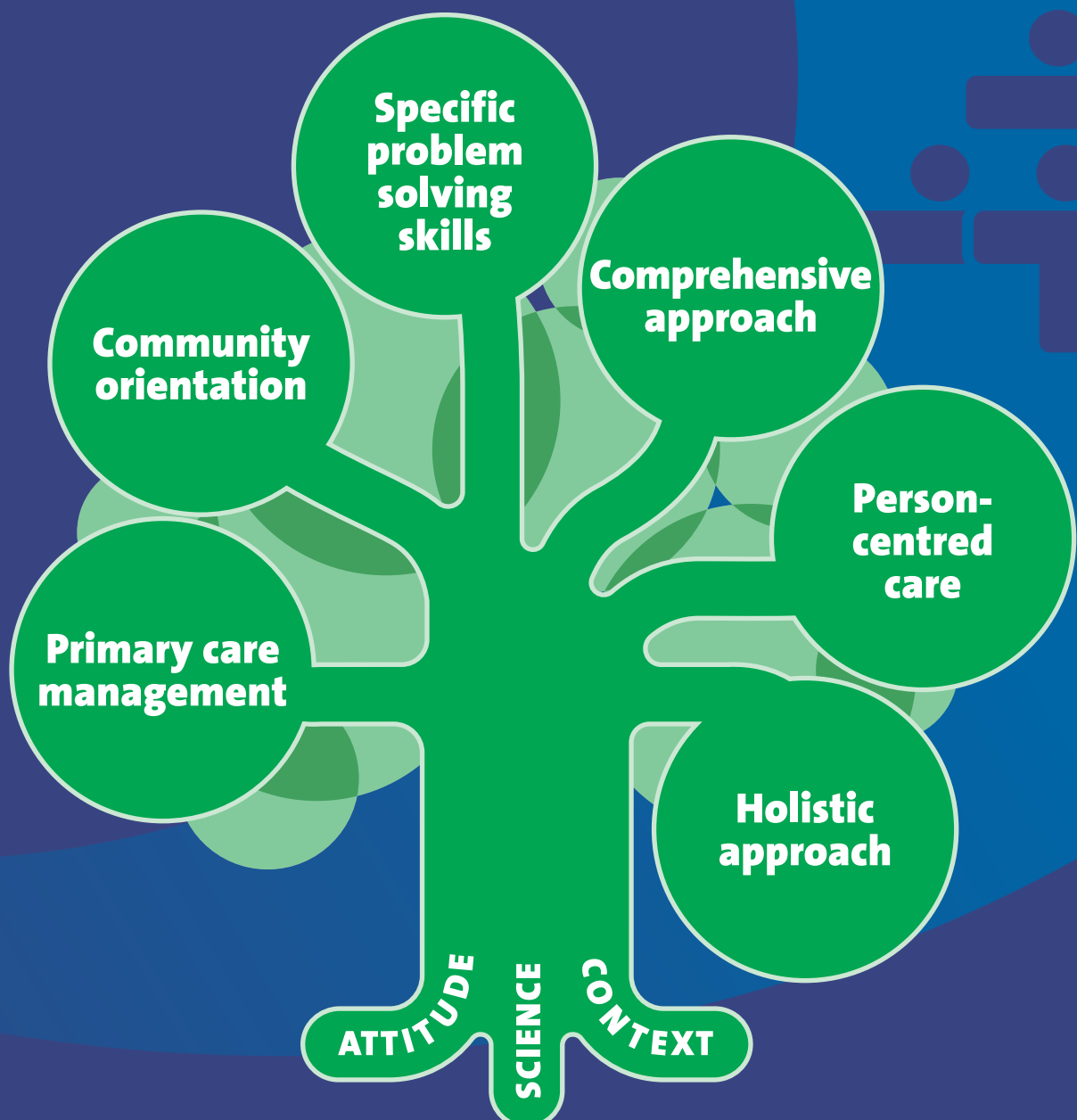


ICGP Curriculum for GP training in Ireland



Foreword

This new ICGP curriculum is designed to be useful and usable for all those involved in general practice and general practice training. During the research phase international literature was reviewed, national surveys were carried out, and the initial phase of chapter development was implemented. This curriculum built on the foundation of the last and continued further in the expansion of outcomes to represent the new areas of interest in general practice.

The ICGP appointed Dr Niamh O’Carroll to the position of curriculum development fellow in April 2013. In September 2014 a curriculum sub-committee was formed with the remit of expanding the current number of chapters and editing those which were complete. Committee members were drawn from programme directors, GP trainers and GP trainees. We also collaborated with AUDGPI in producing one of the foundation chapters on research and best practice.

It is our intention that each learner approaches this curriculum with their own unique set of learning experiences and finds this resource both useful and relevant to their learning.

This new content will be brought to a modern electronic platform to optimise both formative and summative assessments. This curriculum will continue to evolve with feedback and regular reviews from its users with its main aim of reflecting the dynamic environment of Irish general practice.

Dr Gerry Mansfield, National Director of Specialist Training in General Practice
and

Dr John Cox, Chair, Curriculum Development Committee

Acknowledgements

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The Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) curriculum defines the learning outcomes for the specialty of general practice and describes the competences you require to practise medicine as a general practitioner in Ireland.

General Practice training has taken place in Ireland since the late seventies. All training schemes have developed their own timetables for training based on the 2006 curriculum. At present all training schemes are trainee centred and encourage reflective learning and a problem solving approach. The advances of the new ICGP curriculum allow the end user to use cases similar to those seen in everyday practice to identify their learning needs and reflect on areas within the fields of knowledge skills and attitudes that they require more input in.

As a doctor in general practice you do not deal simply with organ systems and symptoms, but with people and problems. The ICGP curriculum has been developed to reflect this. The meaning of the curriculum will increasingly be conveyed by showing not just how you as a GP must manage illnesses, but how problems present differently in different types of patients with different implications and in ways that require different types of management. The ICGP curriculum, approved in 2006, was the first attempt in the Ireland to define the indefinable, i.e. the complex competences that are required by doctors in undertaking the work of the expert clinical generalist.

How has the curriculum changed since 2006?

- There is now an increased focus on competency based training through a problem based approach
- Each chapter opens with a problem that sets a context for learning. Contemporary competencies are included that need to be added to the GP's traditional skill set
- New updated information has been incorporated on the general practice environment
- The curriculum content has been reformatted. This was required to increase accessibility, utility and user-friendliness, especially for general practice registrars, general practice trainers, and general practice training schemes.

The primary aim of a curriculum is to achieve a careful balance between providing enough information to encourage greater understanding of the discipline without giving so much that it becomes difficult to see the wood from the trees.

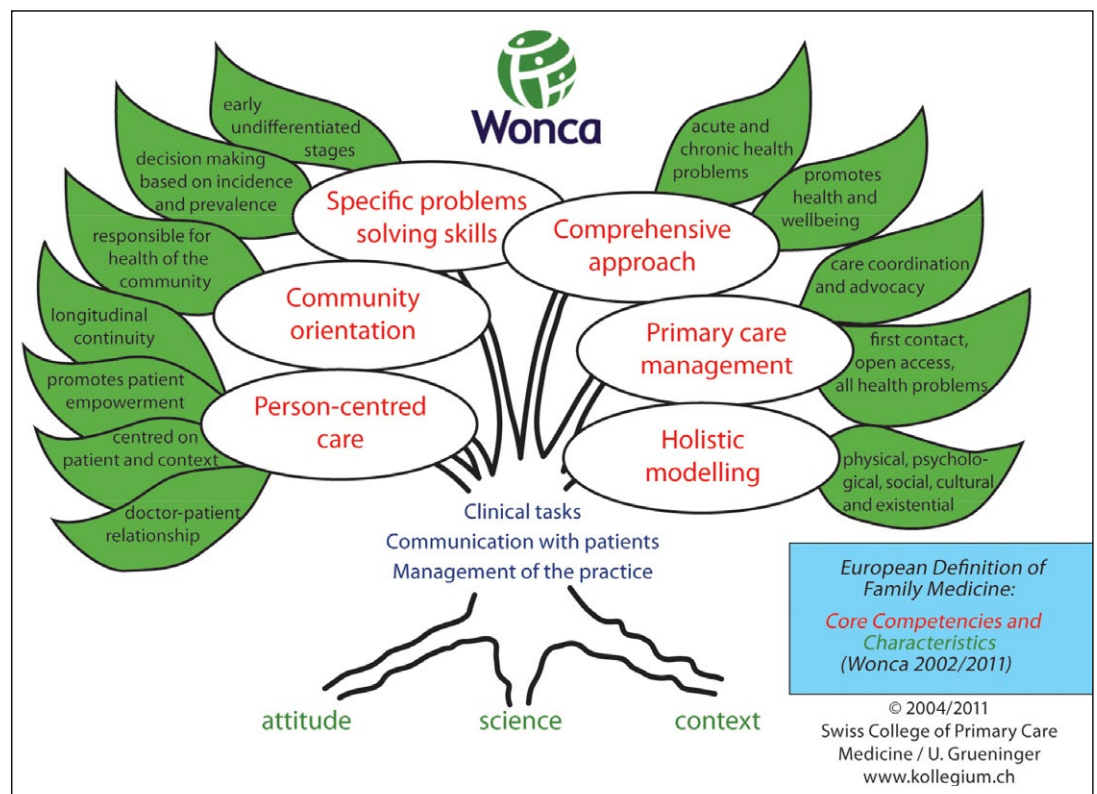
Process of development

The work of the Curriculum subcommittee is best described as having four main components: literature review and national survey; review of existing curriculum models; consultation on models and methods; and development of curriculum chapters. Results from the surveys and initial development work on the curriculum model adapted were reported through presentations and workshops at national and local meetings and national conferences, further contributing to the process of consultation and feedback.

In parallel with the literature review and survey, curriculum models developed and applied elsewhere were also examined. Those considered included Australia, Canada, UK, Netherlands, Norway and the USA. It was concluded, however, that the most appropriate framework was that devised by the World Organisation of Family Doctors ((WONCA) Europe) both because of its international applicability and its acceptance by the national colleges and associations of family medicine in thirty countries in Europe.

As part of this process, the content of the WONCA framework was mapped against the Irish Medical Council's Good Professional Practice domains. Some of the Chapters were drafted by individual general practitioners across Ireland involved in teaching and training GP trainees. These were subject to scrutiny and feedback from a wide spectrum of practitioners, to ensure that the curriculum matches the needs and requirements of doctors in daily practice.

The use of the curriculum chapters and the learning outcomes addressed places significant emphasis on the use of personal development plans/learning need plans. An individual trainee's scheme will be built around such plans and will be orientated to meeting the learning outcomes defined in the curriculum.



Curriculum framework

The curriculum is based on the original framework statement for the discipline of general practice that was developed by WONCA Europe (World Organization of National Colleges and Academies of General Practice/Family Medicine) and formally launched during its meeting in London in 2002, and revised in 2005 and again in 2011. The WONCA framework describes the fundamental characteristics of general practice, a role description of the specialist in family medicine, and the competencies required of you. These characteristics of the discipline of general practice relate to the abilities that every family doctor should master, and are the basis of developing the curriculum for training in Irish general practice.

The core competences which you will need to master in order to be a GP are grouped into six areas of competence and three essential features of you as a doctor. In the curriculum chapters these are subdivided into specific learning outcomes.

They are derived from the characteristics of general practice in the European Definition. The framework is set within a pedagogical approach that supports the preparation of lifelong learners as a necessary pre-requisite for doctors to sustain their capacity to practice effectively in an environment of changing expectations about appropriate practice. It is an approach that also recognises that individuals learn at different rates using different styles and, typically, that learning is enhanced when individuals are actively involved in identifying their learning needs and contribute to planning, implementing and evaluating their programme of learning.

The core GP competencies are:

- 1. Primary care management** is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you and coordinating their care using resources appropriately. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.)
- 2. Person-centred care** is about understanding and developing an effective doctor patient relationship.
- 3. Specific problem-solving skills** is about the context-specific aspects of general practice: Selective history taking, physical examination and investigations leading to an appropriate management plan. It is about how you deal with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, without medicalising normality.
- 4. A comprehensive approach** is about how general practitioners must be able to manage co-morbidity, multiple complaints and pathologies both acute and chronic health problems in the individual and also applying health promotion and disease prevention strategies.
- 5. Community Orientation.** Reconciling the health needs of individual patients and the health needs of the community in which they live in balance with available resources.
- 6. A Holistic Approach.** Taking into account clinical factors, but also any psychological, social, economic or cultural factors that are important and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health.

Applying Core Skills

In applying these core skills in General Practice, three personal features are important.

These personal features relate to factors which have an impact on your ability to deliver the competences in real life in your work setting:

- **Contextual aspects of care.** The environment in which you work; working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks; the impact of workload and the practice facilities and how that may influence the quality of your care.
- **Attitudinal aspects of care.** Your awareness of your attitudes and capabilities; ethical aspects of clinical practice; achieving a good balance between work and private life.
- **Scientific aspects of care.** Adopting a critical and evidence based approach to your practice and maintaining this through continued learning.

Medical Council Requirements

The Irish Medical Council is the sole regulator in Ireland of the medical profession and of its training standards. Its publication Good Professional Practice (2013) provides another framework against which you as a doctor can judge your own performance and by which you can also be judged. The ICGP curriculum domains have been mapped to the eight domains of good professional practice to ensure that coverage of the professional expectations of the discipline and of the regulator are complete. (Appendix 1 gives you an illustration of this cross-referencing.)

This curriculum is competency based, in other words the knowledge, skills, attitudes and expertise will be clearly spelt out. The curriculum content has to cover both generic professional competencies, the qualities that are expected from all doctors (such as those that appear in Good Professional Practice) and those competencies that are specific to the specialty of general practice.

As set out, the curriculum has three principal audiences. Above all, it must meet the needs of its primary users, GP trainees and educators. For GP Registrars, it must contain the elements of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will assist them in reaching and demonstrating required competences. For educators with responsibilities as facilitators or managers of learning, it must be a resource that is a guide or framework and which, shaped by their professional practice is a basis for their dialogue with trainees as learners. For educators with responsibilities as assessors, it must be a resource that enables them to interpret learning outcomes into valid and reliable tests of those competences.

“We are what we do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.” – Aristotle

The Irish Medical Council has defined that good professional practice is based on a shared understanding between the profession and the public of the principles and values that underpin good care. These principles and values, and how they should be applied in practice, are set out using the **three pillars of professionalism** – **Partnership, Practice and Performance**.¹

1. **Partnership** - Good care depends on doctors working together with patients and colleagues toward shared aims and with mutual respect. It relies on trust and treating patients fairly and making decisions about providing or withholding treatment without discrimination. It also relies on truthfulness both in communication with patients and colleagues, and in professional work such as recordkeeping, running a practice, managing adverse events, and in research.

Good communication is central to the ‘doctor-patient relationship’ and essential to the effective functioning of healthcare teams. GP’s act as an advocate for patients in two ways. We speak on behalf of individual patients, to help make sure they receive appropriate healthcare. In addition, GP’s should support all patients by promoting the fair distribution of limited resources and fair access to care.

2. **Practice** - This describes the behaviour and values that support good care. It relies on putting the interests and well-being of patients first. The main elements of good practice are; caring when treating patients, confidentiality and promoting patient safety. Doctors are entitled to good care and support from their colleagues and employers when they suffer ill-health. However, they should make sure that the condition of their own health does not cause patients harm. GP’s are urged to seek and follow independent medical advice promptly when you have signs of physical or mental ill-health.
3. **Performance** - This describes the behaviours and processes that provide the foundation for good care. It requires competence, reflective practice and teaching and training. Competence is required in all aspects of professional practice. A commitment to lifelong learning is essential to providing up-to-date and effective care. You should make sure you are up-to-date with developments in your area of practice by participating regularly in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and in other formal and informal education, training and development.

Reflective practice includes formal reviews through audit and outcome data. It also includes informal reflection on how personal values may affect communication with patients, colleagues or others, and ultimately the care provided to patients. Doctors are role models for medical students, trainees and other colleagues. GP’s should be aware of the impact behaviour can have on others within the clinical environment.²

The commitment to excellence commits us as GPs in delivering a high quality service while the commitment to continuous improvement requires that we engage in Continuous Professional Development. Audit is a necessary tool to ensure the service achieves the necessary quality standards.

It is essential for doctors in training to both learn what professionalism means and display professional values and behaviours in their interactions with patients, their colleagues and their educators.

Professional Development also demands that we engage in reflective practice. Reflective practice requires us to reflect on action and so engage in a process of continuous learning from our experiences. Reflectivity can be encouraged in many ways through reflective logs; continuing medical education groups; Balint groups, Problem Case Analysis and Critical Incident Analysis. Mindfulness is a particularly useful approach for the development of reflective practice.

The concept of Personal Development first arose when Balint first introduced the concept of the psychodynamic consultation in his seminal book, *The Doctor, The Patient and his Illness*. The psychodynamic approach to the consultation recognises that doctors are not robotic scientists and patients are not inhuman presenters of symptoms and signs awaiting the doctor's diagnosis. Both bring in their own feelings, presumptions of how the world works, stereotypes and prejudices and when they engage in a doctor-patient relationship all these conscious and unconscious processes affect the dynamic of the consultation. Accepting the psychodynamic aspect of the doctor-patient relationship entails committing to a process of becoming self-aware and aware of patient's feelings and the social and psychological processes that contribute the psychodynamics of the consultation.

Both personal and professional development also encompass the notion of self-care. It is increasingly recognised that general practitioners and other professional caregivers are prone to high levels of stress which can lead to burnout. Burnout has three components namely, emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation of others and lack of personal accomplishment. This stress and burnout has been recognised as resulting in poor performance, an increased likelihood of making mistakes, lack of motivation to maintain clinical excellence; commit to continuing professional development; and can help explain the high levels of depression, anxiety and addiction to alcohol or drugs amongst the medical profession. Thus it is incumbent on us as professionals to be able to recognise and manage stress and potential burnout we are experiencing. Trainees need to develop the ability to self-care and the necessary resilience to cope with the particular pressures and stresses of providing quality general practice care for communities and individuals. Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) courses are again particularly useful in developing such resilience.

All the areas of competence and the essential features as outlined in these chapters will be brought into play during your professional life, but not to the same extent in every encounter. Throughout your training, it is therefore essential

to take the time to reflect on your practice. This includes developing a clear understanding of what has been learned and how it can be applied effectively to a general practice setting.

Case vignette

John is a 69 year old patient who has a history of hypertension, and a recent diagnosis of atrial fibrillation which was discovered when he presented with a history of transient ischaemic attacks. He was recently started on warfarin and you monitor his INR's. One day you are consulting with his wife, a frequent attender at the practice with minor complaints. She is someone who has always placed huge faith in your opinion and constantly tells you how wonderful the practice is and how she and her husband would be lost without you.

Early on in the consultation she tells you that her husband was admitted to hospital with a stroke three weeks previously. You hear he lost power on his left side and had slurred speech but was recovering well had was left with some residual weakness. She thanks you and the practice for the help they have received. You check his chart to find that his last INR had been sub-therapeutic. No one had informed the patient of the result. You also suspect from the conversation with his wife that the family are not aware of this oversight. He had attended another partner in the practice for an upper respiratory tract infection recently and the partner had not informed the patient of the result.

You have been concerned that your partner has been not as sharp in his practice as he used to. You have felt he has seemed to lose his thoroughness that he used to have in practice and also that he has seemed not to be himself. You have suspected he has been feeling burnt-out and has acted unsafely on occasion. You also have not seen him attend medical meetings when he previously had been a regular member.

Mapping the case to the curriculum domains

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What are the practice systems for the follow up of test results and how effective are they?
- Was this an isolated incident or could your system have weaknesses that mean this could happen again?
- Would an audit of INR results help?
- How will I approach my colleague's poor performance and possible personal stress/burnout?
- Do we do critical analysis of such scenarios in the practice?

Person-centred care

- How are you going to deal with the fact that the patient is not aware of the practice oversight?
- What psychological processes could be at play in my relationship with the patients' wife (e.g. using transference/counter transference or Berne's Transactional Analysis)?
- Would this case be suitable for me to bring to a Balint group?

Specific problem solving skills

- Am I aware of my responsibilities under the Irish Medical Council Code of Conduct when a mistake has been made and when I believe a colleague is displaying medical poor performance?
- How do I break it to a patient that I made a mistake?
- How do I address the issue of my colleague's mistake in not informing the patient?
- How do I talk to a colleague about their perceived ill health and their poor performance?

Community orientation

- Who else in the community had been following up this patient?
- Could the Community Intervention Team have helped with this patient?

Comprehensive approach

- When ordering tests do I tell patients to call for their results if they do not hear from us?
- What other safety-nets could be considered with INR monitoring?

Holistic approach

- How might the patients religious beliefs affect their attitude to what has happened?
- How do I deal with the stress that may result from how I address my partner's issues?
- How do I prevent burnout in myself?

Context

- Is there a local INR hospital clinic that could have taken on this patient?
- Would having INR testing with on the spot results be a suitable possibility for the practice? If so do you have the resources and how would you fund it?

Attitudes

- How do I feel about disappointing this patient and his wife who places great faith in me?
- How do I manage the stress of the incongruity between my desire to do my best for patients and having just let them down?
- How do I feel about not acting on my partner's issues earlier?
- Why have I not acted on my partners poor performance earlier – is it related to our age difference?
- How would a mindful practitioner have approached this scenario?

Evidence based practice

- Do I need to learn about new anti-coagulant therapies?
- What is best practice in managing atrial fibrillation?

This chapter outlines the necessary attitudes, skills and expertise required to become a competent General Practitioner in Ireland. It highlights the importance of personal and professional development that is required for a commitment to a lifelong career in the specialty of general practice.

