Differential Diagnosis of Headache Based on 3 Questions

How long have you been having headaches?
How often do they occur?
How long does each headache last?

New onset explosive
- ACUTE POST-TRAUMATIC HEADACHE
- SUBARACHNOID HEMORRAGE
- THUNDERCLAP HEADACHE
- CAROTID DISECTION
- STROKE
- PITUITARY APOPLEXY

New onset, gradual, progressive for hours, days or weeks
- INFECTION
  - MENINGEAL OR SYSTEMIC
  - INCREASED INTRACRANIAL PRESSURE
  - METABOLIC DISORDERS
  - CERVICOGENIC HEADACHE
  - ARTERITIS

Recurrent irregular frequency
- TENSION-TYPE
- MIGRAINE
- PRIMARY STABBING HEADACHE
- NEURALGIAS
- POSITIONAL
- EXERTIONAL
- COUGH
- COITAL

Recurrent daily or almost daily
  - paroxysmal - duration less than 4 hours
    - CLUSTER HEADACHE
    - PRIMARY STABBING HEADACHE
    - PAROXYSMAL HEMICRANIA
    - SLEEP APNEA
    - HYPNIC HEADACHE
    - SUNCT SYNDROME
  - continuous - chronic daily headache
    - duration > 4 hours
      - REBOUND HEADACHE
      - CAFFEINE-INDUCED
      - SECONDARY TO MEDICATIONS
      - ABNORMALITIES OF THE SKULL BASE
      - SYSTEMIC DISEASE
      - DEPRESSION
      - CHRONIC POST-TRAUMATIC
      - CHRONIC TENSION-TYPE
      - HEMICRANIA CONTINUA

* THESE MAY OCCUR >1 / DAY