Sick or Not Sick

REFRESHER

RECOGNIZE IT

- A real-world field approach to the initial assessment of sick or injured patients
- Identifies the key indicators of physiologic stability
- The clinical picture starts at dispatch and develops at the doorway

ASSESS

- Five clinical indicators: respirations, pulse, mental status, skin, position
- Add chief complaint, NOI/MOI, and your index of suspicion
- Poor signs: altered mental status, respiratory distress, weak or no pulse
- Poor skin signs and poor body position also mark a sick patient
- If one element is off, classify the patient as sick

ACT — FIRST MOVES

1. Take in all the information and make the sick-or-not-sick decision
2. Do not delay making the decision
3. If the clinical picture is not clear, classify as NOT sick
4. Reassess — clinical pictures do not change

PEARLS

- If they look sick, they are sick; if they are NOT sick, they are NOT sick
- A NOT sick call does not mean the patient needs no interventions

Take Home Message:

Judge five indicators at the door — respirations, pulse, mental status, skin, position — and if one is off, the patient is sick.