The following learning outcomes demonstrate the core competences in this subject. You will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) As a GP you should be able to:

- Manage your contact with patients, in primary and continuing care
- Deal competently with any and all problems that are presented to you.
- Demonstrate the ability to coordinate care and develop links with other professionals in primary care and secondary care specialists
- Manage effective and appropriate care provision
- Act as advocate for the patient when needed.
- Participate in teamwork and delegate tasks, where appropriate, in the general practice setting

2. Person- centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. As a GP you should be able to:

- Adopt to a person centred approach treating patients with respect and dignity and developing a relationship/partnership of trust
- Involve the patient in the decision making process and taking responsibility for their health
- Protection of marginalised patients should be a priority, with a focus on an inclusive approach and equality
- The ability to provide a long term continuity of care as determined by health needs

3. Specific problem solving

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty. As a GP you should be able to:

- Diagnose and manage early and undifferentiated illness
- Acquire the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, without medicalising normality
- Utilise a specific decision making process informed by the clinical picture and the prevalence and incidence of illness in the community
- Make effective and efficient use of diagnostic and therapeutic interventions

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. As a GP you should be able to:

- Manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting
- Manage acute and chronic care health problems simultaneously in the same individual
- Promote health and well-being by applying health promotion and disease prevention strategies appropriately
- Recognise that GPs have a responsibility not to medicalise normality

5. Community Orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. As a GP you should be able to:

- Reconcile the health needs of individual patients and the health needs of the community in which they live, balanced with available resources
- Recognise the responsibility to maintain their own skills

6. Holistic Approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. As a GP you should be able to:

- Use a bio-psycho-social model taking into account cultural and spiritual dimensions
- Recognise the role of social, cultural, ethical, religious and family background in the determination of health
- Maintain and nurture your own physical and mental well-being which leads to better patient care (recognising limitations and professional boundaries and the need to seek help when appropriate)

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about your personal context and the environment in which you work; this influences what you can achieve and what you should achieve. Contextual aspects include your working conditions per se, the team in which you work, your co-workers and other health professionals.

The context of the person, the family, the community and their culture in which the definition is applied. In the Irish situation the context of inter-current changes in demographics and manpower needs is particularly relevant. This reality is always present and, because of its impact on your daily practice, must be recognised and managed. The following are listed as possible examples of contextual aspects of your work as a doctor.

- How suitable are the premises in which you work?
- Is your practice fully staffed?
- Are these staff permanent or temporary?
- How does your workload compare to national and local norms?
- What is the ethnic background of your patients, and do you understand how this may impact on their needs and wants?
- Are you being paid fairly for the work you do?
- Is your home life stable and supportive?

(This list is not exhaustive and your list is personal, and will be different)

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

As a GP you should aim at understanding and learning to use your own attitudes, strengths and weaknesses, values and beliefs in a partnership with your individual patients. This requires a reflective approach and the development of insight and an awareness of self. Being honest and realistic about your own abilities (strengths and weaknesses) and priorities will help you in dealing with your patients and their problems. Your own values, attitudes, and feelings are important determinants of how you practice medicine.

9. Scientific

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through continuing professional development and lifelong learning.

General practice should be as much as possible based on scientific evidence. Using experience in the management of your patients remains very important, but should wherever possible be supported by best practice from medical literature. As a GP you should be able to search, collect, understand and interpret scientific research critically and use evidence as much as possible. Reflecting and critically appraising your experience in practice should become an attitude that is maintained during your lifetime of practice.

Where will the learning take place?

The majority of your learning for general practice will occur in the workplace, both in general practice itself and in your hospital placements. A key element of professional behaviour requires you to reflect actively on your experiences and incorporate your learning into your daily work with your patients³ There will also be opportunities for you to learn outside the workplace, through planned educational activities with other healthcare professionals and during formal teaching sessions.

As a GP specialty trainee, your training scheme will provide you with unique insights both into the ways in which your patients and their problems are managed in general practice and in the hospital, and into the interface between these care environments. It will also give you a deep understanding of the meaning of the patient pathway and your role in helping your patient to negotiate this.⁴

As an adult learner you will have your own distinct learning style and preferences. These will influence how you make use of the learning opportunities during your training day and beyond, into your lifelong learning as a general practitioner.

Attachments in the hospitals can provide you with a concentration of clinical experience allowing you to manage patients from point of entry to discharge. It will show you the differences between the primary and secondary care sector. You will appreciate the role of working in teams and managing patient care and you will be able to compare different approaches between the two working environments.

Throughout your training, it is essential to take the time to reflect on your practice. This includes developing a clear understanding of what has been learned and how it can be applied effectively to a general practice setting.

Work-based learning

In your training practice the patient contacts that you make while working there will provide you with the foundation for your development as a generalist medical

practitioner. Initially, you will work closely with your trainer when consulting with patients. As you gain in competence, you will work more independently with less direct supervision. Being observed, receiving structured feedback and reflecting on your work while providing care for patients, both in the surgery and in their own homes, are fundamental features of workplace-based learning.

In addition, you will have structured teaching sessions with your trainer, tailored to your learning needs. You will be able to gain an understanding of how your practice functions looking after the needs of its patients and local community. You will get the opportunity to carry out 360 degree appraisals, significant event analysis and critical incident reporting with your Trainer to recognise and meet your learning needs.

Self-directed learning

You are a self-directed adult learner and self-directed study is an important part of your development as a GP. Examples of this are reading around a topic, reflecting on your experiences, searching for evidence, or preparing for an assessment or facilitating a teaching session. There are many online resources such as forum, BMJ learning and ICGP e-learning modules, which cover many of the outcomes in the ICGP curriculum. You will need to keep reflecting on areas not only of interest but also areas that you may not have experience in before as your training as a GP advances to help you identify new learning needs.

Learning the roles of other health care workers in the primary care team offers you a better insight into the valuable work they contribute to general practice. This may mean a visit to your local primary care centre or health clinic. Direct contact with pharmacist and specialist nurses managing chronic diseases can provide a valuable learning experience. Understanding the interface between the community and your practice and the hospital and the community is key to the running of general practice. Closer to home the roles of the practice managers, receptionists and practice staff can't be underestimated as key decisions on prioritising patients and their needs are made every day and are important to understand.

Finally there may be opportunities for you to join other healthcare professionals in joint educational events, learning together through in-house or local-based programmes. Small group discussion, Ballint groups, Reflective portfolios and more specific collaborative work with LARC training and Procedural skills.

After CSCST and becoming an independent GP does not mean that your learning stops. Rather, it is the beginning of a process of lifelong learning – not only to keep abreast of medical developments but also to improve in your application of the knowledge and skills that you learnt during your formal training. Your learning needs will differ at different stages of your career and you need to be able to continuously review, identify and meet those needs. By linking in with ICGP CME network can help address ongoing learning needs.

Web resources

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21727179#

www.icgp.ie/go/in_the_practice/doctors_health

www.icgp.ie/go/pes

www.nice.org.uk

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Introduction

Communication can be seen as the main ingredient in medical care. It is clear from the literature that better physician communication skills improve patient satisfaction and clinical outcomes and that good communication skills can be taught and learned. It is important that physicians learn the principles of good physician-patient communication and apply them in clinical practice.¹

Consulting and communication skills are often used interchangeably, but effective communication skills, while essential, are only a subset of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to consult effectively. Within the consultation your patients rely on your skills as a doctor not only to identify any significant illness, but also more frequently its probable absence.

The aim is to achieve more effective consultations with respect to accuracy and common ground, efficiency, supportiveness, collaboration, and reduced conflicts and complaints. The prize is improved outcomes in terms of patient and physician satisfaction, understanding and recall, adherence to treatment plans, symptom relief, and physiological outcomes.²

Physical examination and investigations should be appropriate, timely and should follow the best available evidence. As a GP, one of the most effective tools at your disposal is the use of time, watching and waiting when it is safe to do so, and also using the continuity of contact with individual patients and their families. The long-term relationship between you and your patient acts as a repository for mutual trust and understanding, which enables high-quality care.



Case vignette

Isabel a 30 year old single mother of one presents to your surgery on a Monday morning. She says that she has been feeling nauseous over the past few days and has been very bloated. Her main reason for coming is to get a note for work as she has just started a new job and she doesn't want any trouble with her new boss for taking a sick day. She tells you how hard it has been in finding work and getting childcare sorted for her 2 year old. On further questioning she reveals that her period is late but she was told that could happen as she took the morning after pill 3 weeks ago. She gives you a urine sample to check. The urine dipstick is negative but her HCG test shows a positive result.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What process might you put in place in the practice to make sure that this news of a positive pregnancy test is delivered in a sensitive way?
- How might you deliver this news to the patient?

Person-centred care

- What words would you use that would be sensitive and articulate your advice in a manner commensurate to her level of understanding?

How might you be empathic?

- How will you manage the balance between delivering the difficult news and making sure her physical wellbeing has also been attended to?
- What other safety nets could you use to help this communication?
- How might you know if she understands your advice?

Specific problem solving skills

- What are the more specific/focused questions that you need to ask to her?
- Could there be any other reason for a positive pregnancy test?
- How much information can you give her regarding the options that are available to her?

Community orientation

- How might you discuss her job and the implications of being pregnant and working?

Comprehensive approach

- What local services are in place for early scanning/ antenatal care for mothers?
- What community resources are available for single mothers?
- What grants/ social welfare allowances are available?

Holistic approach

- How would you advise the patient when they are conflicted as to the options they may have?

Context

- How could this consultation differ if you were living in a rural v's urban area?
- How might this consultation differ if you were working outside the republic of Ireland?

Attitudes

- How do you reconcile your own attitudes if a patient would prefer to discontinue a pregnancy

Science

- How can you keep up to date with the legislation and best practice in this area?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the competencies needed from communication in the consultation. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should;

- Understand the common models of the consultation that have been proposed and how you can use these models to reflect on previous consultations in order to shape your future consulting behaviour
- Adapt communication skills to meet the needs of the patient, including working with interpreters to deal with patients from diverse backgrounds
- Demonstrate focused questioning and examination to obtain sufficient relevant information to diagnose, manage and refer appropriately
- Recognise that consultations where three people are present (three-way consultations) require particular skills, for example, checking that the patient consents to having another person present, addressing the patient's needs while maintaining dignity and confidentiality,
- Demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the breadth of scientific evidence in order to provide the best information for patients about their illness
- Recognise the roles of health care professionals and draw on this expertise appropriately.
- Keep accurate, legible and contemporaneous records.

2. Person centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should;

- Recognise that patients are diverse: that their behaviour and attitudes vary as individuals and with age, gender, ethnicity and social background, and that you should not discriminate against people because of those differences
- Explore the patient's health understanding and to be aware of the range of values that may influence your patient's behaviour or decision-making in relation to his or her illness.
- Respond flexibly to the needs and expectations of different individuals
- Respond to signals (cues) that lead to a deeper understanding of the problem
- Explain the problem or diagnosis in appropriate language and share any information with patients in an honest and unbiased manner.
- Allow the patient the opportunity to be involved in significant management decisions
- Negotiate a shared understanding of the problem and its management with patients, so that they are empowered to look after their own health
- Achieve meaningful consent to a plan of management by seeing the patient as a unique person in a unique context
- Specify the conditions and interval for follow-up or review.

- Apply ethical guidance on consent and confidentiality to the particular context of an individual patient
- Demonstrate how to use the computer in the consultation while maintaining rapport with your patient
- Apply the law relating to making decisions for people who lack capacity to the particular context of an individual patient
- Understand the importance of continuity of care and long-term relationships with your patient and their family in identifying and understanding the values that influence a patient's approach to healthcare

3. Specific problem solving skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should;

- Formulate appropriate diagnoses, rule out serious illness and manage clinical uncertainty
- Base treatment and referral decisions on the best available evidence
- Make timely and appropriate referrals, using relevant information
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate risks and benefits in a way that is meaningful to patients
- Demonstrate the skills to offer patients health choices based on evidence so that an informed discussion can occur, taking into account patients' values and priorities
- Demonstrate the ability to suggest speaking to the patient alone where this is appropriate and you feel it is in the patient's best interest.
- Recognise that the order in which people present their problems may not be related to their clinical importance.

4. A comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Demonstrate the use of available healthcare resources in a prudent manner, balancing individual patient needs with fairness to other patients
- Manage the potential conflicts between personal health needs, evidence-based practice and public health responsibilities
- Recognise that socio-economic deprivation is a major cause of ill health
- Understand how the values and beliefs prevalent in the local culture impact on patient care
- Understand how ethnic and cultural diversity of your practice population impact on the range and presentation of illness in the individual consultation

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should;

- Be able to explain the concepts of ethnicity and culture
- Include the cultural values and circumstances of your patient in the consultation
- Understand the process by which patients decide to consult, and how this can affect consulting outcomes
- Understand that consultations have a clinical, a psychological and a social component, with the relevance of each component varying from consultation to consultation (the 'bio/psycho/social model')
- Recognise that episodes of illness usually affect more than merely the patient
- Understand the relationship between the interests of patients and the interests of their carers

6. Holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Negotiate whether and how relatives, friends and carers might become involved, while balancing your patient's right to confidentiality
- Understand that your patient's views and perspectives may change during the course of a chronic disease
- Recognise that emotions such as fear or embarrassment may influence a person's behaviour during the consultation and may impair their ability to absorb information.
- Accept that patients may wish to make their own choices on the basis of their own values and not necessarily on the basis of clinical efficiency or resource implications
- Accept that patients may prefer to delegate their autonomy to you as their GP, rather than accept this responsibility themselves

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks. A GP should:

- Recognize how consultations conducted via remote media (telephone and email) differ from face-to-face consultations and be able to demonstrate skills that can compensate for these differences
- Understand their inter professional boundaries with regard to clinical responsibility and confidentiality
- Demonstrate knowledge of local referral pathways and services to ensure appropriate and efficient provision of care
- Understand how the social context of primary care frames the identification and resolution of ethical issues by general practitioners

8. Attitudinal features

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care. A GP should:

- Recognise the role and responsibility you have to patients
- Demonstrate awareness of your limits of knowledge, skills and expertise.
- Manage your own personal emotions arising from the consultation and how personal emotions, lifestyle and ill-health can affect your consultation performance and the doctor–patient relationship
- Understand that attitudes, feelings and values are important determinants of how you practice
- Demonstrate a non-judgmental approach, treating your colleagues, patients, carers and others equitably and with respect
- Clarify people's beliefs and preferences in clinical and everyday working
- Recognise and take action to address discrimination and oppression by yourself and others
- Challenge behaviour that infringes the rights of others
- Reflect on how particular clinical decisions have been informed by ethical concepts and values. E.G consent and confidentiality.

9. Scientific features

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work and maintaining this through lifelong learning. A GP should:

- Understand the principles of evidence-based practice and how you can apply these principles.
- Demonstrate an awareness that a combination of evidence-based treatments is not always evidence-based in itself. Interactions between single interventions may increase or decrease efficacy
- Explore patient values and placing them in context with clinical evidence, so that you can develop an appropriate shared-management plan
- Demonstrate an awareness of your own attitudes, values, professional capabilities and ethics so that, through the process of reflection you are not overwhelmed by personal issues and gaps in your knowledge.
- Undertake self-appraisal through such things as learning needs assessments, reflective logs and video recordings of consultations.

Where will the learning take place?

- Secondary Care:
 - Communication at the bedside
 - Communication in OPD/Clinics
- Primary Care:
 - Communication through role play, videos at day release
 - Communication with patients and direct observation by trainer/ video's.
 - Consultation models and their use in different contexts.



Web resources

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- www.gp-training.net/training/.../consultation/consultation_theory.htm
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Books

- Neighbour R. The Inner Consultation: How to Develop an Effective and Intuitive Consulting
- Style (2nd edn) Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing, 2004
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Introduction

At present the management infrastructure of each Irish General Practice is determined by the individual practice. There are no Health Service Executive (HSE) staff employed in this regard, but partial funding is available if a practice meets required criteria. Thus for the majority of GPs, their career will at some point lead them to the role of business owner, employer and manager of a small to medium size commercial entity.

More than 90% of Irish GP trainees¹, see themselves in group practices wherein one individual usually takes the business lead or 'Managing Partner' role. Whether a GP holds such a role or not, a comprehensive understanding is important to empower you in making prudent career related decisions. This learning remains a critical element to the success of each practice. All managers need managing and an over reliance on external or internal managing partners comes with hazards.

Whilst it is not necessary to be expert in every element of Practice Management, it is essential that GPs who take on the role of the business owner and employer understand the role, the obligations that it carries and the important elements that must be managed to run a successful business. General Practitioners not taking on these roles will still benefit from a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. It affords them the opportunity to optimise their clinical care provision within the capacity of the business infrastructure upon which that care is provided.

Leadership and innovation in primary care development is a key education area for GPs hoping to mould their future professional role. For GPs to be active in this area, it is important to understand the various roles of our primary care colleagues. This raises the issue of inter disciplinary learning and collaboration. Practice management is a foundation stone for the application of our clinical practice. All elements of our curriculum will be touched in some way by an element of practice management and is therefore recognised within our curriculum as a foundation chapter.

Business management is a wide and varied topic. As it applies to General Practice it can be summarised into a number of different topics, which cover significant elements of practice management but do not cover all aspects of the running of a successful General Practice.



Case vignette

Dr Bradley is a 35yr old, father of two working as GP principal in a four person group practice and holds a GMS contract. There has been a recent extension of eligibility for GMS Services to patients of a certain age and he is worried about the impact of this on the practice.

The practice is already struggling to cope because of staff issues with long-term sickness leave, maternity leave and a request for extended unpaid leave over

coming summer months. There are also unresolved issues around allegations of bullying and harassment among staff.

As Dr Bradley considers his options, evidence of stealing by one staff member emerges. He prepares a business plan with his partners and he realises they must borrow money to develop the services needed. Dr Bradley is concerned as he is aware that one of his partners invested heavily in the existing practice premises in previous years and is struggling to remain tax compliant.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What does Dr Bradley need to do to achieve good standards and patient outcomes for his patients?
- How might he look at ways of maximizing the practice income?
- How might you identify when practice income is not being maximized and how would you cost a practice development plan?

Person-centred care

- What ways does your practice encourage patient centredness?
- How would you advise Dr Bradley to manage his current staff problems?
- What do you think might motivate Dr Bradley to take these actions?

Specific problem-solving skills

- How could the issues of potential practice expansion and recruitment of staff effect his practice?
- Does Dr Bradley have the required knowledge to comprehensively analyse the practice situation before him?
- How might he develop skills or use resources appropriately to manage his staff?

A comprehensive approach

- How can Dr Bradley address health promotion and disease prevention for the patients in his practice?
- How might you consider self- care in this scenario?
- What is the impact of stress on patient care?

Community orientation

- What knowledge of the healthcare services does Dr Bradley need to be able to bring about these changes?
- If Dr Bradley does not go ahead with the proposed development and feels he must go elsewhere for career opportunity, how does this impact upon the community he leaves?

A holistic approach

- If Dr Bradley was working with your own practice population, what issues might arise in relation to culture, ethnicity and socio-economic groups?

Contextual features

- What is the likely impact on practice resources of Dr Bradley's actions?

Attitudinal features

- What personal qualities may help Dr Bradley achieve optimal results?

Scientific features

- How could Dr Bradley use data to drive quality improvement and change and potentially offer a better outcome for the practice and his patients?



This is a chapter which explores in greater detail particular aspects of your work as a GP. In order to demonstrate the core competences you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should be able to:

- Coordinate care with other professionals in primary care, and with other specialists
- Describe the roles of all members of the primary care/practice team
- Demonstrate the ability to coordinate a team-based approach to the care of patients
- Demonstrate the ability to be an effective member and leader of a team
- Understand the role of team dynamics in the functioning of a practice/ team.
- Describe strategies for effective communication within the practice.
- Evaluate your own preference for a role within teams and in interaction with others.
- Describe the management structure of the practice, how decisions are made and how responsibilities are distributed
- Understand how the practice functions as a business and the implications various activities and expenses have for profitability
- Understand primary care in the context of the wider health care system in Ireland.
- Critically appraise the organisational systems of the practice
- Delegate tasks effectively
- Understand and participate in the motivation of staff
- Contribute to staff development and training
- Produce job descriptions for members of the practice staff.

- Complete performance assessments for members of the practice staff.
- Produce confidentiality agreements for members of the practice staff.
- Have knowledge of grants and allowances available in practice, e.g. rural practice allowance, grants for practice manager or practice nurse.
- Organise planned care for specific populations (e.g. people with chronic conditions) through use of registers, recall and reminder systems.
- Delegate administrative aspects of planned care to appropriately trained administrative staff.
- Participate in the recruitment and selection of staff or colleagues in accordance to the law relating to equal opportunities
- Successfully manage a research project/audit/quality initiative project.
- Understand the responsibilities as an employer or co-worker in looking after the occupational safety of their staff.
- Understand the process of, and factors that influence change.

2. Person-centred care

When involved in management GP's are acting as an advocate for patients and their families. The GP should take into account patient preferences and expectations. A GP should be able to:

- Encourage patient involvement in their health and provide information on patient support groups.
- Act as an advocate for the patient which includes negotiating effectively with colleagues on behalf of them and provide appropriate choices for patients in relation to their future healthcare.
- Maintain a patient-focus in practice in the midst of structural and political change.
- Be aware of the expectations that patients, carers and families have of their practice and local primary care services
- Involve patients in the management of the local primary care services
- Be aware of the importance of confidentiality for all team members in general practice Demonstrate appropriate communication skills when dealing with team members both within and outside the practice
- Accept and acknowledge the role of the GP in complaints management

3. Specific problem-solving skills

The GP requires appropriate knowledge and skills to be able to participate in the management of the practice and local health services. A GP should be able to:

- Understand the duties, rights and responsibilities of the doctor as employer and the fundamentals of employment law as it applies to general practice
- Describe the methods needed to assist in effective time management to include appointment systems, home visits, emergencies and out-of-hours cover
- Outline the principles of best practice in budget management, to include taxation and financial control within the legislative frameworks governing revenue compliance

- Outline what needs to be included in a business plan to include financial management/analysis, basic information management/planning and systems organisation
- Describe the various means by which GPs are contracted and the key features of contractual agreements
- Describe the various methods to assist in effective time management to include appointment systems, home visits, emergencies and out-of-hours cover
- Identify sources of income for the practice
- Define the role of the GP in the management of patients in nursing homes
- Construct a practice health and safety statement²

4. A comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should be able to:

- Discuss the important role as a GP working with other practice team members and other members of the primary healthcare team to develop appropriate systems for delivering healthcare e.g. chronic disease management.
- Understand the role of the GP in the organisational aspect of general practice in out of hours care, nationally and at local level.

