Honor the patient’s values and preferences

- Acquire appropriate perspectives and attitudes
  - Understand fallibility, and uncertainty and the limits of cognition
  - Not every problem needs a diagnosis now
  - Labelling stops thinking
  - Appreciate the possibility of diagnostic error in your own diagnoses and diagnoses made by others

CHANGE IDEAS

- Education and training should be INTERPROFESSIONAL
- Education should incorporate the latest advances in the cognitive and learning sciences
- The importance of human factors should be emphasized throughout
- The ultimate test is skillful differential diagnosis
- Diagnosis will require skillful use of informatics
- Well-functioning teams will outperform the individual