

# Education Element (E<sup>2</sup>)

## Teaching Evidence-based Physical Examination

- **Scenario:** You are, seeing a new consult in the emergency room with the third-year medical student on your team. After reviewing the chart and imaging with the student, you head in to complete your history and physical exam on the patient. How might you use this opportunity to teach physical exam skills?
- **Perspectives from the literature:**
  - To maintain patient-centeredness, teachers should always ask for permission for learners to also examine the patient. They should explain that there will be discussion of the findings and their implications
  - Asking students to commit to their own description of physical exam findings prior to the discussion facilitates a key step in their learning
  - This commitment should only be elicited after establishing a positive learning climate, framed as a low-risk opportunity to practice, reassuring learners that descriptions are rarely completely correct or incorrect
  - Teaching points can be made after listening to learners' descriptions of findings. These can range anywhere from proper technique and terminology to differential diagnosis and management
  - Students appreciate opportunities to correlate physical exam skills with the basic science principles they learned in pre-clinical years