5. Community care

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should be able to:

- Understand the individual's needs, the GP's needs and the practice's needs and reconcile these with the needs of the wider health economy
- Demonstrate knowledge of the structure of the local healthcare system and its economic limitations
- Understand the variety of ways in which healthcare and health promotion may be appropriately delivered in the community.
- Understand the impact of the practice on the local business community.
- Understand the contribution of the private sector in healthcare delivery

6. Holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should be able to:

- Recognise the positive benefits of involving patients in their care and in the systems of healthcare provision and quality improvement.

- Describe how to foster a practice culture that respects diversity
- Describe how to tailor practice services to the cultural needs of specific individuals and populations
- Understand the broad knowledge base that GPs with management input require
- Demonstrate knowledge of employment legislation, taxation, accountancy and business finance

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual aspects

Understanding the context of doctors themselves and the environment in which they work, including their working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks. A GP should be able to:

- Understand the impact of the local community, including socio-economic factors, geography and culture, on the workplace and patient care
- Know how the health service is organised locally and nationally, and how variation in resources can impact provision of care

8. Attitudinal aspects

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care. A GP should be able to:

- Be aware of the relevant issues concerning entry into general practice, including negotiation to entry into partnership arrangements, locum work, or assistantships
- Identify triggers for and manage change within the business of general practice
- Identify ethical aspects relating to management and leadership in primary health care, e.g. approaches to use of resources/rationing, approaches to involving the public and patients in decision-making
- Be self-aware: an understanding that your own attitudes and feelings are important determinants of how you manage and lead
- Take appropriate action when faced with staff or colleagues who act unprofessionally or irresponsibly
- Take personal responsibility and holding oneself accountable

9. Scientific aspects

This essential feature is about adopting a critical and research-based approach to practice and maintaining this through continuing learning. A GP should be able to:

- Understand the process of change and factors that influence it, and using resources for obtaining support in developing and leading change
- Understand key national guidelines that influence healthcare provision in the locality and country in which you work
- Demonstrate knowledge of coding systems in current use for effective recording and audit
- Use call and recall systems within general practice
- Demonstrate the skill to research and audit services in general practice, eg framing a research question, methodology, literature review, critical analysis, accurate conclusion
- Identify critical incidents and managing risk to include development of protocols and procedures
- Utilise web-based information systems in patient care and the ability to search the internet for medical and scientific information
- Demonstrate the ability to improve the quality of health care delivered to patients by the practice

Where might the learning take place?

- Work-based learning – in primary care
- Practice team meetings
- Structuring tutorials: Finance, prescribing, referral management, service development
- Pharmacy
- Primary care centers; nurses, physiotherapy, chiropody
- Work based learning- secondary care
- Value of teams
- Journey of patient from primary to secondary care and back again



Web resources

- <http://www.practicemanager.ie/>
- www.dohc.ie
- www.hia.ie
- www.HSE.ie (under 6 contracts and over 70's)
- www.icgp.ie/toolkit
- www.hpsc.ie
- <https://www.BeSMART.hsa.ie>



HIQA Safer Better Healthcare Standards Guidance eResource

COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

This tool outlines some of the key pieces of employment legislation. It provides a brief summary of each Act. Please note information contained in this list is subject to change

Employment Legislation that an employer needs to comply with:

1. Industrial Relations Act
2. Terms Of Employment Act
3. Minimum Notice Act
4. Payment Of Wages Act
5. National Minimum Wage Act
6. Organisation Of Working Time Act (Breaks)
7. Worker Protection Act
8. Protection Of Young Persons
9. Protection Of Employment Act
10. Unfair Dismissal Act
11. Redundancy Payment Act
12. Employment Agency Act
13. Employment Equality Act
14. FOI
15. Data Protection
16. Maternity Protection
17. Adoptive
18. Carer
19. Parental Leave
20. Health And Safety

Note that fines (between €1200 – 3 Million) and legal proceedings could apply should an employer be in breach of the Act. Failure to apply or abide by the legislation.

Organisation of Working Time Act: Lays down the minimum health and safety requirements around the organisation of working time, provides for minimum daily rest periods, maximum length of working week and minimum holiday entitlements.

Protection of Young Persons Act: Provides protection to all employees up to age 18. 1 year, as offences must be brought within 12 months of the date of the offence.

National Minimum Wage Act: Provides legislative framework for national minimum hourly rate of pay for all employees.

Minimum Notice & Terms of Employment Act: Sets out required minimum periods of notice for terminating a contract of employment. 1 year as offences must be brought within 12 months of the date of the offence. Varies ranging from 1-6 weeks remuneration.

Terms of Employment (Information) Act: Lays down the minimum information requirements that an employer must provide to an employee in a written statement. A copy of the written statement must be held for the duration of the employee's employment and for 1 year thereafter.

Payment of Wages Act: Regulates the payment of wages. 1 year as complaints may be presented within 6 months from the date of an unlawful deduction of payment, this may be extended by up to a further 6 months in exceptional circumstances

Data Protection Act: Lay down minimum standards for the collection, processing, storage, use and disclosure of personal information on computer.

Electronic Commerce Act: Provides that electronic information, contracts and signatures have the same legal recognition as paper based transactions.

Employment Equality Act: Promotes equality in the workplace and makes provision in relation to harassment and discrimination in the workplace. Equality Officer authorised under the Act to inspect an

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Legislation

- [Health and Safety Act 2005](#)
- [Maternity Protection Act 1994, 2001 2005](#)
- [Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act 1973, 1991](#)
- [National Minimum Wage Act 2000](#)
- Organisation of Working Time Act 1997
- Parental Leave Act 1998
- Payment of Wages Act 1991
- Protection of Employees (Part Time Work Act) 2001
- Redundancy Payments Act 1976-2001
- Terms Of Employment (Information) Act 1994, 2001
Work Permits and Migrant Workers
- Adoptive Leave Act 1995
- [Carers Leave Act 2001 \[S\]](#)
- [Data Protection Act 1988-2003](#)
- [Employment Equality Act 1998-2004](#)
- [Freedom of Information Act 1997-2003](#)

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2. <https://www.besmart.ie/>

Introduction

The purpose of the ICGP is to improve the quality of healthcare by upholding the highest standards for general practice, the promotion of the best health outcomes for patients and the public and to support GPs while promoting general practice as the heart and the hub of our health services.

As a GP you are in a strong position to influence your own care of patients, that of your practice and that of the wider healthcare community.

Understanding how and when to apply tools and methods to improve the quality of care is a key skill that can, and should, be learned during your training, and enhanced in lifelong learning and continuous professional development.

How we learn from and share lessons regarding quality improvement in general practice care is an important marker of our personal and collective professional development.

Working in partnership with your patients and understanding their needs is vital to improving health care. Patients, their families and carers have an important role in the assessment of health care; their views are therefore essential for the development of high-quality health care. Patients should be actively involved in planning their care and in the development of services.



Case vignette

The following case illustrates how the quality and safety curriculum applies to general practice:

Mary works as a cleaner in the local factory and is aged 47 years. She attends frequently with her 10 year old son who has numerous medical problems and challenging behaviour. At the end of a particularly long consultation with her son, she requests a prescription for pain-killers for back pain.

Over the next few months, the prescription is re-issued by different doctors in the practice. On one occasion, she is referred to the local A/E department because her back-pain is particularly severe. The hand-written discharge letter from A/E notes a marginally reduced Hb.

Three months after the initial presentation, Mary's husband requests an urgent house call as his wife is feeling weak and unwell and fainted earlier that morning. You visit, to find Mary pale and hypotensive, and send her urgently to the local A&E.

Following the house call to Mary, you attend a practice meeting at lunch-time. Among the items for consideration at the meeting is a recent correspondence from HSE about patterns of prescribing of benzodiazepines, including data comparing practice patterns to national averages. A recent letter of complaint from a patient is also on the agenda.

After the practice meeting you contact the hospital and learn that Mary died shortly after arrival there, from a presumed upper GI bleed.

You are due to go on holidays that evening...

Some months later you receive a letter from the Medical Council indicating that you will be subject to a Fitness to Practice Inquiry.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What are the systems and processes that a practice puts in place to ensure requests for repeat prescriptions are handled safely and effectively?
- What are the systems and processes that a practice needs to put in place to ensure that hospital discharge letters are dealt with safely and effectively?

Person-centred care

- What are the particular issues do you need to consider when a patient requests medication? How would you share decision-making with the patient?
- Cost implications for patient: Barriers to pt health seeking behaviour.

Specific problem-solving skills

- How would I use clinical audit and the team-based use of significant event audit to identify the issues in this situation?
- What tools could I use to monitor improvement in the practice once agreed changes have occurred?

A comprehensive approach

- How can I manage the clinical risk issues of blood results and other correspondence?

Community orientation

- How might I predict and meet the needs of patients who present infrequently and ensure their follow-up?
- How might the practice look at opiate/ codeine prescribing patterns and their impact on the local community?
- After reviewing benzodiazepine prescribing, it emerges that the prescribing behavior of one doctor was questionable. What are your responsibilities in this situation?

A holistic approach

- Duty of care....
- After Mary's death what is your duty to her?
- After Mary's death what is your duty to her family
- After Mary's death what is your duty to the practice?
- After Mary's death what is your duty to yourself?

Contextual features

- How might organisational and contextual factors e.g. seeing extra patients at the end of a long consultation, impact upon clinical care?

Attitudinal features

- How would your approach change if, on reviewing the situation, other doctors in the practice felt there was no need to modify practice systems and processes?
- How might your approach to frequent attenders and, those whose behaviour you find difficult, affect the thoroughness with which you carry out the consultation?

Scientific features

- How might different approaches to appointment system management predict that a vulnerable time for patients and doctors might occur?
- How do general practitioners reach diagnosis and where is error is likely to occur in this process?
- What evidence of good practice would you be able to furnish for consideration at a Fitness to Practice hearing?



In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary Care Management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should

- Demonstrate effective recording of clinical encounters with patients
- Demonstrate an understanding of the connection between good data entry and improved patient health outcomes
- Demonstrate use of a call/recall system within the practice to the benefit of patient care
- Demonstrate the use of the practice computer system to improve the quality and usefulness of the medical record e.g. through audit
- Recognise the difference between an effective handover of clinical care between health professionals from an ineffective handover

2. Person-Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should be able to

- Describe factors (doctor factors / patient factors / system factors that might facilitate or impede the patient-doctor communication
- Identify factors that may contribute to distracting the GP during patient care tasks
- Describe elements of situational awareness theory (MPS)
- Describe and Implement elements of shared decision-making with patients
- Analyse the different ways of gaining feedback from patients in the general practice setting
- Discuss occasions when a patient might positively contribute to maintaining the safety of their care
- Demonstrate ability to communicate openly, listen and take patient's concerns seriously
- Demonstrate ways of gaining feedback from patients in the general practice setting
- Recognise the issues involved in disclosing and discussing an adverse event with patients
- Show how the magnitude, likelihood and impact of risk can be explained to patients with poor literacy skills

3. Specific Problem-Solving

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of quality and safety in general practice, and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty and marginalise danger. A GP should be able to

- List common factors that are causes of error in medical practice
- Describe common forms of harm to patients in medical practice
- Outline the difference between a 'person based' and a 'systems based' approach to patient safety
- Compose effective ways to manage complaints by patients
- Define a near miss and adverse event, and explain why the distinction between near misses and adverse events is important
- Describe use of safety-netting in general practice

4. A comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should be able to:

- Describe examples of a positive contribution to creating a 'safety culture' and their application to the current workplace
- Analyse the use of metrics such as Health and Safety Statements as tools for quality improvement

- Evaluate the quality improvement systems and processes within your current workplace setting
- Show how safeguards to patient safety operate within the systems of the practice
- Complete a structured and systematic analysis of the causes of a near miss or adverse event.
- Demonstrate effective strategies to raise concerns with a colleague about a lapse in safety.
- Recognise how to give constructive feedback on performance to other members of the team.
- Prioritise factors that would facilitate discussion of patient safety among practice team and among CME peers.

5. A Community Orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should be able to:

- Outline characteristics of effective practice based teams and primary care teams (if relevant)
- Outline strategies for quality improvement in general practice.
- Appraise the involvement of patients and carers in quality improvement processes”
- Evaluate the challenges in sharing of information within the practice, within the wider primary care team, between GP/hospital sectors.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the need for information recorded in the practice clinical system to be fit for sharing with different health professional in different organisations
- Demonstrate how to use information management and technology to share information and co-ordinate care with other health professionals
- Demonstrate how to use electronic booking systems to tailor healthcare provision to the needs of individual patients
- Demonstrate effective use of interagency systems such as pathology links and GP-GP transfer.
- Recognise the difference between effective leadership and the ability to take direction and work within teams when necessary.

6. A holistic Approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should be able to:

- Recognise the need to apologise and admit error for failings in delivery of care and communicate openly when error occurs.
- Recognise the need to tell patients and their families as soon as possible when incidents occur and do so fully, honestly and compassionately.
- Demonstrate learning from event by embedding any lessons learnt in the practice processes and systems.

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual Features

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Describe common causes of harm to patients in hospital and how this may differ from the general practice setting.
- Demonstrate familiarity with the Medical Council Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners”(ref)
- Describe your ethical duties in the event of an adverse outcome with reference to the Medical Council Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners(ref)
- Outline the concept of quality healthcare with reference to HIQA National Standards for Safer Better healthcare(Ref)
- Describe how to locate information about standards, clinical guidelines and databases
- Analyse the appropriate use of clinical guidelines and protocols
- Describe the symptoms of stress and fatigue and how these may impact on the workplace
- Describe relationship between Medical Council requirements for CPD and the role of ICGP in this process
- Describe the role of Patient Safety Directorate of HSE and its role in patient safety
- Describe principles of medicines management
- Describe how to report adverse drug reactions and clinically significant errors through appropriate national reporting system

8. Attitudinal Features

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Develop and maintain an approach to continuing learning and professional development
- Demonstrate understanding of principles of continuing professional development as outlined in *Medical Council Standards for Maintenance of Professional Competence* (ref)
- Demonstrate awareness of your own capabilities, values and ethics

9. Scientific Features

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Demonstrate awareness of national referral guidelines produced by HIQA
- Produce a quality improvement activity focused on improving practice processes.



Work-based learning...

In general practice

All trainees should complete an audit/re-audit cycle relating to patients in their training practice and actively contribute to practices' significant event audit meetings. Recognising this as an opportunity for reflection as well as possible celebration of good care is a particular feature of primary care.

The processes that occur during a consultation when a decision to refer is made, as well as the practical systems in place to achieve referral, should be explored. Reflection on cases that illustrate a delay in diagnosis can help in understanding the complex process of diagnosis.

Trainees should observe systems developed by each practice to manage repeat prescribing, hospital referral and other areas where there are significant risks. They should learn how to quantify risk in the two dimensions of probability and impact. The level of risk which is "tolerable" (risk appetite) in each situation should be defined.

It is important that the trainee observes, and is aware of, the varying levels of influence arising from the different roles of partner, sessional doctor and locum.

Trainees should observe the role of the patient in shared decision-making.

In secondary care

There should be opportunities to undertake clinical audit and critical event analysis and root cause analysis with hospital colleagues.

The primary/secondary care interface is especially vulnerable to patient safety incidents. Observing and understanding how different systems and processes influence this can be appreciated during a secondary care-based experience.

Non-work-based learning

There are many web-based sites that offer educational modules in patient safety and quality of care. Websites hosted by companies indemnifying medical professionals in particular are useful in this regard.

Learning with other healthcare professionals

Primary care teams are evolving along with opportunities for chronic disease management in the community and afford opportunities for collaborative working with allied health professionals.

Unscheduled care in the community is provided by a variety of different contractors including paramedics, emergency care practitioners, crisis mental health teams and insurance-sponsored walk-in centres. These provide opportunities for you to understand skill-mixing in healthcare and to compare and contrast the benefits and disadvantages of each option.

References

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3. Agency for Healthcare Research and Safety. Patient Safety Primers. <http://psnet.ahrq.gov/primerHome.aspx>
4. HIQA. National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare. <http://hiqa.ie/system/files/Safer-Better-Healthcare-Standards.pdf>
5. Medical Council
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7. Avoiding Errors in General Practice
8. MPS website
9. ICGP advice on eportfolio for CPD, including audit

Introduction

In 2001 the Department of Health and Children acknowledged 'the central role of general practice in the future development of modern health services' (*Primary care – a new direction*) General practice research enables GPs to contribute to their discipline and generate necessary improvements in patient care. Familiarity with the processes of conducting and appraising research are a pre-requisite for all GPs, as we strive to incorporate best evidence appropriately into clinical care. In addition, the increasing use of clinical audit as a means to quality improvement in general practice requires the application of strong research skills.

Mant (*UK Report on R&D in Primary Care, 1997*) has cited four reasons as to why active involvement in clinical research improves quality of care and the ease with which research evidence is disseminated and adopted:

- The actual process of conducting research has a direct impact on quality of care (e.g. control patients in clinical trials have better outcomes than usual care)
- Quality standards and audit protocols for service delivery often arise from clinical research
- Engagement in research and development promotes a self-critical professional culture
- In secondary care, patient outcomes are better in centres engaged in research and there is no reason why this should be different in general practice.

General practice research is needed to provide answers to the unique problems that arise in general practice (*Mant, Primary care R&D in Ireland, 2006*). Such problems include:

- Discovering how best to treat illness seldom seen in hospitals (e.g. otitis media, hay fever)
- Reviewing the evolution of symptoms before hospital admission to avoid diagnostic delay (e.g. meningitis, ovarian cancer)
- Determining how best chronic diseases can be managed in general practice, in collaboration with hospital services (e.g. type 2 diabetes, kidney disease).

In addition, research on the organisation and staffing of Irish primary care must be undertaken in Irish primary care.

All this will involve the input of GPs, members of primary care teams and their patients. The context of general practice is different from specialist and hospital contexts, especially regarding the holistic treatment of people with multimorbidities, the management of undifferentiated illness, and dealing with uncertainty. GPs have a leading role in posing clinically relevant research questions that incorporate the specific complexity of general practice, acknowledge the psychosocial dimensions of wellness, adopt a multidisciplinary approach and utilize multiple methodologies to provide patient-centred answers.

GPs may engage with research in general practice at multiple levels:

1. Reading, appraising, and integrating new evidence and guidelines into practice
2. Conducting practice based research including audit, significant event analysis, critical incident analysis, quality improvement

3. Supervising research by medical students, other undergraduate training in health care professions or GP trainees
4. Participating in academic or pharmaceutical company research projects, including facilitating and recruiting patients and monitoring for studies instigated by academic or pharmaceutical bodies
5. Conceptualising, designing, leading, conducting and publishing research to address gaps in the medical literature on health care in general practice.

The skills necessary to conduct high quality, clinically meaningful research are closely aligned with skills in teaching and reflective practice. They enable GPs to act as advocates for improvements in patient care in their local communities or nationally, and are fundamental to the continuance of general practice as an academic specialty.



Case vignette

An 8 year old girl attends your practice accompanied by her Mum. She reports three days of increasingly sore throat. On examination she is afebrile and her throat shows pustules on her tonsils. Mum is keen to avoid antibiotics if possible but is also worried about prolonged infection as her daughter is making her Communion next week.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- Where are my strengths and weakness in understanding the evidence base around antibiotic prescribing?
- How will I know if my patients will understand my explanation of no antibiotics needed in viral conditions?
- Are my prescribing patterns different for certain populations?
- Are my prescriptions given out more readily at certain times of the day or week?

Person-centred care

- What are the health inequalities that exist in my practice area and how has this impacted on the practice prescribing policies?
- In what ways could I improve both the way I consult and my skills in shared decision-making?
- How do I know if I communicate well enough with my staff and patients to foster improvements in the practice?
- How do I know if my patients have unmet needs from this consultation?
- How do I use medical evidence in a way that is patient-centred, and appropriate to their needs and preferences?

Specific problem solving skills

- What evidence base should I use to inform my prescribing?
- If I wanted to implement a change in my practice regarding antibiotics, how would I know what quality improvements to make?
- How do I measure my current prescribing practice?
- How would I measure changes in my practice?
- How would I identify the appropriate patient population?
- How do I incorporate the latest high quality evidence to my practice, to help diagnose and manage patients?

Community Orientation

- What does the research evidence tell us about antibiotic prescribing and the effect on health at a community level?
- Why is there a national variation in prescribing and what evidence-based factors may influence the care of my patients in my locality?
- What is the need for patient education? Are there specific groups within my community that need tailored education or approaches?
- How can we work with other primary care/community disciplines to improve prescribing?

Comprehensive approach

- How consistent are the approaches to prescribing at a practice level? How can consistency be improved, to better modify patients' expectations regarding antibiotics?
- How can we provide longitudinal care that will best facilitate patient satisfaction, high quality of care, and improvements in measures of prescribing?
- How accurate is our data recording, and how might it be improved?
- What data would be useful for me to capture on an on-going basis?

Holistic care

- What are the important psychosocial factors relating to antibiotic prescribing in my patients/my community?
- How can I identify the important psychosocial influences on patient demand for antibiotics?
- How can I address these factors within my practice/my consultations, to improve my prescribing?

Essential Features***Context***

- What are the features that influence my prescribing here in my practice?
- What resources are available to me to utilize the evidence base to improve my practice?

