

Top 10 differential diagnoses in family medicine: **Fever**

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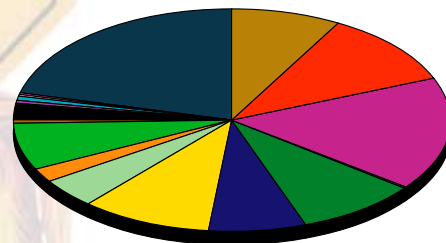
4. FEVER

The differential of acute fever is well known to the general practitioner.

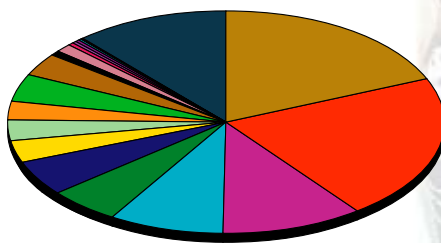
A prolonged fever of unknown origin (FUO) of over 3 weeks duration is a diagnostic challenge and should elicit the following thoughts in the appropriate context:

- Abdominal abscess;
- Neoplasms, especially lymphomas, leukemia, multiple myeloma and bronchial carcinoma;
- Connective-tissue disease;
- TB;
- AIDS;
- Infective endocarditis;
- Multiple PEs;
- Malaria and other tropical diseases in the returning traveller; and
- Drug fever.

Do not give a therapeutic trial for FUO, unless in an area with limited resources (e.g malaria in sub-Saharan Africa).



45 and Older



Under 45

	AGE	
	Under 45	45 and Older
URI	18.60 %	8.10 %
Other Viral Disease	21.10	10.70
Acute Bronchitis	10.50	16.40
Acute OM	8.50	0.20
Influenza	5.30	9.00
Fever NYD	5.10	7.20
Pneumonia	3.20	9.70
Sinusitis	3.00	4.30
GI Infection	2.70	2.00
UTI	4.00	6.80
Strep Throat	3.30	0.50
COPD Exacerbation	0.70	2.20
Mononucleosis	1.20	0.06
Meningitis	0.40	0.03
Appendicitis	0.30	0.09
Iatrogenic	0.30	0.43
GI Malignancy	0.20	0.60
Lymphoma/Leukemia	0.09	0.25
Lung Malignancy	0.09	0.25
Other	11.40	21.00

COPD—chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; FUO—fever of unknown origin; GI—gastrointestinal; NYD—not yet diagnosed; OM—otitis media; PE—pulmonary embolism; TB—tuberculosis; URI—upper respiratory infection; UTI—urinary tract infection.

For a pdf of the Top Ten Differential Diagnoses in Family Medicine pamphlet or to access the slide show on-line, go to <http://www.familymedicine.uottawa.ca/eng/TopTenDifferentialDiagnosisInPrimaryCare.aspx>.

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