**Communication skills: patient requesting pethidine**

**Instruction for actor**

You are Ronnie Orford, a 36 year old man with heavy alcohol use and occasional drug use (marajuana, cocaine) but you don't inject drugs. You are a frequent attender at the ED. You generally attend a presenting complaint of headaches, which you often have but which get worse when you are feeling wound up. This happens when you've had arguments with friends, when you are short of money, when you have housing problems, etc. Today you are feeling low (it is November, rainy, you've no money, your benefits are being cut and you've had an argument with your partner). You are out of work (manual labourer).

You always request pethidine for your headaches this as it chills you out and makes you feel better generally (and the headache gets better). Once you get the pethidine you self-discharge. Usually the doctors give in and give you the pethidine so you feel you have a right to it.

The triage nurse has offered you ibuprofen and paracetamol but you know you won't get the buzz you want from these and are determined to get some pethidine.

The headache is generalised and not too bad (with typical tension headache features) but you feel on edge and wound up. You will say whatever you think the doctor wants to hear in order to get the pethidine. You don't want any tests doing. You have seen your GP and a Neurologist about your headaches in the past and don't really accept their diagnosis, (that your headaches are stress-related) so have stopped seeing them.

If the doctor shows weakness you will really press them - threatening to complain, insisting on seeing someone senior, etc. If the doctor remains firm you will self-discharge. If they offer to examine you, you will agree to this.