Attitudes

- What are my thoughts on changing my current practice or adopting change to improve my practice?
- What prejudices do I have regarding the evidence base/guideline recommendations?

Scientific

- How can I ensure that I maintain high quality, evidence-based practice?
- How do I stay abreast of updates in the evidence, relevant to my practice?
- How do I know that the information is the best available evidence to hand?
- What contributions can I make to improve the evidence base on prescribing antibiotics?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the competencies required in this subject. You will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should be able to:

- Use appropriate study designs to answer clinical questions or improve the quality of care in general practice
- Outline the essential components of the research process (e.g. developing a research question, identifying appropriate research methods, basic qualitative and quantitative analysis skills, appropriate data interpretation, writing up and disseminating research findings)
- Demonstrate adherence to ethical principles of consent and confidentiality when undertaking research or quality improvement activities
- Obtain approval from appropriate human research ethics committees for research activities where necessary
- Understand the difference between pharmaceutical interventions and complex/behavioural interventions
- Understand the complex processes involved in implementing change in practice.

2. Person Centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should be able to:

- Communicate the evidence for management, diagnosis or screening to patients in a manner that is both understandable to the patient and is patient-centred

- Involve the patient in the decision making process about their health and acknowledge the informed patient's right to choose to accept or decline new interventions based on research evidence
- Recognise that some patients may be involved in research or may want to be involved in research and, where appropriate, communicate and comply with the appropriate researchers
- Ensure that practice information systems highlight which patients are involved in research trials
- Ensure that vulnerable patients who may be involved with research trials are appropriately counselled and monitored appropriately
- Inform patients of their choices regarding research studies, and the research protocols regarding consent and confidentiality.

3. Specific Problem Solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should be able to:

- Compare and contrast different study methodologies:
 - Cross sectional
 - Cohort
 - Randomised trials
 - Meta-analyses
- Interpret results of research including:
 - confidence intervals for population means and proportions
 - p-value
 - absolute and relative risk
 - number needed to treat
- Understand the limitations and strengths of screening programmes including the criteria for what makes a good screening test
- Explain key metrics of screening:
 - Sensitivity and specificity
 - Likelihood ratios
 - Number needed to screen
 - Number needed to harm
- Describe when survival analyses are used and understand their interpretation
- Explain features of diagnostic tests (i.e. sensitivity, specificity, positive and negative predictive values) and defend their use in including and excluding diagnoses
- Interpret confounding and interaction in studies
- Identify sources of bias and confounding in clinical research, especially clinical trials
- Calculate incidence and prevalence of disease in a defined population.

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should be able to:

- Record patient data on clinical software systems in a way that enables quality improvement activities and research to be reliably conducted at a later date
- Use clinical software to retrieve data for quality improvement activities or research (e.g. performing a database search)
- Evaluate professional performance in clinical and non-clinical areas, using appropriate research methods (e.g. clinical audit, needs analysis, significant event analysis, and critical incident analysis)
- Use appropriate methods to implement and evaluate change in clinical and non-clinical practice (both individually and with peers and within primary care teams)
- Describe and analyse the harm caused by system errors and failure
- Recognise and manage adverse events and near misses
- Plan quality improvement initiatives in your practice
- Understand that most clinical interventions in general practice are complex and require the use of multiple or mixed research methods to evaluate them (i.e. quantitative (what?/how much?) and qualitative methods (why?/how?/who?)).

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Understand that much clinical research is conducted in secondary care settings; the studies and the results may not be applicable in general practice
- Judge relevance, applicability and validity of research findings to your own practice
- Apply the principles underlying generalizability of research evidence when using evidence about screening, diagnosis and treatment in the management of individual patients
- Demonstrate skills in applying research evidence from clinical trials to individual patients within their unique context and comorbidities
- Where indicated, demonstrate an ability to disseminate the results of research, or critical evaluation/literature review to peers or other health professionals
- When you are asked for your expert opinion, take care to ensure this is evidence based, and be clear when you are stating an opinion based on experience rather than evidence.

6. Holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should:

- Identify and formulate research questions as they arise in clinical practice
- Use reflective skills to generate important research questions for the benefit of oneself and other practitioners
- Describe and understand the differences between qualitative research, observational research and trials/intervention studies in general practice
- Consider psychosocial dimensions to care when formulating research questions and quality improvement plans.

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care with patients. A GP should:

- Demonstrate sound skills in evidence gathering (e.g. where to find resources, how to search databases, internet searching skills)
- Demonstrate skills in literature searching including the use of PubMed and Cochrane databases
- Outline the hierarchies of evidence available for clinical decision making including systematic reviews, trials, and observational studies
- Use the range of resources and supports available from ICGP, university departments, and hospital libraries to support your evidence-based practice
- Appreciate the importance of appropriately seeking research expertise from others when necessary.

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care. A GP should:

- Include a non-judgmental evidence-based approach to problem-solving, taking into account your patients' values
- Examine your own attitudes, values, professional capabilities and ethics so that, through the process of reflective and critical appraisal, you are not overwhelmed by personal issues and gaps in knowledge
- Judge the value of incentives and interventions, and be able to recognise where conflicts of interest may occur in clinical practice and in research

- Outline how research funding and publication bias can influence the evidence base of clinical practice
- Demonstrate awareness of external influences on one's knowledge, how different sources bring their own biases to the information they present (e.g. Pharmaceutical companies, media), and how to critically evaluate these influences.

9. Scientific

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning. A GP should:

- Demonstrate the use of clinical guidelines and recent evidence to guide patient care decisions
- Examine new research/guidelines for validity and reliability using published appraisal tools (i.e. CASP tools) for systematic reviews, RCTs, and observational studies
- Critique the validity and generalizability of new research
- Evaluate the role of new research in your practice, after applying appraisal skills to the papers
- Evaluate the cost-benefit of new interventions for individual patients (financial, time to wellness, return to work etc.)
- Apply new research to your practice in a systematic way.

Where will the learning take place?

Primary Care

Direct clinical contact will bring you many challenges in applying evidenced-based practice when faced with patients who prefer a more holistic approach to medicine and how it is delivered. Learning from contact with patients is a prerequisite for good practice. Although it will be difficult to follow a research, audit or QI project through all stages in the time currently allowed for training for general practice, all training practices will be users of research and opportunities such as the following may be available in practice:

- Discussion groups, often known as 'journal clubs'
- Case-based discussions with your trainer, often called 'debriefing'
- It is often possible to set up peer groups to discuss research evidence through a process of critical appraisal of published material.

Discussing educational interventions and methods encountered during the GP training programme may provide an opening for GP registrars to gain an interest in educational research.

The ICGP has a research webpage listing resources and forthcoming research events [<http://www.icgp.ie/go/research>].

Each university department has special research interests; these and contact details are listed on the ICGP research webpage. The Association of University Departments of General Practice in Ireland also have annual research meetings and career supports listed on their webpage.

Secondary Care

The principles of direct observation of clinical contact allow the learner to be fed back important messages around clinical management and there will be opportunities to learn skills and methods in a secondary care setting that could be applied back into primary care.

Personal Learning

- Personal learning and e-learning
- Feedback from teaching sessions
- Self-directed learning, reading journals, abstracts, reviews, editorials and teaching journals will provide you with many opportunities to learn and apply your knowledge as a GP.



Resources

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- The Cochrane database of systematic reviews
www.thecochranelibrary.com/view/o/index.html
- PubMed: freely available version of Medline from the National Library of Medicine
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed
- Evidence-base for Improving Patient Care
<http://www.icgp.ie/go/research/advice/FCoCE381-B848-E3EA-E402C932ECO2BgEB.html>

- HSCP research methodology guidebook
<http://www.icgp.ie/go/research/advice/01C9CB90-AEC4-407A-371B3697ADE8F21A.html>
- Health Well
<http://www.thehealthwell.info/>
- Health Intelligence
<http://www.healthintelligence.ie>
- ICGP Research Guide
<http://www.icgp.ie/go/research/advice/FC0900A1-930E-1E83-2E749E2EB3E66664.html>
- HRB Trial Methodology Research network
<https://www.hrb-tmrn.ie/upcoming-events/>

Introduction

Cardiovascular problems are an important cause of morbidity and mortality. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) remains the leading cause of premature death worldwide. In Ireland, it accounts for 35% of all deaths and more importantly, 20% of premature deaths (i.e. death in those under 65 years).¹ As most of these patients are followed up in the primary care setting, the general practitioner is ideally situated to carry out screening for and management of CVD risk factors in his or her practice.² Managing the risk factors for cardiovascular problems is an essential part of health promotion activity in primary care and as a general practitioner you should be competent in the management of cardiovascular emergencies in primary care. It is important to remember that accurate diagnosis of symptoms that may potentially be caused by cardiovascular causes is a key competence for general practice.



Case vignette

Mr Tom Jones is a 55 year old high powered hotel chain executive, travels all over the country and abroad. He stays at five star hotels and enjoys fine dining. When relaxing at home he often has a BBQ with lots of wine. He is not keen on salads and fruits. He presents to the practice concerned with his increase in weight. He admits that with his hectic lifestyle he often forgets to take his medication, and in fact he has not taken any medications for three weeks as he had ran out. He had been on atenolol for hypertension.

He has no history of angina but he does get out of breath easily on exertion. He used to smoke 10 years ago and he still enjoys wine. He would like to lose weight and get fitter.

He admits to drinking to excess. His intake of alcohol is in the region of 40 units a week, but he doesn't see this as a problem.

He wants to know if there are any better medication. He has not had any blood tests done in the last three years. No ECG has ever been performed but he has had a urine sample done 1 year ago which he was told was normal.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What additional information do I need? How will I go about making a diagnosis as to the cause of the breathlessness here?
- How do I assess cardiovascular risk?
- How do I measure blood pressure? What blood tests should I do?
- What medications are most suitable to manage high blood pressure?

Person-centred care

- What else would I discuss with the patient in this consultation?
- What are the challenges to dealing with lifestyle in this patient?
- Will compliance to medication be a problem here?

Specific problem-solving skills

- Would an ECG in the practice be helpful to exclude for example, atrial fibrillation?
- Should I arrange chest X-ray, BNP estimation etc. to rule out cardiac failure at the local A/E Department/Medical assessment Unit?
- Am I able to use a cardiac risk score calculator?
- Is ambulatory blood pressure helpful in the assessment of hypertension?
- What support could I give him for smoking cessation?
- What medications are appropriate for management of blood pressure and high cholesterol?
- What are their side effects?

Comprehensive approach

- What additional benefit would a referral bring?
- Should I involve a dietitian?
- Should I advise him to contact the National Smokers Quitline?

Community orientation

- Recognise social determinants of cardiovascular health and the importance of population interventions – should the Irish population be taking less salt?
- Should smoking be banned from all public places?

A holistic approach

- What would I tell his partner?
- Should she be involved in management of his alcohol consumption especially in the home (who buys the wine?)

Contextual features

- What are the ICGP guidelines for the diagnosis and longer-term management in this case?

Attitudinal features

- Should overweight smokers be offered open access to treatment if they do not lose weight or cease smoking?

Scientific features

- How should I calculate cardiovascular risk in such an individual?
- How do I measure left ventricular hypertrophy using an ECG?



The following learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes that a general practitioner (GP) requires when managing patients with cardiovascular problems. Such problems include coronary heart disease (angina, acute coronary syndromes, cardiac arrest), heart failure, arrhythmias, other heart disease (valve disease, cardiomyopathy, congenital), peripheral vascular disease (arterial and venous), cerebrovascular disease (stroke and transient ischaemic attack (TIA)) and thromboembolic disease (PE and DVT).

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) As a GP you should:

- Manage primary contact with patients who have a cardiovascular problem
- Compare the significance of symptoms such as breathlessness in patients such as the above and the association of this symptom and other similar symptoms with cardiac and non-cardiac conditions
- Describe the importance of family history, over- weight, lack of exercise and smoking in the aetiology of CVD
- Outline the association between hypertension & hyperlipidaemia and CVD
- Assess the importance of screening for diabetes in such cases
- Explain the importance of left ventricular hypertrophy on an ECG in prediction of outcome in patients with hypertension
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of risk factors, including chronic kidney disease, in the diagnosis and management of cardiovascular problems
- Apply concepts such as the “stages of change” (Carlo C. DiClemente and J. O. Prochaska) in the management of smoking cessation

2. Person-Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. As a GP you should:

- Compare the significance of symptoms such as breathlessness in patients such as the above and the association of this symptom and other similar symptoms with cardiac and non-cardiac conditions
- Implement “stages of change” (Carlo C. DiClemente and J. O. Prochaska) in the management of smoking cessation
- Have a firm but supportive attitude to patients who have difficulty with lifestyle issues which effect cardiovascular health
- Accept and comply with the role of the GP in primary contact with patients who have cardiovascular risk factors

3. Specific problem solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. As a GP you should:

- Manage primary contact with patients who have a cardiovascular problem
- Compare the significance of symptoms such as breathlessness in patients such as the above and the association of this symptom and other similar symptoms with cardiac and non-cardiac conditions
- Make an initial diagnosis to elicit the appropriate signs and symptoms, and subsequently investigate and/or refer patients presenting with symptoms that might be cardiac in origin, noting that in each case there will be a non-cardiac differential diagnosis
- Recognise the impact cardiovascular problems have on disability and fitness to work
- Elicit a proper CVD history
- Record a smoking history, with understanding of the significance of pack years
- Complete with confidence a dietary history relevant to a patient with or likely to develop CVD
- Perform blood pressure measurement in the clinic and using out – of – office measurements
- Perform venipuncture to measure fasting lipids, creatinine, U/E, fasting blood sugar
- Calculate eGFR
- Perform urinalysis
- Perform an ECG
- Complete with confidence the estimation of left ventricular hypertrophy from an ECG
- Perform out basic fundoscopy
- Implement the calculation of cardiovascular risk using an electronic cardiovascular risk calculator
- Implement “stages of change” (Carlo C. DiClemente and J. O. Prochaska) in the management of smoking cessation
- Manage cardiovascular conditions, including: coronary heart disease heart failure arrhythmias (atrial fibrillation is by far the commonest) peripheral vascular disease (arterial and venous) cerebrovascular disease and thromboembolic disease (PE and DVT)
- Make timely appropriate referrals on behalf of patients to specialist services, especially to rapid-access chest pain, stroke/TIA and heart failure
- Advise patients appropriately about driving, according to their cardiovascular risk and RSA guidelines

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. As a GP you should:

- Be aware that cultural backgrounds may influence patient's attitudes towards health and cardiovascular risk factor management
- Recognise the impact cardiovascular problems have on disability and fitness to work
- Make timely appropriate referrals on behalf of patients to specialist services, especially to rapid-access chest pain, stroke/TIA and heart failure
- Accept and comply with the role of the GP in leading effective and appropriate risk factor assessment and management
- Accept and comply with the role of the GP in primary contact with patients who have cardiovascular risk factors
- Initiate discussion with patients smoking, weight, exercise, & diet and the link between these lifestyle issues and health

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. As a GP you should:

- Recognise the impact cardiovascular problems have on disability and fitness to work
- Advise patients appropriately about driving, according to their cardiovascular risk and RSA guidelines
- Accept and acknowledge the role of the GP in helping patients with lifestyle issues such as smoking cessation, weight loss and the prescription of exercise

6. Holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should:

- Initiate discussion with patients smoking, weight, exercise, & diet and the link between these lifestyle issues and health
- Be aware of the impact of socio-economic status on attitudes to lifestyle modification and cardiovascular risk factor prevention

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks. As a GP you should:

- Adopt a lower threshold for suspicion of significant combinations of cardiovascular risk factors knowing that patients are often unaware of the effects of having diabetes and smoking even a few cigarettes in the day for example
- Make timely appropriate referrals on behalf of patients to specialist services, especially to rapid-access chest pain, stroke/TIA and heart failure

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care. As a GP you should:

- Supportive attitude to patients who have difficulty with lifestyle issues which effect cardiovascular health
- Accept and comply with the role of the GP in leading effective and appropriate risk factor assessment and management
- Accept and comply with the role of the GP in primary contact with patients who have cardiovascular risk factors
- Be aware of the impact of socio-economic status on attitudes to lifestyle modification and cardiovascular risk factor prevention
- Adopt and demonstrate a non-judgmental, caring and professional consulting style to minimise embarrassing patients with lifestyle issues e.g. the obese patient
- Advocate the need for time to be available in the consultation to deal opportunistically with issues pertaining to cardiovascular risk factors
- Adopt a shared decision-making style of consultation, working with and supporting the patient with lifestyle changes
- Adopt a lower threshold for suspicion of significant combinations of cardiovascular risk factors knowing that patients are often unaware of the effects of having diabetes and smoking even a few cigarettes in the day for example
- Acknowledge that cardiovascular risk factor assessment can extend into settings other than the clinic, thereby increasing opportunities for prevention of cardiovascular disease, e.g. in the school or the work place
- Ensuring that personal opinions regarding risk factors for cardiovascular problems (e.g. smoking, obesity, exercise, alcohol do not influence your management decisions
- Acknowledge that non-concordance is common for many preventative cardiovascular medicines and respect your patient's autonomy when negotiating management

- Be aware that cultural backgrounds may influence patient's attitudes towards health and cardiovascular risk factor management.

9. Scientific Evidence

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning and a commitment to quality improvement. As a GP you should:

- Advise patients appropriately about driving, according to their cardiovascular risk and RSA guidelines
- Implement the calculation of cardiovascular risk using an electronic cardiovascular risk calculator
- Be able to describe the key research findings that influence management of cardiovascular problems (see below)

Where the teaching may take place

- In the surgery, with the trainer or at the local Medical Assessment Unit/ Cardiology Outpatients dept

Links with other chapters

- Women's health
- Men's health



Web based Resources

- Irish Heart Foundation
- British Hypertension Society (lists of validated BP monitors) www.bhsoc.org
- Relevant NICE guidelines NICE guidance is available for the management of stroke, post-myocardial infarction, atrial fibrillation, diabetes, hypertension, lipid lowering, anti-platelet therapy and heart failure

References

1. Department of Health and Children. Changing Cardiovascular Health. National Cardiovascular Health Policy 2010 – 2019. May 2010. Available from: http://www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/changing_cardiovascular_health.pdf?direct=1
2. Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in General Practice. Author: Cox, John Dr.; Graham, Ian; ICGP Quality in Practice Committee. Publication Year: 2013 <http://www.icgp.ie/go/library/catalogue/item/A06234C2-A51E-F386-oD9C96C8D5B79922/>

Introduction

In this chapter we strive to define the learning outcomes and skills required of a General Practitioner working in Ireland in the area of gastrointestinal medicine or digestive health.

Digestive problems are a daily presentation to all general practitioners and as a result require a broad range of knowledge of the conditions of the whole gastrointestinal tract from mouth to anus and appropriate management of same.

As well as the presentation of ACUTE conditions requiring urgent referral to secondary care the GP has an essential role in early detection and treatment and the need to incorporate into the consultation the opportunity to implement lifestyle advise, screening and immunisation.

Hereditary conditions such as Haemachromatosis, the commonest genetic disorder in Caucasians particularly of Celtic descent and very common in Ireland where its prevalence exceeds CF, PKU and muscular dystrophy combined.

Coeliac disease is another significantly under diagnosed condition.¹

In Ireland colorectal cancer is the second most common newly diagnosed cancer among men and women with over 2000 new cases reported yearly and the number is due to rise in the next 10 years. Fortunately the government funded National Bowel Screen Programme is now in place and once fully rolled out will offer free bowel screening to men and women age 55–70 every 2 years.²

Liver and pancreatic conditions with hepatitis are often newly diagnosed in the GP setting leading to acute and chronic ill health and there is immense importance in keeping “up to date with the continual emergence of new approaches to treatment through CME.

Death from Chronic Liver Disease is increasing with alcohol and obesity being the two main preventable causes, but early detection is vital. For safe delivery of patient care, the GP also needs to be aware of the family and social implications of gastrointestinal disease and have a good knowledge of accessibility to local services with close liaison and communication with hospitals consultants.



Case vignette

Mary age 61 years presents to the surgery complaining of general fatigue, heartburn, belching, and nausea and epigastric discomfort. She had attributed her symptoms to OTC use of ibuprofen as analgesia for a recent fractured radius. She mentioned her daughter commented on some weight loss, but Mary felt this was related to a recent diet change which excluded wheats and helped with her long standing irritable bowel symptoms. Her family history is remarkable for colon cancer her father passing away from same in his late 60's. She is an ex-smoker for 5 years and enjoys alcohol socially.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Specific Problem-Solving Skills

- What further information would I require from the history and examination in this case and what skills would this require?
- What investigations would be appropriate for management?
- What is my differential diagnosis?
- What is my knowledge of safe prescribing in gastroenterology in primary care?

Person-Centered Approach

- How can I elicit her ideas concerns and expectations?
- How would I address areas of embarrassment in both the history taking and examination?
- How would I approach investigations in diagnosis and screening?
- How can I maintain ongoing communication with the patient, allied health professionals involved in her care as well as family members?

Primary Care Management

- What follow up arrangements would I put in place for this case?
- What is the practice policy on responsibility for blood results follow up?
- How would I implement guidelines within the practice?
- What services are there within my own practice, practice nurse, phlebotomy and accessibility to same for patients?
- What services are available through the local primary care team, dietician, PHN, social workers?
- What is my knowledge of screening and guidelines and its application in primary care?

Community Orientation

- What access is there to local hospital based services such as radiology and endoscopy? How easy is it to access these services? What are the wait times and resources?
- What is the referral mechanism for primary care team members?
- What palliative care services are available in the community and how do I communicate effectively with them for a comprehensive care of my patient with a terminal diagnosis?
- What is my knowledge of community or web based support group for chronic illness?
- What is my knowledge of support in the community for smoking cessation and alcohol and drug addiction for both patient and family members?

Comprehensive Approach

- What health promotion and preventative health measures does this consultation raise?

- Holistic Care of the patient, how would I address this?
- What complementary therapy is available locally and how is it accessed?
- What is my awareness of the importance of lifestyle, stress and anxiety management in relation to digestive health?

Contextual Features

- What are the practice guidelines for use of a chaperone or same sex doctor for examinations and informed consent where needed in some GI examinations?
- Who is responsible for maintenance of premises and practice equipment?
- What are the practice policies on surveillance and implementation of same and different roles of individuals within practice?
- What is the role of the practice nurse?
- What is the practice policy on telephone triage and who is responsible. Awareness of telephone advice without examination?

Scientific Features

- What is the evidence base for colorectal screening?
- Use of evidence based research in approach to practice standards
- Continual medical education to up skill in areas and further knowledge
- How can I use audit as a tool to improve quality in practice

Attitudinal Features

- What is my attitude to the patient seeking alternative or complimentary care and therapies?
- How can I advocate best practice and patient safety?
- Awareness of potential inequalities in patient care and my attitude to reducing same
- Open minded attitude to multiple similar consultations required in long term care of ongoing conditions
- What is my attitude to high risk behaviour and its influence on public health?
- What is my approach to the patient that is not keen to engage in treatment?
- What is my attitude to self-medicating despite medical advice?



Curricular outcomes grouped according to competencies

The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of digestive health. In order to demonstrate the core competences in the area of digestive health you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary Care Management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) As a GP you should:

- Be able to Take a comprehensive history for gastrointestinal symptoms including a dietary history and family history
- Conduct a competent condition appropriate abdominal and rectal examination
- Recognise and manage acute abdominal presentations
- Describe the main gastrointestinal conditions encountered in general practice
- Evaluate and manage acute conditions such as appendicitis, cholecystitis, pancreatitis, bowel obstruction ascites and GI bleeds
- Describe and manage common conditions such as gastroenteritis diverticular disease constipation abdominal pain hernias
- Demonstrate a knowledge of various forms of hepatitis as well as NAFLD
- Demonstrate a knowledge of IBD, IBS, GORD, oesophageal cancer, coeliac disease, haemachromatosis and various other GI diseases, investigation and management appropriate to primary care
- Demonstrate knowledge of weight management bariatric surgery in relation to obesity and its related problems
- Assess and manage alcohol dependence in General practice and its impact on CLD
- Demonstrate a knowledge of palliative care
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the impact of long term conditions on nutrition, bone health
- Conduct the relevant investigations appropriate for the common presentations in gastroenterology to general practice and the local services available
- Demonstrate an understanding of laboratory results and appropriate handling of same
- Compose a differential diagnosis
- Demonstrate an efficiency in prescribing for gastrointestinal conditions seen in general practice

2. Person-Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. As a GP you should:

- Master the skill required for good communication techniques
- Demonstrate an understanding of the need to educate, empower and involve the patient in their chronic illness management
- Recognise that it is difficult for some patients to discuss digestive symptoms, through factors such as embarrassment and social stigma
- Understand that digestive symptoms are often multiple and imprecise, and frequently linked to emotional factors
- Be aware of the sensitive nature of GI symptoms and some GI examinations (such as rectal examination)

- Understand the many cultural and social factors which can influence the way patients interpret symptoms and the manner in which this influences their expectations of medical management

3. Specific Problem Solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. The GP should:

- Demonstrate communication skills for lifestyle modifications and understand dietary factors associated with various GI conditions and offer appropriate dietary advice (e.g. in weight loss, irritable bowel syndrome and primary cancer prevention)
- Demonstrate a structured, logical approach to the diagnosis of abdominal pain, e.g. to enable a positive diagnosis of irritable bowel syndrome to be made, rather than making the diagnosis by exclusion

4. Comprehensive Approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should

- Understand screening programmes for colorectal cancer, and the role of primary care.
- Analyse the relevance of family history on screening and investigations
- Demonstrate a knowledge and execution of screening protocols and vaccinations schedules and immunisation guidelines for at risk groups and family members
- Discuss management of long term conditions with family involvement
- Implement an approach to continual surveillance
- Implement opportunistic health promotion in consultations
- Demonstrate how to respond to patients who attend frequently with unexplained GI symptoms, e.g. strategies might include educational and supportive counselling approaches
- Understand the impact of GI symptoms and illness on patients, their families and their wider networks Support people to self care, particularly those with chronic symptoms (such as those typically associated with irritable bowel

5. Community Orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Identify local referral services
- Identify access to specialist nurses eg stoma nurses in patient care

- Recognise nutritional factors in community health
- Perfect the ability to work in partnership with other agencies to secure appropriate interventions e.g drugs and alcohol rehabilitation
- Understand the high prevalence of GI symptoms in the community and the implications for primary care

6. Holistic Approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should:

- Adopt a non judgmental role to the patients right to seek complementary therapy
- Evaluate the influence of cultural and ethnic background on the presentation of disease and health beliefs that can impact access to health service
- Recognise the effects psychological stress can have upon the gastrointestinal tract, especially with functional disorders, e.g. non-ulcer dyspepsia, irritable bowel syndrome, abdominal pain in children

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks. The GP should:

- Recognise any biases in the practice regarding GI presentations
- Consideration of the environment and the option of providing a chaperone during examination
- Evaluate the influence of stress anxiety and psychosocial factors on digestive health in practice
- Recognise and accept risk taking behavior and its influence on physical, mental and family wellbeing

8. Attitudinal

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Explore attitudes to gastrointestinal illness and accept that these can influence the way you respond to individuals with digestive disorders

- Aware of the many issues relating to embarrassment and social and cultural factors which influence presentation to primary care, and what strategies you have to manage these.
- Exemplify a non-judgemental approach to individuals with, for example, chronic gastrointestinal symptoms, drug and alcohol problems
- Maintain a sensitive approach to discussing weight related issues in consultation especially with parents and their obese children
- Recognise and accept the influence of stress and anxiety on digestive health
- Recognise and accept risk taking behavior and its influence on physical, mental and family wellbeing

9. Scientific Evidence

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Recognising the importance of complying with CME in relation to constant medical changes and advances
- Construct a decision making process determined by the prevalence and incidence of gastrointestinal disease relevant to your practice
- Understanding the epidemiology of gastrointestinal symptoms and disorders in primary care, and the evidence on the risks for cancer and other serious diseases associated with various symptoms and symptom complexes
- Using contemporary management approaches to individuals with hepatitis B and C and other chronic conditions
- Understanding the evidence base for the colorectal cancer screening programme

Where the teaching takes place

- Hospital OPD/rounds
- GP practice/tutorials
- Day release

Related Curriculum Areas

- Medical chapters
- Drugs and alcohol misuse
- Social medicine
- Infectious diseases
- Health promotion



Resources

- Hemochromatosis QRG ICGP
- Hemochromatosis BJGP 2013
- Coeliac.ie
- Coeliac disease BMJ 2012/14
- Bowel screen.ie
- GP Notebook gastroenterology
- Immunisation.ie
- British dietetic association guidelines
- Drugs and therapeutics Bulletins
- British Society of Gastroenterology Guidelines on Iron Def
- NICE guidelines
- RCGP e learning
- guideclinic.ie
- ICGP managing alcohol dependence in GP
- Forum distance learning programme 2013
- MPS.ie
- HSE.ie
- Drugs.ie
- Patient.co.uk

References

1. QIP ICGP November 2013; www.coeliac.ie
2. www.bowelscreen.ie

Introduction

Issues relating to the urinary tract extend from the kidneys to the end of the urethra. There is considerable overlap between renal medicine and urology and the topics of women's health and men's health, as well as sexual health and diabetes. Chronic kidney disease represents an emerging public health problem. It is one of the most potent risk factors for cardiovascular disease and contributes to around 15% of all hospitalisations and nearly 10% of all deaths. Chronic kidney disease is also accompanied by multiple other co morbidities: hypertension, anaemia, hyperparathyroidism, and renal osteodystrophy. Timely identification and management of CKD can slow its rate of progression and reduce cardiovascular risk by up to 50%. However, the assessment and management of CKD in patients can be an area of uncertainty for general practitioners and a separate curriculum to common urological conditions seen daily such as renal colic, haematuria and prostatic symptoms. Therefore knowledge and prevention in primary care is essential in improving overall health outcomes.



Case vignette

John a 56 year old factory worker last seen three months ago with suspected gout and prescribed naproxen. His blood test showed a raised uric acid level confirming gout and he had an eGFR of 42. He is a non-smoker. His blood pressure today is 140/100, the same reading as that recorded at his last visit. His BMI is 34. He has been too busy to come back to see you. He is married with 3 children and they are struggling financially. You are concerned about his medications and possible chronic kidney disease. He presents today with a painful right ankle and is requesting just a medical certificate and another prescription for naproxen.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- How would I take an adequate history and relevant examination?
- How could I promote renal health and well-being, applying the principles of health promotion and disease prevention?
- How can chronic disease management be applied to the practice and who is responsible for leadership in same and overseeing practice policy?
- What is my knowledge of the connection with renal disease and other long term conditions such as cardiovascular disease and renal disease?
- How best can I provide ease of access to resources for patients to help educate them about their condition?
- What structures can I put in place for follow up and how can I facilitate this for John?

Specific problem-solving skills

- What further questions and information would I require in order to work towards solving John's issues?
- What other resources/services/healthcare professionals could I involve in the management of this case?
- What investigations would be appropriate?
- What is my knowledge of safe prescribing in renal health?
- What referral system is in place for secondary care and how familiar am I? How easy is this to access? What are the wait times?
- What is the mechanism of referral for access to primary care services in the community?

Person-centred care

- What skills should I use communicating risk to my patient regarding medication use and renal disease?
- What challenges might I face in understanding from the patients perspective what his understanding of his risks and long term needs are?
- How do I take my patient to an understanding of what long term issues he needs to address which will suit his lifestyle and therefore facilitate his ability to engage in treatment?
- How would I make an appropriate risk assessment in this case and what skills would this require?
- What might be the implications for John if he has acquired chronic kidney disease?
- How can I use appropriate language to accurately explain and educate John about renal disease?

Community orientation

- What supports or groups are available in the community or on line for John and his family outside of primary care?
- How can I become familiar with accessing this for my chronic disease patients?
- What is my understanding of palliative care issues and services in end stage renal disease?

Comprehensive approach

- What health promotion, lifestyle management and screening opportunities can be implemented in the renal consultation?
- How can I overcome the challenge of ongoing communication and understanding between my patient and his family members involved in his care?

A holistic approach

- How would I approach holistic care in this case?
- How would I reach a mutually agreed management plan with John?

Contextual features

- How can I identify groups vulnerable to renal disease within the practice population?

- How can my patient's access dialysis in rural areas in particular what is my understanding of barriers to dialysis such as travel, work commitments and the impact on patient care?
- How would I implement screening programmes as appropriate locally or nationally in line with current evidence based guidelines?
- How would I approach defining the roles and responsibilities of individuals within the practice on implementation of screening programmes?

Attitudinal features

- How do I approach a patient that is not reluctant to engage in treatment?
- What is my attitude to the patient who continues to take risks to his renal health with use of over the counter medication or self-medicating?
- Do I have any personal worries and concerns dealing patients who do not follow medical advice?
- What guidance or support is available to me through professional bodies such as ICGP/Irish Medical Council/medical protection agencies to assist?
- How can I advocate best practice with view to patient safety?
- How would I manage the uncertainties around John's case both for the patient and myself?
- What are my attitudes on complementary or alternative therapy in John's management?

Scientific features

- What is my plan for keeping up to date with current management of chronic kidney disease in my patients in general practice?
- How can I apply current evidence based research to maintain practice standards?
- What is the practice accessibility and ease of application of current guidelines to daily consultations?
- What is the role of audit in renal care and how can this be applied in practice?
- What is my knowledge of local guidelines for managing renal conditions and how would I implement them into my practice?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of renal disease in primary care. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should:

- Explain the treatment targets for patients with different stages of CKD
- Complete a competent history and conduct an examination relevant to the presenting renal problem

- Demonstrate appropriate medication prescribing in managing renal conditions and monitor effectively including requirements for reducing dose or ceasing
- Identify and organise the necessary investigations into renal conditions
- Demonstrate an understanding of laboratory results for renal conditions and the appropriate handling or follow up
- Demonstrate a recognition and management of the significantly ill patients, for example acute renal failure, pyelonephritis, severe hyperkalaemia
- Demonstrate a recognition and management of the significantly ill patients, for example acute renal failure, pyelonephritis, severe hyperkalaemia
- Demonstrate appropriate history taking skills to identify those at risk of chronic kidney disease(CKD)
- Define the normal and recognise the abnormal ranges of renal biochemistry
- Demonstrate communication skills required to discuss lifestyle factors that impact on renal conditions
- Master the appropriate communication skills in discussion with patients and their family when explaining and managing renal conditions
- Adapt to working with patients and their families or carers with a terminal illness

2. Person-Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should:

- Recognise those at risk of renal disease
- Adapt language skills to explain the complexities of renal disease to the patient and their family tailoring consultations as needed.
- Be aware and value the patient's ideas, concerns and expectations concerning their renal disease and how this impacts on the individual's life
- Recognise the role of the GP in empowering patients in their management decisions
- Communicate results or prognosis, good, bad or uncertain, while recognising the needs of the patient and their family

3. Specific problem solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should:

- Demonstrate the knowledge of the different stages of CKD , their presentations and their appropriate management
- Have a basic understanding of kidney transplants , how they impact on patients and their family's management of such patients

- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of renal tract cancers, their presentations, investigations and treatment
- Construct strategies to educate and engage patients and their family in managing renal conditions

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should:

- Outline how to screen for CKD including protocols for screening, relevant investigations and execute appropriately
- Analyse the relevance of family history on screening and investigation
- Assess lifestyle factors that are important in managing renal conditions
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the impact of long term illness on nutrition
- Implement opportunistic health promotion in consultation

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Define the population at risk of CKD
- Outline and apply the referral requirements to secondary care for renal conditions
- Outline the links with various support services for renal or chronic disease in the community
- Communicate with and access effectively appropriate clinicians for advice or further management of patients with renal conditions
- Be able to communicate with appropriate organisations in a manner that facilitates patients care and management
- Assume responsibility for establishing clear professional boundaries for confidentiality within the practice team, particularly in rural communities and the sharing of information with other professionals outside of general practice
- Adapt to work well in a multidisciplinary team and to be able to communicate well with the team and the family

6. Holistic Modelling

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should:

- Adapt to cultural diversity in patient care and its influence on access to health services
- Adopt a non-judgemental role to the patient's right to seek complementary therapy

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks. A GP should:

- Identify and reflect on the management variations that may occur depending on the practice setting.
- Demonstrate the ability to recognise urgent from non-urgent or chronic conditions

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care. You should:

- Be aware of patient's attitudes, beliefs and reasons for choosing not to have dialysis or recommended treatments and adopt a non-judgemental approach
- Accept and maintain a sensitive approach towards patients in denial, or unwilling to engage in behaviour change recommended by the medical team
- Exemplify an attitude to treating all patients equally and with respect
- To listen, understand, assist and be supportive of the patient and their family during periods of illness and at end of life care
- Acknowledge your own limitations

9. Scientific Evidence

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning. You should be able to:

- Describe the epidemiology of renal disease
- Choose to keep up to date with guidelines and management of renal disease in GP and recognising the importance of same

Where the teaching may take place

- Clinical attachments (Medical jobs in the hospital)
- One-on-one teaching
 - Role-play of difficult cases
 - Discussion of renal- related patient presentations
 - Video/direct observation – teacher to registrar, registrar to teacher
 - Practice team meetings (participation as able)
- In-general practice
 - Direct observation
 - Record review
 - Personal reflection
- Small group learning
 - Case-based discussion
 - Role-play
 - Video interview
 - Journal club and discussions

Links with other chapters

- Cardiovascular Health
- Digestive Health
- Metabolic and Endocrine
- Surgery
- Woman specific Health
- Man specific Health
- Drugs and alcohol Misuse
- HealthPromotion
- Elder Health
- Sexual Health

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4. Kidney Disease: Improving Global outcomes <http://kdigo.org/home/>

5. National Kidney Foundation (United States) guidelines: Kidney Disease Outcomes Quality Initiative (KDOQI) <http://www.kidney.org/professionals/kdoqi/index.cfm>
6. National Institute of Health (NIH): National Kidney Disease Education Program website
<http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-communication-programs/nkdep/Pages/default.aspx>
7. National Kidney Foundation: “Part 4. Definition and Classification of Stages of Chronic Kidney Disease”. Am J Kid Disease 2002; Suppl 1: PageS46-S75

Introduction

Respiratory problems comprise 17% of general practice workload.¹ General Practitioners have a role in prevention, health promotion, identification, diagnosis, acute treatment and ongoing management of respiratory disease as well as co-ordinating referral to specialist and other services, where needed. Respiratory disease affects people of all ages and socio-economic groups. Comprehensive assessment is essential because of its multifactorial aetiology which includes genetic and environmental factors. General practice diagnosis and chronic management of respiratory disease has expanded in recent years. This has been achieved through development of multidisciplinary planned care and the availability of more services like pulmonary rehabilitation in community settings. Multimorbidity is also a common feature for those with respiratory disease because of factors such as increasing age and common risk factors like smoking. In this complex setting GPs have the opportunity to provide individualised care in for people in their community.



Case vignette

Margaret Doherty is 61 and attends the surgery because she has a cough with dirty phlegm for the last 3 days. She is also feeling a bit breathless and wheezy.

You notice that this is the second time she has been in with similar symptoms in the last four months. She tells you that she coughs up some phlegm most mornings. She smokes 20 cigarettes a day. She has been getting a salbutamol inhaler on repeat prescription for two years now and she uses it most days. She is also taking Ramipril for hypertension. She also has osteoarthritis of the hip and is awaiting hip replacement. When you check her BMI it is 31.

She wanted to talk to you today about her chest because her daughter is expecting her first grandchild in a few months and she realises that she is not as active as she used to be. She tells you she'd "like to be able to keep up with the grandkids!"

Mrs Doherty lives with her husband James on their small farm. She does not drive so relies on him or other family and friends for transport.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- How would I address the issues this consult presents within the time allowed?
- What other health care professionals / services might I suggest involving in Mrs Doherty's care?
- How could my practice provide planned care for people with chronic conditions?

- How would I approach the concept of readiness for change with Mrs Doherty?

Person-centred care

- How would I endeavour to develop rapport with Mrs Doherty?
- What consultation skills would I use so that Mrs Doherty engages with the practice in management of her health?
- How would I empower Mrs Doherty to take responsibility for her health?
- How would I inform Mrs Doherty so that she can be involved in shared decision-making?
- How would I assess and build on Mrs Doherty's goals for her health?
- How could my practice provide continuity for Mrs Doherty over time?

Specific problem-solving skills

- How will I manage Mrs Doherty's acute symptoms?
- How would I investigate whether Mrs Doherty has COPD? Could this be done in the practice?
- How would I assess the severity of and manage Mrs Doherty's condition?
- How would I address Mrs Doherty's smoking?
- What local resources are available that might be helpful for Mrs Doherty?
- Is there a practice policy for repeat prescribing?
- To what degree will I address lifestyle factors at this consultation?

Comprehensive approach

- How would I address prevention and health promotion with Mrs Doherty in terms of smoking cessation, vaccination, diet, and exercise and weight loss?
- How would I assess Mrs Doherty for co-morbid conditions that occur with respiratory disease (e.g. cardiovascular disease, malignancy, diabetes, depression)?
- How would I prioritise Mrs Doherty's health needs?
- How will I arrange follow-up with Mrs Doherty?
- How do I organise care for people with multimorbidity?

Community orientation

- Am I aware of the resources in your community that might be useful to Mrs Doherty (e.g. smoking cessation, pulmonary rehabilitation, green prescription, social prescribing, self-management courses)?
- What are the waiting times for these services and are you and your practice using them appropriately?
- Are there transport services available in my community?

A holistic approach

- How are the Doherty's managing at home and with the farm as they grow older?
- What support systems to the Doherty's have?
- Are there any particular challenges involved (e.g. physical isolation)?

- How could I address Mrs Doherty’s feelings about becoming a grandmother?
- How are my time-management skills?

Contextual features

- Does my practice have systems for management of chronic conditions in primary care?
- Do I have the resources to provide care for chronic conditions?
- Are there particular access difficulties in my practice’s area?
- What impact might running late in this consultation have?

Attitudinal features

- How do I feel about the management of chronic disease taking place in general practice?
- How do I feel about how resourcing of services affect you, the practice and the people of the community?
- How do I feel about illness that is related to a person’s lifestyle choices, e.g. smoking?
- How will I reconcile these feelings with providing a professional service for Mrs Doherty?

Scientific features

- Am I aware of up-to-date, evidence-based guidance for managing COPD?
- Am I familiar with self-management and self-efficacy as concepts in the management of chronic conditions?
- Am I aware of the incidence of multimorbidity in this age-group and its impact?
- Am I aware of local guidelines regarding sensitivities and antibiotic prescribing?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of respiratory problems. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should;

- Describe the systems of care for respiratory conditions, including the roles of primary and secondary care, shared care arrangements, multidisciplinary teams and the person’s own involvement
- Accept the role of the GP in leading effective and appropriate acute and chronic respiratory disease management including prevention and rehabilitation
- Accept the role of the GP as an advocate for the patient

- Describe primary care resources and when to refer to secondary care so that people receive appropriate treatment
- Record data appropriately
- Recognise the role of disease registers, data recording templates and recall and reminder systems in the audit of performance for optimum care
- Demonstrate an understanding of the need to co-ordinate care with other health professionals (e.g. smoking cessation, pulmonary rehabilitation, self-management services), leading to effective and appropriate management including prevention and rehabilitation
- Be aware of local, alternative referral resources such as GPs with a Special Interest (GPwSIs), specialist nurse practitioners, 'expert patients' or self-management courses
- Delegate elements of planned chronic respiratory disease care to other members of the primary care team as appropriate
- Demonstrate the ability to refer appropriately

2. Person-Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should;

- Assist people to adopt appropriate self-treatment and coping strategies for respiratory illness
- Create appropriate self-management plans for people with respiratory disease
- Recommend appropriate educational material and strategies
- Assess your practice's accessibility for those with respiratory disease
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate disease prognosis and complex medical management strategies to people and their relatives
- Guide people towards information on referral options, social services and patient support groups

3. Specific Problem-Solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should;

- Formulate a differential diagnosis
- Create an appropriate investigation and treatment plan
- Identify inherited respiratory conditions (e.g. α 1-antitrypsin deficiency)
- Accept the role of the GP in the management of vaccinations
- Diagnose and manage the following conditions
 - Acute bronchitis
 - Allergic Rhinitis

- Aspergillosis
- Asthma
- Bronchiectasis
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Cough
- Cyanosis
- Dyspnoea
- Lower Respiratory Tract Infections
- Lung Cancer
- Occupational Lung Disease
- Obstructive Sleep Apnoea
- Pleural Effusion
- Pneumonia
- Pneumothorax
- Pulmonary Embolus
- Pulmonary Fibrosis
- Sarcoidosis
- Tuberculosis
- Upper Respiratory Tract Infections
- Viral Respiratory Infections
- Wheeze
- Recognise acute severe respiratory illness
- Recognise alarm symptoms and signs for respiratory cancer that necessitate fast-track referral
- Take an appropriate respiratory history, including family, occupational and drug history
- Perform an appropriate respiratory clinical examination
- Demonstrate an understanding of the effective use of drug therapy
- Perform and interpret investigations appropriately
- Perform and interpret peak flow
- Perform and interpret spirometry
- Demonstrate nebuliser use
- Perform assessment of inhaler technique
- Perform BMI measurement
- Perform pulse oximetry

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Make use of knowledge of common respiratory disease co-morbidities (e.g. cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes, depression)
- Make use of the association between atopy and respiratory disease
- Accept how multimorbidity will influence the management of existing disease and may delay the early recognition of clinical patterns
- Accept the role of the GP in respiratory health promotion and disease prevention including occupational health and avoiding exposure to unnecessary chemicals

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should;

- Accept the role of the GP to notify infectious diseases

6. Holistic Modelling

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Acknowledge the impact on quality-of-life, social and psychological wellbeing that respiratory illness can have and how it can also impact on the family, friends and work
- Acknowledge the importance of exercise, and the benefits of peer group support in all types of respiratory disease

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, and culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Describe the current population trends for lung disease with respect to age, ethnicity, occupation and socio-economic status
- Be aware of cultural and other factors that might affect care

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Accept the concept of the multidisciplinary team approach
- Accept the responsibility of the GP to practice evidence-based medicine
- Exemplify a sensitive approach towards people and their families

9. Scientific Evidence

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Make use of evidence-based guidelines for managing respiratory disease
- Make use of local guidance regarding sensitivities and antimicrobial prescribing
- Recognise key health policies and strategies that influence healthcare provision for chronic disease

Related curriculum areas

- Cardiovascular Health
- Older Adult Health
- Child Health



Resources

- Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) Guidance, www.goldcopd.com
- Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) Guidance, www.ginasthma.org
- ICGP Asthma Control in General Practice, Quick Reference Guide, www.icgp.ie/QIPasthma
- ICGP COPD Management, Quick Reference Guide, www.icgp.ie/QIPCOPD
- Irish Thoracic Society, www.irishthoracicsociety.com
- British Thoracic Society, www.brit-thoracic.org.uk
- ICGP Repeat Prescribing Quick Reference Guide, www.icgp.ie/QIPRepeatPrescribing
- The Green Prescription, <http://www.nuigalway.ie/health-promotion/>

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Introduction

Neurological problems are a common presentation in GP surgeries. Patients presenting with symptoms often have specific concerns about how their symptoms may impact on their future lifestyle.¹ These consultations need specific skill in history taking examination and clinical management. It is important to recognise that neurological conditions often affect patients during their working lives and consequently have a large impact on the family's social and economic well-being. There may be a stigma associated with their neurological disease and disability, and this may differ in different communities and cultures. One third of new referrals to general neurology clinics have symptoms that are poorly explained by identifiable organic disease. These patients are disabled and distressed.²

Grounded theory research has shown that doctors feeling awkward or lost without a diagnostic framework and need additional help in managing these consults.³

As a GP it is important to know the sources of help and support that are available in the local community for people with neurological disabilities.



Case vignette

Marie, who is 34, presents with a history of recurrent episodes of feeling weak and almost fainting. These tend to occur in the morning after showering but have occurred at other times of the day. She discussed this with you 18 months ago and saw a cardiologist subsequently who felt the episodes were vasovagal in nature. Today she reports that she is increasingly worried about these episodes. They are occurring more frequently and now happen once a fortnight. They still tend to occur in the morning and she doesn't feel quite right for the rest of the day. They are associated with a feeling of *déjà vu* before she feels weak and has to sit down. She has never lost consciousness.

She is otherwise well. She has no significant past or family history. She is married with two children aged 3 and 6. She lives 2 miles outside the town and drives her children to school and their child minder on school mornings. She then goes on to work. She works part time, which enables her to be back to pick up her daughter from school. She describes her life as busy and can feel pressurized to get back to school on time. Overall she feels happy with her life style choices. She has good supports from her husband and her parents who live nearby.

How would you proceed with the management of this case?

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary Care Management

- How does my practice manage hospital correspondence? Is information efficiently incorporated into patient's records?

Person-centered care

- What communication skills could I use to help Marie explore her symptoms more?
- How do I communicate that the feeling of déjà vu means that these episodes are most likely complex partial seizures, which have driving restrictions.

Specific problem-solving skills

- How do I communicate that the feeling of déjà vu means that these episodes are most likely complex partial seizures, which have driving restrictions.

A comprehensive approach

- How do I address the fact that my initial working diagnosis was wrong?
- Does Marie have confidence in my clinical skills?

Community orientation

- How would I manage the situation if Marie refused to stop driving and posed a risk to other road users?

A holistic approach

- How do I support Marie in dealing with this diagnosis? Are there any local or national resources that I can refer her to?

Contextual features

- What is the waiting time to access local neurology services?
- How could I advocate for Marie to try to get her seen soon?

Attitudinal features

- How do I feel about my initial working diagnosis being wrong?
- How does this impact on my interaction with Marie today?

Scientific features

- What effect do medications have on the management of partial seizures?
- What do I need to do to confirm the diagnosis?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of neurological problems.

In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care Management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This

area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should;

- Take an appropriate history and perform an accurate and efficient neurological exam.
- Explain common neurological conditions to patients in a way that addresses the patient's ideas and concerns about the condition.
- Manage palliative care for the terminal stages of certain neurological conditions.
- Manage the specific care needs of patients with brain injury or severe mobility impairment and work as part of a multi-disciplinary team in delivery this care.

2. Person centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should;

- Elicit patients ideas concerns and expectation when they present with a problem and agree a shared management plan that reflects best use of resources.
- Recognize that muscular headaches and certain altered sensations can be in response to psychological distress. Explain and develop a shared management plan with the patient on how to manage these distressing symptoms.
- Communicate prognosis, including any uncertainties, truthfully and sensitively to patients with disabling neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis
- Demonstrate empathy and compassion towards patients with disabling neurological conditions
- Understand the importance of continuity of care for patients with chronic neurological conditions

3. Problem solving skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should;

- Know the epidemiology of common and/or important neurological conditions such as epilepsy, headache and facial pain syndromes, brain infections, neurological causes of vertigo, spinal cord disease, spinal root compression/irritation, peripheral neuropathies, multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease, Parkinson's disease and common and/or important movement disorders, brain tumours, and common and/or important inherited and congenital conditions
- Know the functional anatomy of the nervous system relevant to diagnosis

- Perform and understand the limitations of a screening neurological examination
- Know red flag symptoms and how to elicit same, and to be able to formulate a management plan.
- Know the indications for referral to a neurologist for chronic conditions that require ongoing specialist management and conditions that require early treatment to avoid permanent deficit

4. A comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Understand the quality of life implications that arise for patients with chronic conditions such as multiple sclerosis and motor neuron disease
- Offer vaccination where relevant
- Offer counselling about investigating people with a family history of genetic neurological disease or epilepsy medication including drug interactions, side effects and contraceptive and pregnancy advice

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should;

- Co-ordinate care with other primary care health professionals to enable chronic disease management and rehabilitation

6. A holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Understand and relate to your patients as individuals and develop an ability to formulate shared management plans.
- Recognise that neurological conditions often affect patients during their working lives and consequently have a large impact on the family's social and economic well-being
- Recognise the stigma associated with neurological disease and disability, and how this may differ in different communities and cultures

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Understand the resources available in your locality for people with neurological disabilities.

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- To recognize any doctor frustrations in dealing with conditions that have poor treatment outcomes.
- To recognize any attitudes regarding patients who may not comply with treatment plans and, once recognised, then modify same, to ensure they do not adversely affect the patients progress to optimal outcome.
- Ensure that a patient's neurological disability does not prejudice your attitude towards, or the information communicated to, the patients

9. Scientific

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Be aware of the driving restrictions that apply to certain neurological conditions and be able to explain the reasons for them to patients.
- Be aware of guidelines (e.g. NICE guidelines) that influence healthcare provision for neurological problems
- Understand how to access up-to-date information on the management of neurological conditions



Resources

ICGP Distance Learning Modules

- Management of Parkinsons disease module 177 May 2012
- Update of Multiple Sclerosis module 191 July 2013
- Management of Epilepsy module 124 Dec 2007.

Web resources

- NICE Guidelines <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidancemenu/conditions-and-diseases/neurological-conditions>
- RSA guidelines Slainte agus Tiomanit
- http://www.rsa.ie/Documents/Licensed%20Drivers/Medical_Issues/Sl%C3%A1inte_agus_Tiom%C3%A1int_Medical_Fitness_to_Drive_Guidelines.pdf
- Epilepsy Society - www.epilepsysociety.org.uk
- Multiple Sclerosis Trust - www.mstrust.org.uk
- Motor Neurone Disease Association – www.mndassociation.org
- Parkinsons’s UK - www.parkinsons.org.uk

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3. *Ment Health Fam Med. 2013 Jun; 10(2): 101–111. PMID: PMC3822641 Making sense of medically unexplained symptoms in general practice: a grounded theory study* Louise Stone, MBBS BA GradDipFamMed MPH FRACGP FACRRM

Introduction

Musculoskeletal problems are common in general practice: The SLAN report estimated that in 2010 almost 12% of Irish adults had clinically diagnosed lower back pain or a chronic back condition in the previous 12 months¹. The PRIME study in 2011 reported a prevalence of 35% for chronic pain with low back pain accounting for almost half that figure. ²

Musculoskeletal conditions may result from a wide range of processes including injury, inflammation, infection, metabolic or endocrinological conditions and the normal aging process.

It includes common ailments such as whiplash, back and buttock pain where findings on radiological investigation do not often correlate strongly with the clinical presentation, requiring a detailed clinical examination to assess biomechanical dysfunction and to interpret referred pain patterns.

Research evidence supports the effectiveness of simple positive approaches for many patients and GPs should encourage appropriate self-care ^{3&4}.

Awareness of the psychological and social dimensions of chronic pain and disability is essential in the management of musculoskeletal conditions. Links between medical practitioners and allied health disciplines such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy are also important.

Early diagnosis and treatment of inflammatory arthritis has a major impact on long-term outcome. Hence prompt referral for specialist care is essential if clinical suspicion of inflammatory arthritis arises ⁵.



Case vignette

Jack, 50 years of age, is a health care assistant in the local hospital. He presents after an accident in the hospital with right shoulder and neck pain. The accident occurred after transferring a patient from a trolley to their bed. He has developed pain in his right shoulder over the past couple of days that is progressively worsening and now wakes him from sleep if he rolls onto that side. He feels that it is getting worse as the right side of his neck is now also painful. He expresses concern that he might be developing a long term problem and whether this will have an impact on his job?

He is otherwise well, with mild hypertension and a history of low back pain. On examination his blood pressure is high and he is overweight. He has an element of pain consistent with rotator cuff injury and tendonitis. He wants to know can you sign him off work for a while and what his treatment options are. He asks how this could have been avoided.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What are the differential diagnoses for Jack's symptoms? What is the diagnosis likely to be?
- What options do I have in treating this problem? What follow-up arrangements would I make?

Person-centred care

- What would help Jack to return to work in an appropriate time? How might I negotiate any conflict over time off work?
- How do his co-morbid conditions affect his options? How do his symptoms impact on his quality of life?

Specific problem-solving skills

- Are there aspects of Jack's case that may cause concern about a possible poor prognosis for improvement?
- What place might investigations have in this situation?

A comprehensive approach

- What self-care and health promotion advice might I provide to Jack on this occasion? How might I manage Jack's potential lifestyle changes?

Community orientation

- What are the advantages of a community physiotherapy service? How might I go about referring to one? How long are waiting lists?
- What other options might I have in managing musculoskeletal disease in the community?

A holistic approach

- What steps could I take to facilitate continuity of care for Jack? How might Jack's problem impact upon the health of his family?
- Jack has been using some remedies obtained from a local health shop. He asks if it is safe to take these along with the medication prescribed. How will I respond?

Contextual features

- What provision might my practice make for patients and staff with musculoskeletal disorders? Jack requests referral for a specialist opinion. How will I respond to this request?

Attitudinal features

- What is my own attitude towards people who I believe are falsifying or exaggerating their musculoskeletal symptoms? How do I feel about giving sick notes for an extended period of time?

Scientific features

- What barriers might I face in providing good quality care for my patients? What guidelines are available to help manage problems presented?



Curricular outcomes

1. Primary Care Management

- Demonstrate how to take a comprehensive history including identification of urgent and emergency conditions ("red flags")
- Demonstrate thorough examination of the musculoskeletal system including identifying dysfunctions, special physical tests and their interpretation
- Recognise conditions that benefit from early referral for surgical intervention (e.g. ruptured achilles tendon, internal derangement of knee, massive rotator cuff tear)
- Recognise where there is a need for a multi-disciplinary approach, including the use of local chronic pain services
- Understand legal requirements in report writing and in providing evidence in court as an expert witness (including limitations of role of trainee in this regard)
- Understand the primary care management of regional pain syndromes such as osteoarthritis, back pain and fibromyalgia
- Understand the primary care management of gout and polymyalgia rheumatic
- Understand the primary care management of regional soft-tissue problems e.g. tennis elbow, carpal tunnel syndrome
- Understand the primary care management of bone disorders, including primary and secondary prevention of osteoporosis and fragility fracture
- Understand the need to consider rare conditions such as connective tissue disease which may present with non-specific symptoms
- Understand the range of musculo-skeletal conditions that present at different ages of childhood
- Understand the variations of normality in childhood musculo-skeletal development
- Understand need to remain vigilant to the possibility of abuse in presentation of musculoskeletal injury
- Assume responsibility for confidentiality and communication with stakeholders to whom patient has given permission to disclose information e.g. insurance companies and rehabilitation providers.

Person Centred Care

- Demonstrate effective communication with the patient including listening to the patient's use of language and exploration of subjective nature of pain and of possible psycho-social stressors
- Demonstrate shared-decision making with the patient including delivery of health information and possible use of patient decision aids and addressing the patient's worrying thoughts around experience of pain
- Generate a comprehensive management plan including role of self-management, patient education and reassurance, medication, therapeutic exercises, rehabilitation, manual therapy, intra-articular injections and other regional techniques, psychological interventions and surgery

2. Specific Problem-Solving

- Understand red flag symptoms of back pain that relate to infection, cancer, fracture, neurological compromise and inflammatory arthritis and the implications for pursuing appropriate further investigation or emergency specialist consultation
- Understand the importance of screening for yellow flags and how the identification of psychosocial risk factors for poor outcome can influence patient management in the primary care setting.
- Understand the indications and limitations of radiography and other investigations

3. A Comprehensive Approach

- Understand the need to monitor patients for potential complications of illness and presence of co-morbid conditions, including awareness of increased cardiovascular risk in patients with inflammatory arthritis, connective tissue disease and gout, and increased risk of fracture in patients with rheumatoid arthritis
- Understand use of long-term medications and issues with compliance, toxicity and the benefits and pit-falls of shared care prescribing of disease-modifying-anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs)
- Demonstrate familiarity with national referral guidelines and treatment thresholds including materials produced by HIQA (Health Technology Assessments of Clinical Referral or Treatment Thresholds for Selected Scheduled procedures)

4. Community Orientation

- Be aware of potential effects on patients where services are deficient and frequently have long waiting times.

5. A holistic approach

- Acknowledge the perception and experience of patients with pain whose primary challenge is to live with pain and its wide-ranging implications, including discomfort, distress, disempowerment and loss (including loss of employment)

6. Contextual features.

- Recognise how your workplace facilitates access for people with disabilities

7. Attitudinal features

- Acknowledge the challenge posed by patients with pain who want to know the cause of pain, want resolution of their pain or who appear motivated towards non-medical goals such as insurance claims, drug seeking behaviour or avoidance of work.

8. Scientific features

- Justify own attitudes to use of complementary therapy and use of opiates for chronic pain



Related curriculum areas/links

Refer also to the curriculum outcomes in the areas of:

- Pain management
- Chronic disease management
- Health Promotion
- Older Person Health

Online resources: ICGP e-learning modules

- Addressing Childhood Overweight and Obesity
- Assessment of Low Back Pain eLearning Module
- Chronic condition Self-Management eLearning Module
- Physical Activity eLearning Module
- Rheumatoid Arthritis: Inflammatory Arthritis

Online resources: Quick Reference Guides on ICGP site

- Communicating Risk to Patients
- Drugs and Doping in Sport-Guidelines for General Practitioners
- HSE/ICGP Weight Management Treatment Algorithms
- Managing Cardiac Risk Assessment for People Under 35 Years Involved in Sports or Exercise
- Repeat Prescribing Quick Reference Guide

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4. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). Low Back Pain: early management of persistent, non-specific low back pain, CG 88, May 2009, p5
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Introduction

Ireland has an ageing population. The incidence and prevalence of endocrine disorders such as type 2 Diabetes is increasing. In 2010 it was estimated that more than 135,000 (8.9%) adults aged over 45 have diabetes in the country, and this is estimated to increase to 175,000 (9.1%) by 2020.¹ Similarly, clinical abnormalities of thyroid function are estimated to affect more than 5% of individuals during their lifetime.²

The vast majority of care for patients with endocrine disorders is undertaken in Primary Care.³ The importance of early diagnosis can't be understated as delay in diagnosis is associated with increased morbidity and mortality. As a general practitioner (GP) you should have an understanding of how common endocrine or metabolic disorders such as diabetes mellitus, thyroid or reproductive disorders can present.

Endocrine disorders are a varied and prevalent group and a GP needs always to be aware of them in the asymptomatic patient as well as those with vague symptoms or those with more classical presentations. Education⁴ and shared decision making should play a central role in treatment planning. Biochemical tests can be diagnostic and often necessary for monitoring metabolic and endocrine diseases, so it is important for GPs to know which tests are useful in a primary care setting and how to interpret these tests and understand their limitations. With a large number of therapeutic agents available for treating, this is an area that can be very challenging.

As GPs, we must be cognisant that often people with endocrine disorders will often have co-morbid mental health disorders, indeed depression is more common in people with diabetes than in the general population.⁵ GPs should appreciate the health and medical consequences of obesity including malnutrition, increased morbidity and reduced life expectancy, and have an understanding of the social, psychological and environmental factors underpinning it. We need to be aware of the number of allied health professionals who are invaluable in the management of patients with endocrine disorders.



Case vignette

Peter, a 50 yr old, obese, bus driver recently attended the surgery with frequency and nocturia. He had not noticed any other symptoms, although he has been a bit thirsty and tired which he puts down to the hot weather and long shifts. He has not lost any weight. He has a history of Hypertension and is on Ramipril 10mg daily. He is Married, two children, one married last year and one at university. He has a sedentary lifestyle due to long shifts. Smoker-15 cigs/day and drinks very little alcohol. He is concerned this may be his prostate.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What are the clinical issues that I will address during this initial consultation? Eg potential diagnosis of diabetes, smoking cessation, diet and lifestyle, assessment for evidence of prostate disease?
- What diagnostics are available to me in my practice?
- What local referral pathways are open to me on confirmation of diagnosis?
- Who can I utilise in terms of allied health professionals to optimise Peter's Management?
- What national screening programmes are in place for people with diabetes and how do we access them?
- When I request a test, how can I be sure that the result is followed up? What protocols and systems are in place in my practice?

Person-Centred Care

- How effective am I at acknowledging and addressing Peter's concerns while at the same time ensuring that address the other clinical issues that this consultation has raised?
- How will a diagnosis of diabetes effect Peter in terms of work and licensing laws? Does patient confidentiality play a role here?
- How can I empower Peter to take control of his health?
- What can I do to develop a trusting Doctor Patient Relationship with Peter?

Specific Problem-Solving Skills

- What further information would I like about Peter before completing the consultation?
- How would I advise Peter going home today, pending results of diagnostic tests?
- What resources are available to me to guide initiation of treatment following diagnosis, along with chronic care management going forward?

A Comprehensive Approach

- How do I balance health promotion and disease prevention with acute presenting issues for complex patients?
- Am I aware of the circle of change and how to assess a patient's stage on it?

Community Orientation

- What can I do as a GP to address the issues of obesity and sedentary lifestyle in my community?
- How can I bring health promotion into my every day practice?
- How can I ensure that those in at risk groups eg those with mental health issues and minority groups get equal access to health promotion?

A Holistic Approach

- Am I mindful of Peter's fears and worries in terms of his potential new diagnosis?
- Am I open to addressing Peter's psychological or social issues in a collaborative way?

Contextual Features

- What are the challenges in my practice when dealing with the needs of my complex patients?
- What legal issues may arise in this case, e.g. regarding driving regulations or release of medical records for insurance policies and claims?

Attitudinal Features

- Am I aware of my own strengths and limitations when dealing with lifestyle issues and their effect on health with my patients?

Scientific Features

- Am I aware of and following national and international best practice guidelines?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management endocrine and metabolic problems. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should:

- Demonstrate a knowledge of the use and limitations of the investigations available in Primary Care
- Apply an understanding of the cycle of change to lifestyle interventions
- Diagnose and manage Endocrine emergencies in the Primary Care setting, eg hypoglycaemia, DKA, HONC and Addisonian Crisis
- Organise members of the multidisciplinary team in a patient focused manner
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with colleagues from a variety of health and social care professions
- Outline the National Screening programmes relevant to endocrine disorders
- Describe the referral pathways available to allow patients to access secondary care
- Explain the importance of the multidisciplinary approach to managing endocrine disorders

- Perform consultations and communicate effectively with patients, presenting information on complex endocrine disorders in an accessible manner

2. Person centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should:

- Assess the impact of endocrine disorders on a patient's daily life
- Explain the importance of patient motivation in addressing endocrine disorders, especially type 2 diabetes
- Guide the patient and their family through decision making processes in terms of their care
- Recognise the role of the GP in empowering the patient to look after their own health
- Adopt practices that encourage patient autonomy and empowerment

3. Specific problem solving skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should;

- Intervene urgently when patients present with a metabolic emergency, e.g. hypoglycaemia and hyperglycaemic conditions.
- Recognise that patients with metabolic problems are frequently asymptomatic or have nonspecific symptoms, and that diagnosis is often made by screening or recognising symptom complexes and arranging appropriate investigations.
- Demonstrate a logical, incremental approach to investigation and diagnosis of metabolic symptoms.
- Combine available evidence based treatments to manage diabetes, including knowledge of the medications used such as insulin, DPP 4 inhibitors, SGLT2 inhibitors, GLP 1 agonists, along with treatments for cholesterol and hypertension

4. Comprehensive care

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should:

- Appraise the GP's role in lifestyle modification and disease prevention, in the context of the individual and in society
- Recognise the role of acute and chronic conditions in a patient's clinical condition
- Perform health screening while managing presenting complaints and concerns

- Recognise that patients with diabetes often have multiple co-morbidities and consequently polypharmacy is common
- Develop strategies to simplify medication regimes and encourage concordance with treatment
- Advise patients appropriately regarding lifestyle interventions for obesity, diabetes mellitus, hyperlipidaemia and hyperuricaemia

5. Community approach

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Accept the GP's key role in managing endocrine disorders
- Recognise the limited resources available to General Practice, balancing individual's needs with those of the community
- Recognise that public health interventions are likely to have the largest impact on obesity and diabetes mellitus, and support such programmes where possible, e.g. fit clubs and walks
- Describe the exemptions from prescription charges for patients with metabolic conditions e.g. long term illness card

6. Holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should:

- Accept the role of co-morbid mental health problems in people with metabolic problems
- Recognise the role of the biological, psychological and social aspects of an individual upon their health
- Recognise long-term metabolic problems, e.g. the risk of depression, sexual dysfunction, restrictions on employment and driving for diabetes

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, and culture,

financial and regulatory frameworks. A GP should:

- Recognise how patient care is affected by the working conditions and resources available to the GP
- Empower patients to self-manage their condition, as far as is practicable

8. Attitudinal

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Adapt a consultation style to respond to patient needs that also encourage patient autonomy and empowerment
- Adopt an active role in disease prevention
- Recognise the stigma associated with obesity

9. Scientific

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning. A GP should;

- Practise an evidence based approach to patient care
- Be aware of the advantages and limitations of a multidisciplinary approach

Where the learning will take place

- Work-based learning in practice:
 - Diabetic watch clinics
 - Pharmacy
 - Community
- Secondary care:
 - You can learn about patients with uncommon but important metabolic or endocrine conditions such as Addison's disease and hypopituitarism, as well as about patients with complex needs or with complications of the more common metabolic conditions
 - Diabetic Liaison nurses/and you should take the opportunity to attend specialist diabetes, endocrine and obesity clinics when working in other hospital posts
 - You should also consider attending specialist clinics during your time in the hospital
- Self directed:
 - E-learning modules
 - Research
 - Audit
 - Special interest Clinics



Web resources

- http://www.icgp.ie/go/library/icgp_publications/quick_reference_guides/E59995BC-DD60-225F-472EBBoE1B66BD69.html
- NICE Guidelines
- Management of Type 2 Diabetes – retinopathy (Guideline E), 2002
- Type 2 diabetes: prevention and management of foot problems, 2004.
- Type 2 diabetes : the management of type 2 diabetes (CG66) 2008
- Type 2 diabetes : newer agents (CG87) 2009
- Preventing type 2 diabetes - population and community interventions in high risk groups and the general population (PHJ 35) 2011
- Obesity: the prevention, identification, assessment and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children (CG43) 2006 www.nice.org.uk
- International Association for the study of obesity (IASO) The International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO) is an umbrella organisation for 53 national obesity associations, representing 55 countries. SCOPE (Specialist Certification in Obesity Professional Education) is IASO's official obesity education programme, designed for all health professionals and is comprised of 5 different workstreams including e-learning and live training courses. www.iaso.org/scope/about-scope/

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3. HSE's A Practical Guide to Integrated Type 2 Diabetes Care. http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/topics/Diabetes/A_Practical_Guide_to_Integrated_Type_II_Diabetes_Care.pdf
4. NICE Guidelines. <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg87/chapter/1-recommendations#patient-education>
5. SIGN Management of Diabetes <http://www.sign.ac.uk/pdf/qrg116.pdf>
6. Slainte agus Tiomaintt. http://www.rsa.ie/Documents/Licensed%20Drivers/Medical_Issues/Sl%3%Aainte_agus_Tiom%3%Aint_Medical_Fitness_to_Drive_Guidelines.pdf

Introduction

Research has shown that 23–33% of people have a skin problem which could benefit from medical attention at any one time.¹ One in seven consultations with GPs have been shown to be for dermatological conditions.² The vast majority of skin problems are managed in primary care. Therefore dermatology provides GPs with significant diagnostic and management opportunities.

General Practitioners are also ideally placed to provide holistic care for people with skin problems as it is well documented that skin disease can impact significantly on quality of life, mood and functioning for people and their families. The rate of skin cancer in Ireland is increasing.³ This means that Irish GPs need to be skilled in recognition, early diagnosis and timely referral of suspicious lesions.



Case vignette

John Farrell is a 36 year-old old teacher. He has had psoriasis since he was a teenager and in recent years has developed joint pains. His rash is currently bad on his hands, knees, elbows, face and scalp.

He is aware that stress can aggravate his symptoms. He attends today looking for a sick note because he says he couldn't possibly teach with his face and scalp the way they are.

He is a non-smoker and drinks alcohol socially. His BMI has increased to 30 over the last few years as he has become more reluctant to exercise or go to the gym.

He finds the emollients helpful but remembering to apply them daily with his work schedule is difficult.

He tells you that he recently bought a 'Sun Lamp' that he is using at weekends.

He is wondering whether there are any new treatments for psoriasis that might help.

He and his wife are trying for a baby but he is concerned that his children might have the same skin complaint.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What tools could I use to measure severity and response to treatment?
- What topical treatments would I prescribe for the various affected areas?
- What other treatment options are available?
- When might I refer?
- Are there any alternative local referral pathways available, e.g. GPs with a Special Interest?

Person-centred care

- How would I assess Mr Farrell’s understanding of psoriasis?
- What communication skills would I use to demonstrate that you hear and accept his concerns?
- As Mr Farrell’s GP, how would I help address his feelings and concerns for the future?
- What are Mr Farrell’s goals for the treatment of his psoriasis?
- How might I address ongoing care and concordance with Mr Farrell?

Specific problem-solving skills

- What is the most appropriate treatment regime for Mr Farrell’s psoriasis?
- If his treatment is going to be topical, how is he going to treat his face?
- How will I address Mr Farrell’s joint pains?
- In what circumstances would I refer Mr Farrell for specialist opinion?

A comprehensive approach

- What are the chances that Mr Farrell’s children might also have psoriasis?
- How and when would I address Mr Farrell’s BMI?
- Are there any other health promotional areas I would like to address with Mr Farrell?
- What advice would I give regarding sunbed use as treatment for psoriasis?
- How would I address the concept of self-efficacy with Mr Farrell?

Community orientation

- Is there a practice protocol for the management of psoriasis in my area?
- Is there a need for education and health promotion about psoriasis in the area?

A holistic approach

- How would I assess the impact of Mr Farrell’s psoriasis on his mental health, relationship and work?
- How would I address the impact of Mr Farrell’s physical illness on his self-confidence and body image?
- How would I address the issue of stress?
- What systemic aspects of psoriasis need to be considered?
- How would I address the issue of reliable (evidence-based) information on psoriasis management with Mr Farrell?

Contextual Features

- What are my responsibilities as a GP and as a certifier of illness?
- What do I know about the possible impact of absence from work for illness?

Attitudinal Features

- How do I feel about Mr Farrell asking for time off work because of his feelings around his recent facial flare?
- How could I empower someone to play an active part in the management of their condition?

Scientific Features

- How would I keep my dermatology diagnostic and management skills up to date?
- What are the major advances in psoriasis therapy?
- Am I familiar with new biological treatments such as TNF- α blockers and monoclonal antibodies for severe disease unresponsive to standard second-line therapies?
- Am I familiar with key national guidelines and early referral routes for suspected cancerous skin lesions?
- How would I assess the quality of the dermatology care you provide?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of people with skin conditions. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should;

- Record data appropriately being particularly aware of the issues surrounding taking and storage of photographs
- Demonstrate an understanding of the need to co-ordinate care with other health professionals, leading to effective and appropriate dermatology management including prevention and rehabilitation
- Be aware of local, alternative referral resources such as GPs with a Special Interest (GPwSIs), specialist nurse practitioners, 'expert patients' or self-management courses
- Acknowledge the role of other members of the primary healthcare team (e.g. specialist health visitors for eczema and wet wrapping, public health nurses/ nurse practitioners for leg ulcers and wound management)
- Acknowledge the role of the GP in the appropriate referral for cosmetic surgery

2. Person-Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should;

- Demonstrate appropriate history-taking for patients with skin problems, including family history, chemical contacts, occupation and drug usage
- Recommend appropriate educational material and strategies
- Guide people towards information on referral options and patient support groups

- Be aware of the role of self-management strategies in skin disease
- Assist people to adopt self-treatment and coping strategies, where possible, in such conditions as eczema, acne and psoriasis
- Communicate information regarding risk of long-term exposure to ultraviolet and sunburn, especially in children

3. Specific Problem-Solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should;

- Describe a skin lesion or rash using dermatologically accurate terms
- Formulate a differential diagnosis
- Distinguish between benign and malignant skin conditions
- Describe inheritance of common skin diseases, e.g. eczema
- Create an appropriate dermatological investigation and treatment plan
- Demonstrate an understanding of the effective use of drug therapy in dermatology and prescribe when appropriate
- Predict the quantities of cream/ointment/lotion that should be prescribed to enable patients to treat their skin condition appropriately and when to use each
- Identify the role of histopathology and when to recommend incision or excision biopsy
- Distinguish between the indications for curettage, cautery and cryosurgery
- Predict likely scenarios for contact dermatitis where patch testing may be needed
- Make use of knowledge of the association between psoriasis and arteriosclerosis
- Diagnose and manage the following conditions
 - Acne and Rosacea
 - Psoriasis
 - Eczema
 - Skin Cancers: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, malignant melanoma
 - Benign skin lesions: keratosis, cysts, warts
 - Fungal, bacterial and viral infections
 - Infestations and insect bites
 - Drug eruptions
 - Vasculitic and Autoimmune skin conditions
 - Urticaria, angioedema, skin allergy
 - Life threatening skin conditions

- Ulcerations
- Hair problems: androgenic alopecia, tellogium effluvium, trichotillomania
- Congenital skin lesions
- Nail changes
- Pityriasis and keratinization disorders
- Lichenoid eruptions
- Erythema and disorders of pigmentation
- Excess hair and sweat gland problems
- Recognise the importance of skin-specific symptoms, e.g. itching and rash distribution
- Perform an appropriate examination of the skin
- Demonstrate the ability to take specimens from skin, hair and nails
- Demonstrate understanding of how to recognise common skin conditions in primary care, e.g. eczemas, psoriasis and infections, and instigate appropriate treatment
- Recognise emergency skin conditions, e.g. erythroderma, anaphylaxis and herpetic eczema
- Demonstrate the ability to refer appropriately, particularly in urgent and emergency situations
- Recognise the alarm symptoms and signs for skin cancers that necessitate fast-track referral
- Demonstrate the ability to interpret histology reports
- Recognise the spectrum of patterns and distributions of rashes of different skin disorders
- Recognise rarer but potentially important conditions, e.g. bullous disorders and vasculitis
- Pay attention to examination of 'difficult areas' such as the flexures, genitalia, eyes and mucous membranes

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Identify symptoms that are within the range of normal and require no medical intervention, e.g. age-related changes such as dry skin/hair loss and innocent moles
- Accept that pathology in other systems may lead to skin changes, e.g. metastases and manifestations of systemic disease
- Accept the role of the GP in health promotion and disease prevention including advice in sun protection, occupational health, avoiding unnecessary chemicals and hand care

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should;

- Describe the systems of care for dermatological conditions, including the roles of primary and secondary care, shared care arrangements, multidisciplinary teams and the person's own involvement
- Describe primary care resources and when to refer to secondary care so that patients receive appropriate treatment (for example light, biological or immunosuppressant therapy)

6. Holistic Modelling

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Recognise how disfigurement and cosmetic skin changes fundamentally affect people's confidence, mood, interpersonal relationships and even employment opportunities
- Be aware of the feelings engendered by skin disease, which include fears about contagion and concerns about malignancy
- Accept and acknowledge the importance of the social and psychological impact of skin problems on people's quality of life (for example, sleep, disfigurement, messy treatment regimens)

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, and culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Recognise the evolving trends in disease demographics, e.g. the increasing incidence of skin cancers, an aging population and the increase in ethnic minorities
- Acknowledge the significant quality-of-life issues regarding common skin complaints, which can also impact on the entire family (for example sleep disturbance from itching affecting children and parents, loss of self-esteem affecting adolescents)

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Show continual desire to ensure that skin problems are not inappropriately dismissed as trivial or unimportant
- Balance the need to undress someone sufficiently for examination with the need to preserve dignity

9. Scientific Evidence

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Apply an evidence-based approach to management of skin problems

Related curriculum areas

- Adolescent Health
- Sexual Health
- Medicine
- Mental Health
- Occupational Health



Resources

- **Primary Care Dermatology Society** – High quality web-based dermatology resource including practical advice on managing common skin problems seen in primary care and excellent picture library. www.pcds.org.uk
- **DermIS** – Searchable photo library. www.dermis.net
- **Dermnet NZ** – Excellent library of pictures and descriptions of diseases (including the uncommon), which can be a resource for creating patient information leaflets. www.dermnetnz.org
- **DermQuest** – This is an excellent picture library with news on clinical and research updates available for all. www.dermquest.com
- **eGuidelines** – UK guidelines for dermatology in primary care. www.eguidelines.co.uk/hub/index.php?topicID=401
- **Medscape** – Easy-to-navigate, short dermatology articles. <http://emedicine.medscape.com/dermatology>
- **National Psoriasis Foundation** – Photos and short descriptions of psoriasis. www.psoriasis.org
- **National Rosacea Association** – Patient education materials and information for physicians. www.rosacea.org

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Introduction

Primary care physicians deal with a variety of acute surgical problems. Abdominal pain accounts for 4.2% of visits to general practitioners with the most common diagnosis being gastritis/duodenitis, infectious bowel disease and cholecystolithiasis and cholecystitis.⁹ General practitioners manage a large proportion of surgical complaints issues, including abdominal, vascular, urological and breast disease and are often the first contact for patients with post-operative problems and complications.



Case vignette

Stephen a 36 year old builder, who is new to the practice, presented with 1 day history of lower abdominal pain, anorexia, nausea and shivers. He had one episode of vomiting that morning. He is concerned he picked up a vomiting bug as one of his children recently had a gastroenteritis.

You examine Stephen and find he has a mild pyrexia of 37.8, tachycardia of 110. His abdomen is soft and tender in right iliac fossa but there is no guarding or rigidity. His urinalysis is normal.

You are concerned he has appendicitis so you refer him to your local ED.

Three days later Stephen returns. He tells you he didn't wait to be seen in ED as he felt it was too busy so he returned the following day and then was rushed to theatre as he had perforated his appendix. He was admitted to the ward shortly after where he thinks he received some antibiotics but was discharged later that day by an on call doctor. He shows you a copy of his discharge prescription which contains Difene 75mg BD x 5/7 and Tramadol 100mg TDS x 5/7. He was told to return to his own doctor for removal of sutures but is unsure what day he was meant to come. Stephen tells you he still has pain and hasn't taken the medication on his prescription as they made him feel sick. He has no problem passing urine but has had no bowel motion since his surgery.

You examine his wound. He had an open appendectomy and the wound has some surrounding erythema and purulent discharge.

Stephen wants to know when he can return to work and if he can have certs for the next two weeks and also asks when he is allowed to drive.

Mapping the case to the curriculum domains

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be mapped to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What investigations I preform in someone who presents with fever in the post-operative period?

- What scale would I use to manage post-operative pain?
- What are the possible causes of constipation in the post-operative period?
- When should sutures be removed from an abdominal/hand/facial wound?

Person-centred care

- How would my initial management change if this was a female patient?
- How might the presentation of appendicitis differ in an elderly patient?

Specific problem solving skills

- For Stephens initial presentation:
- What are the possible differential diagnosis?
- What other questions would I elicit from the history?
- How would I manage wound infection?

A comprehensive approach

- What opportunistic health promotion could I bring to this consultation considering Stephen is a new patient to the practice?

Community orientation

- Am I aware of guidelines in relation to driving with a medical condition?
- How could communication between primary and secondary care be improved?

A holistic approach

- What impact could Stephen absence from work have on his family?
- How information would I give Stephen about illness benefit?

Attitudinal features

- What are my personal feelings about Stephens treatment in ED?

Scientific features

- What are my local antibiotic prescribing guidelines?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of surgical issues in primary care.

In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas

1. Primary Care Management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP Should:

- Be aware of guidelines in relation to breast screening
- Know appropriate referral pathway for breast lump

2. Person-Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP Should be able to:

- Advise patients on stoma care
- Identify patients at risk of AAA
- Identify symptoms of prostate cancer and perform appropriate exam and investigations
- Recognise symptoms of DVT in post operative patient

3. Specific Problem Solving skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should be able to:

- List differential diagnosis for dysphagia
- Diagnose and manage acute abdomen
- Diagnose and manage acute GI bleed
- Diagnose and manage appendicitis
- Diagnose and manage biliary colic
- Diagnose and manage cholecystitis
- Diagnose and manage pancreatitis
- Diagnose and manage inguinal hernia
- Diagnose and manage perianal abscess and fissure
- Assess appropriately the patient presenting with pr bleeding
- Diagnose and manage breast abscess
- Diagnose and manage mastitis
- Diagnose and manage mastalgia
- Diagnose and manage acute limb ischaemia
- Diagnose and manage chronic limb ischaemia
- Diagnose and manage varicose veins
- Recognise symptoms of acute urinary retention
- Diagnose and manage epididymo-orchitis
- Diagnose and manage phimosis
- Diagnose and manage BPH
- Differentiate between benign and malignant testicular lumps
- Diagnose and manage renal calculi
- Evaluate patients with pyrexia in the post-operative period
- Diagnose and manage wound infection

- Perform an abdominal examination
- Perform a DRE
- Perform a breast examination
- Demonstrate ability to examine pulses
- Detect and advise patients presenting with testicular trauma/torsion

4. A Comprehensive Approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should be able to:

- Evaluate and manage post operative pain
- Accept the importance of addressing patient concerns regarding a procedure
- Demonstrate the ability to counsel patients about benefits, risks and complications of a procedure
- Accept the importance of obtaining valid and informed consent
- Demonstrate the ability to perform suturing
- Outline Indications and techniques for skin biopsy
- Demonstrate the ability to interpret histology reports
- Recognise and manage complications of a procedure

5. Community Orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Recognise the role of the general practitioner in the use of social welfare certification
- Be aware of current Medical Fitness to Drive Guidelines

6. A Holistic Approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should:

- Acknowledge reasons for reluctance of male patients to attend their GP
- Recognise opportunities for health promotion in patients attending with an acute illness

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual Features

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks. You should

- Accept the importance of performing abdominal and rectal examination in a comfortable and dignified environment

8. Attitudinal Features

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care. You should

- Recognise your own frustrations regarding patients who fail to comply with treatment plans
- Value other healthcare professionals and workers opinions.

9. Scientific Features

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning. You should

- Keep account of changes in areas of surgery to allow better explanation and communication to patients
- Keep up to date by attending surgical meetings that are relevant to primary care

Learning Opportunities

- Emergency Department
- General Practice
- Day release teaching

Links with other chapters

- Digestive Health
- Gender specific health-Man and Woman
- Urgent and Immediate Care
- Pain Management



Resources

- BreastCheck An Educational Package for General practice
<http://www.icgp.ie/go/library/catalogue/item/09A43490-3164-49CE-BD8DE15F58EFFF13&redirected=yes>
- Comprehensive focus on Breast Disease for GPs, Forum
https://www.icgp.ie/assets/79/9179Fo29-DB26-D59F-152A2FC34E713FBD_document/7._GP_Education_Breast_module.pdf
- Peripheral Arterial Disease, A Management Guide for General Practice, Irish Heart Foundation
https://www.irishheart.ie/media/pub/padcd/pad_guidelines.pdf
- NICE Guidelines-Improving Outcomes in Urological Cancers
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/csguc/evidence/improving-outcomes-in-urological-cancers-manual-2>
- Postoperative pain management-Good Clinic Practice, European Society of Regional Anaesthesia and Pain Therapy
<http://polanest.webd.pl/pliki/varia/books/PostoperativePainManagement.pdf>

References

1. Saxon Epidemiological Study in General practice

Introduction

Women-specific health matters such as contraception, pregnancy, menopause and disorders of reproductive organs account for many GP consultations. In addition, women present with non-gender related issues in specific ways that as a GP you will need to become sensitive to: domestic violence, depression and alcoholism can all present differently in women, compared to men.

Women also are more likely than men to be looking after the home, with 98% of those engaged in looking after home/family being women, this represents close to half a million women in Ireland¹.

It is important to recognise that women in Ireland experience fewer “Healthy Life Years”, are more likely to suffer from chronic conditions and are more likely to die from cancers than their EU counterparts². Observations of increased stress in women who have to work outside the home coupled with financial worries of childcare costs have a direct effect on women’s medical and psychological well-being.

Research by the Irish Sports Council, shows that women’s participation in weekly sport is increasing, as is the percentage of women meeting National Physical Activity Guidelines³, and we as GP’s we are in an excellent position to encourage and foster this healthy change in Irish women.



Case vignette

Mary, a 54 year patient who rarely visits the practice, comes to see you with symptoms of night sweats and fatigue. On further questioning you hear that she is looking after her father who was recently diagnosed with oesophageal cancer. Her husband has recently started a job after 4 year of unemployment but is away working quite a bit and she is an only child. She last had a period 2 years ago but she has only developed these sweats in the last few months. On examination you find a breast lump. She admits to not pursuing her mammogram invitation.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What are the clinical issues I will prioritise to address during this initial consultation?
- How will I approach these issues e.g., diagnosing menopause and management of menopausal symptoms, screening for depression, and counselling, management and referral paths for a patient with a breast lump?
- Am I confident in my skill of breast examination?
- As a GP, how can I be sure that my practice knows about, and follows up, all invitations for screening when women do not attend?

- Am I familiar with this and other national screening programmes?
- What other resources/services/healthcare professionals could I involve in the management of this case?

Person-centred care

- How effective am I as a GP at respecting the views of patients who are reluctant to accept help involving public health services and other agencies?
- How can I develop a therapeutic relationship with Mary with a view to improved health outcomes for her?
- In relation to communication; am I comfortable dealing with these issues in an open, collaborative and non-judgemental manner?

Specific problem-solving skills

- What further questions would I like answered in order to work towards helping Mary with these issues?
- Do I know the ‘red flag’ symptoms which require urgent referral?
- What resources would I use to check the guidelines if I was unsure?
- How would I approach this consultation in the absence of the examination finding of a breast lump?

A comprehensive approach

- How can I balance on-going health promotion and advice-giving at a time of serious illness?
- What steps would I take to better understand the impact of this illness on Mary’s family?
- How do I address the seriousness of Mary’s examination findings while not losing sight of her presenting symptoms and her own concerns?

Community orientation

- What additional services and support groups are available to patients in my area?
- How would I advise Mary to access any that might be appropriate to her or her family?

A holistic approach

- As the GP for more than one generation of a family, how do I balance their health and social care needs?
- Am I cognisant of Mary’s fears and expectations when dealing with her?
- What is my understanding of the impact of stress and family history in different social groups and on the health of the individual?

Contextual features

- How might Mary’s background influence this and further consultations? E.g. if language is an issue? or if Mary is a member of a minority community?
- How might my cultural background affect my relationships with my patients?
- If Mary asked me for investigation results in relation to her father, am I aware of the regulatory framework within which I practise?

Attitudinal features

- As a GP, how might I manage my feelings if there are any aspects of a case where my personal beliefs and values are in conflict with those of my patient?
- What guidance does ICGP/IMC have on such matters - link

Scientific features

- What tensions do I see between the scientific, political and patient-centred aspects of breast screening?
- What do I know about the limitations of screening?
- What resources are available to me to continue my learning in this area?
- How do I ensure that I stay up to date and evidence based in my practice?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of women's specific health problems. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management:

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should:

- Know the causes of and management strategies for post-menopausal bleeding
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the GP in the structure of antenatal care
- Recognise the role of the GP in the management of higher risk pregnancies e.g. multiple pregnancy
- Recognise the role of the GP in the management of bleeding in pregnancy
- Complete with confidence the two and six week checks
- Recognise and manage Ectopic pregnancy
- Recognise the role of the GP in identifying and managing Pre-eclamptic toxemia, Premature rupture of membranes and Precipitate labour
- Recognise the role of the GP in diagnosing and managing Postpartum haemorrhage, Breast abscess, Mastitis, Involution and Retained products of conception
- Identify and manage the medical and emotional elements associated with sub-fertility
- Understand the GP's key role in providing emergency contraception including LARC
- Identify the common STD's along with their natural histories and management
- Define a woman's level of individual risk of specific infections based on her sexual history

2. Person Centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should:

- Make use of national guidelines when managing a woman with an unplanned pregnancy
- Define the legal aspects of managing a woman with an unplanned pregnancy
- Demonstrate an understanding of the GP's duty of care for a woman post termination of pregnancy

3. Specific problem solving skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should:

- Differentiate the common and serious causes of Abnormal Vaginal bleeding
- Assess women's contraception needs including LARC
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the GP's role in diagnosing and managing woman-specific issues including
- Recognise the role of the GP in routine pre pregnancy counselling, antenatal and post natal care, including after unanticipated pregnancy outcomes
- Diagnose and manage (including referral) obstetric emergencies including ectopic pregnancy, pre eclampsia, placental abruption
- Describe maternal immunisation
- Distinguish the causes of bleeding in pregnancy
- Combine available evidence to manage common medical disorders in the setting of pregnancy and lactation, including diabetes and hypertension
- Perform routine antenatal assessments including abdominal palpation, use doppler ultrasound and /or foetal heart auscultation, recognise foetal growth retardation and other abnormal presentations
- Accept the GP's role in identifying high risk pregnancies and referring appropriately
- Diagnose labour and outline the GP relevant issues in managing labour including Precipitate Labour and Premature rupture of membranes
- Identify those women at risk of postnatal depression
- Diagnose and manage women with postnatal depression and baby blues
- Accept the role of the GP in identifying and managing post-partum complications including haemorrhage, infection and mastitis
- Perform a cervical smear and manage an abnormal cervical smear results appropriately
- Perform Breast Examination while being conscious of the patient's feelings
- Perform appropriate gynaecological assessment including history and pelvic examinations
- Perform sample taking for common STDs

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should:

- Demonstrate knowledge of national screening programmes including Cervical Check and Breast Check
- Explain the supports available to a woman who is experiencing domestic violence
- Explain the obstacles to women in seeking health care
- Explain the obstacles to women disclosing a history of domestic violence
- Define the legal framework that a GP operates in when it comes to consideration of contraception options in females under the age of 18
- Manage common medical presentations in pregnancy including hypertension and diabetes as well as low mood and depression
- Improve efficiency of appropriate data recording

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Distinguish the role that socioeconomic conditions play in relation to women's health
- Identify the effect of psychological stresses on a woman's physical health
- Show continual desire to address health inequalities

6. Holistic care

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should:

- Understand the unique way that women may present with medical conditions, e.g. atypical symptoms in myocardial infarction
- Know how to screen for and manage psychological conditions associated with the different stages of a woman's life
- Adopt a supportive role for all new mothers both those breast and not breast feeding
- Adopt a supportive role for all those with a crisis pregnancy
- Support a woman to make decisions about contraception in an individualised manner that takes into accounts her cultural and personal beliefs

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, and culture, financial and regulatory frameworks. A GP should:

- Use resources to make your GP practice approachable for women suffering domestic violence
- Adapt your practice to recognise women's key role in caring for children and other members of the community and understand how this can affect their health and their health can affect their ability to provide this care

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care. A GP should:

- Seek to support patient autonomy
- Accept the role of a chaperone, and offer same as appropriate
- Maintain a non-judgemental approach to women suffering domestic violence
- Advocate for women, whose right to healthcare is being infringed
- Initiate systems to make the GP practice approachable to all women including for lesbian, bisexual and transgender patients
- Adopt an approach to women that is appropriate to her cultural and personal context

9. Scientific

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning. A GP should:

- Practice evidenced based medicine with consulting skills to explain diagnoses and management options to patients and their families
- Adopt an evidence based approach to individual women's contraceptive needs from early sexual encounters to the menopause
 - Breast Cancer
 - Breast Pain
 - Dysfunctional Uterine bleeding
 - Endometriosis
 - Gynaecological cancers
 - Pelvic Inflammatory Disease
 - Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

- Premenstrual Syndrome
- Symptoms of Menopause
- Treatment options for menopause
- Urinary Incontinence
- Vaginal Prolapse
- Vulvovaginitis

Web resources

- ICGP ELearning Module – Breast Disease
http://www.icgp.ie/go/courses/e_learning/A23FC7A2-19B9-E185-836CCAF19504B756.html
- ICGP Quality in Practice – Crisis Pregnancy
<http://www.icgp.ie/go/library/catalogue/item/C865CA4C-EDB8-3F3F-DEC2E4A0434F7907>
- HSE National Immunisation Website – Vaccines in Pregnancy
<http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/>
- Faculty of Reproductive and Sexual Health – Medical Eligibility Criteria for contraception
<http://www.fsrh.org/pdfs/UKMEC2009.pdf>
- NSE/SafeFood: Healthy Eating in Pregnancy Leaflet
<https://www.safefood.eu/SafeFood/media/SafeFoodLibrary/Documents/Consumer/Healthy%20Living/Healthy-Eating-For-Pregnancy.pdf>
- Patient.co.uk – information to provide to patients regarding diet and lifestyle in pregnancy as well as medication use, website run by the NHS
<http://www.patient.co.uk/health/diet-and-lifestyle-during-pregnancy>
- Cancer Research UK T- website includes information about cancer statistics
<http://cancerhelp.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/what-is-cancer/statistics>
- Irish Cancer Society
<http://www.cancer.ie/#sthash.FCdLbAHo.vgVW1oeZ.dpbs>
- Women's Aid
<http://www.womensaid.ie/>
- Irish Sports Council's Women in Sport Programme
http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Participation/Women_in_Sport/

References

1. Women and Men in Ireland 2013
<http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-wamii/womenandmeninireland2013/#.VVT6svlViko>
2. National Women's Strategy 2007-2016
<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/National%20Womens%20Strategy%20PDF.pdf/Files/National%20Womens%20Strategy%20PDF.pdf>
3. Irish Sports Council, Women in Sport Programme
http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Participation/Women_in_Sport/

Introduction

The Men's Health Chapter does not encompass all aspects of a man's health but rather the aspects of it which are specific to men and therefore warrant attention. Irish men have a life-expectancy which is almost five-years shorter than Irish women.¹ They are also more likely to die at an earlier age from most major causes of death.² The vast majority of Irish suicides are men.³

In addition, men have poorer lifestyles in terms of diet, exercise, alcohol and smoking and do not consult their GP as often as women.^{4,5} As a result, men can present later with symptoms resulting in delayed diagnosis.⁶ The relationship between perception of masculinity and health is a complex one where engagement in risk-taking or health-damaging behaviour can be seen as proof of masculinity.⁴

This sets the scene for consultations with men in general practice where communication skills, case-finding and opportunistic health promotion are of vital importance.



Case vignette

Tony, 40 years of age, is the successful owner of a real-estate business. Tony's wife, Sarah, and their children also attend the practice. Tony tells you that Sarah made the appointment for him. He says he would like a health check, "You know, the full MOT!" He also mentions that Sarah wanted him to get his prostate checked because he had an uncle who had prostate cancer.

Tony is considerably heavier than when you last saw him and now weighs 107 kg (height: 173 cm, BMI: 36). He has been working late and eating take-away food 3 or 4 times a week (usually fried fish and chips or pizza). His alcohol intake has also increased, consuming a six-pack most nights and twice that on Fridays with his workmates. He has been worried at the downturn in the housing market and says the alcohol helps him to relax. He used to be a keen football player until he injured his knee, and knows he needs to exercise more but finds it difficult to get motivated.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- How would I address the issues this consult presents within the time allowed?
- How would I approach the issue of attending to Tony's health needs while maintaining confidentiality between other family members?
- What other health care professionals / services might I consider suggesting in this case?
- How would I approach the concept of readiness for change with Tony?
- How would I address the concept of continuing health care and health management with Tony?

Person-centred care

- How would I endeavour to develop rapport with Tony?
- What consultation skills would I use in my approach to this consultation so that Tony will be more inclined to return to me and/or doctors in general on a regular basis?
- What would I do to inform Tony and involve him in decision-making?
- How would I empower Tony to take responsibility for his health?

Specific problem-solving skills

- What do I think a “health check” for a man of 40 should consist of?
- How will I assess Tony’s prostate?
- Am I aware of the Medical Council guidelines on intimate examinations and the use of chaperones?
- What is the significance of his family history of prostate cancer?
- How would I assess his cardiovascular risk?
- How would I assess urinary symptoms?
- To what degree will I address lifestyle factors at this consultation?

Comprehensive approach

- Am I comfortable providing a listening and supportive role for Tony?
- How would I prioritise Tony’s health needs?
- How would I proceed safely, knowing that men attend doctors less frequently than women?
- How will I arrange follow-up with Tony?
- When would I address health promotion for Tony in terms of diet, exercise, weight-loss, alcohol intake and life-work balance?

Community orientation

- Are I aware of the resources in your community that might be of use to Tony?
- What are the waiting times for these services and am I and our practice using them appropriately?

A holistic approach

- How are things at home for Tony (his relationship with his wife and his children)?
- Are Tony’s family under financial pressure?
- Is Tony self-conscious of his weight and is it one of the things preventing him from recommencing exercise?
- Does Tony’s situation resonate with similar concerns for you or your family?
- How are your time-management skills?

Contextual features

- Am I aware of the barriers to accessing health care for men?
- Are there particular economic difficulties in my practice’s area?
- Are there current health promotional activities which may have helped or could help in addressing Tony’s health needs?
- What impact might running late in this consultation have?

Attitudinal features

- What are my attitudes to working long hours and using alcohol as a means of “winding down”?
- How do I manage stress?
- How do I feel about men discussing their fears and weaknesses?
- How will I reconcile these attitudes with providing a professional service for Tony?

Scientific features

- Am I aware of the statistics regarding men’s lower life-expectancy, less frequent attendance with GPs and late presentation with symptoms?
- Am I familiar with national health policies and guidelines for men (e.g. National Prostate Cancer Referral Guidelines)?
- Is there evidence for regular “health checks” in men?
- What is the evidence for screening for prostate cancer?
- Am I up to date with the management of the health issues Tony presents?

The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of issues relating to men’s health. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary Care Management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should;

- Accept that men tend to be poorer users of health services compared to women
- Make use of the knowledge that men may need more encouragement both to attend the GP and to articulate the full extent of their health problems
- Demonstrate knowledge and describe the management of the key male-specific medical conditions, while noting that the most serious non-sex specific health problems are more common in men and tend to occur at an earlier age
- Identify those non-male specific conditions that are found to be more prevalent or have a different presentation in men, such as depression
- Accept and comply with the role of the GP in leading effective and appropriate acute and chronic disease management including prevention and rehabilitation
- Accept and comply with the role of the GP in primary contact with patients who have a male genitourinary problem
- Recognise the role of the GP in empowering the patient to look after their own health

- Identify how the other primary care team members may help in delivering health promotion for men
- Recognise when urgent referral to specialist services are required (e.g. testicular lumps and suspected prostate cancer)
- Explain the indications for urgent referral to specialist services
- Identify conditions affecting men where there is a low index of suspicion such as breast cancer and osteoporosis

2. Person-Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should:

- Adapt consultation skills to compensate for difficulties men may have in articulating their health needs
- Recognise that men may present with more than one health problem at a time and that men may mask mental/emotional health problems with physical symptoms
- Be aware of the impact of socio-economic status on lifestyle
- Describe the particular difficulties that adolescent and young adult males have when accessing primary care services
- Adopt and demonstrate a non-judgmental, caring and professional consulting style to minimise embarrassing male patients
- Advocate the need for appointments and other services to be available at times convenient to men
- Assess and detect readiness for behaviour change
- Adopt a shared decision-making style of consultation

3. Specific Problem Solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should;

- Adopt a lower threshold for suspicion of significant disease knowing men consult less frequently but have poorer health outcomes for many conditions.
- Use knowledge of the relative prevalence of all medical conditions in men compared to women to assist diagnosis
- Assess suicidal risk
- Diagnose and manage benign prostate problems (benign prostatic hypertrophy, prostatitis)
- Define indications for a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test
- Explain the role of PSA blood test in the diagnosis and management of prostate cancer
- Apply evidence-based guidance in screening for prostate cancer

- Interpret the results of the PSA blood test
- Proceed urgently with referral of suspected malignancy
- Evaluate testicular & lumps and have a low threshold for referral
- Diagnose and manage male genital problems such as hydrocoele, hernia, varicocoele, epididymo-orchitis, phimosis
- Identify the health needs of the increasing number of men who are cancer survivors
- Evaluate and manage erectile dysfunction
- Describe the implications of erectile dysfunction as an early marker of cardiovascular disease
- Evaluate and manage overweight and obesity issues in men
- Describe the systems of care for men's sexual health, including the roles of primary and secondary care, shared care arrangements, multidisciplinary teams and patient involvement
- Describe the potential impact of workplace health hazards on men
- Accept and acknowledge the role of the GP in stress management
- Recognise the role of the GP in the management of psychosexual problems
- Recognise the role of the GP in the diagnosis and treatment of subfertility

4. Comprehensive Approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Identify the patient's health beliefs regarding illness and lifestyle
- Reinforce, modify or challenge health beliefs as appropriate
- Initiate discussion with men about symptoms, and the link between lifestyle and health
- Apply health promotion and disease prevention strategies appropriately
- Use consultations with infrequent attendees opportunistically for health education
- Describe the impact of men's health problems on the patient and his family and on their presentation and management
- Describe the screening programmes available to men and be able to discuss these with patients
- Use evidence-based men's health resources to reinforce advice given during consultations and for general health promotion
- Acknowledge that healthcare provision for men can extend into other settings, thereby increasing opportunities to target men other than in the clinic, e.g. in the workplace or in leisure settings
- Make men's health information available within the practice
- Act habitually to empower patients to recognise when they can self-care safely and when they must visit the GP

5. Community Orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should;

- Describe the features of a successful men's health service, including cultural and social awareness
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the primary care service you provide from the male patient's point of view
- Accept equality legislation and the implications for you as a GP
- Formulate practical means of engaging with men more effectively regarding their health
- Appraise the role of well-man clinics in primary care
- Be aware that men presenting with aggressive behaviour could be a sign of psychological stress
- Describe the local male-targeted health programmes or services for referral

6. Holistic Approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Be aware that cultural backgrounds may influence men's attitudes towards health and expectations of the doctor.
- Explain the importance of the parental fathering role in family structures
- Demonstrate an understanding of social influences on mental health including family and marital dynamics
- Describe the psychological, social, cultural and economic problems caused by unemployment amongst men
- Describe the health needs of gay, transgender and bisexual men (beyond sexual health) and their partners
- Describe the health needs of minority ethnic men including members of the Travelling Community
- Describe and acknowledge the social and cultural pressures which may underlie the reluctance of male patients to seek timely help and may inhibit male patients from expressing their health concerns

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Recognise important variations in men's health according to ethnicity, social class and geography
- Describe the local demography, social deprivation and failings in service provision that may contribute to poor male health

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Accept that relationships with male patients may be different depending on the gender of the doctor, and intervene when this is adversely affecting the doctor–patient relationship
- Demonstrate a non-judgemental approach towards male health beliefs, and encouraging these beliefs to be expressed and modified, where appropriate
- Acknowledge that male circumcision is important for several religious groups
- Adapt the consultation because men's presentation of symptoms for depression and other mental health problems may be different to women's
- Accept that your own gender experience may influence your decisions as a GP

9. Scientific Evidence

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Identify the key statistical differences between the health of men and women
- Appraise the evidence base for men's different presentation of symptoms, particularly for mental health conditions

Related Curriculum Areas

- Sexual Health
- Cardiovascular Medicine
- Women’s Health
- Social Medicine
- Adolescent Health



Resources

- National Men’s Health Policy 2008 – 2013, Working with Men in Ireland to Achieve Optimum Health & Wellbeing. Department of Health and Children 2008. Available at: http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/reference_document.pdf
- National Prostate Cancer GP Referral Guidelines. http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/cancer/profinfo/resources/gpreferrals/Prostate_Referral_Guideline.pdf
- International Prostate Symptom Score. <http://www.urospect.com/uro/Forms/ipss.pdf>
- Equality Legislation in Ireland, Equal-check, http://www.culturewise.ie/equal-check/equality_lagislation_in_ie.php
- British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH), www.bashh.org
- British Society for Sexual Medicine, www.bssm.org.uk

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4. UCL Institute of Health Equity. Review of social determinants and the health divide in the WHO European Region: final report. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2013.
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Introduction

34% of the Irish population are under the age of 25 and about 25% of all consultations in general practice are with children¹. Most healthcare for children and young people is delivered in the community. The national policy framework for children and younger people “Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures” 2014–2020 is a whole of government policy to support this age group². The majority of children and young people in Ireland are healthy and happy with their lives, but 20% of this age group need additional support. Services for children with disabilities are described in the HSE’s national programme on “Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People”. An inter-agency, interdisciplinary approach to provide a holistic, child centred, safe and respectful environment for children is encouraged. This is consistent with the core competencies of general practice.

The Child and Family Agency was established in January 2014. Legislation for child protection is underpinned by the 1991 Child Care Act, and guided by the 2004 Children First guidelines³. The Domestic Violence Act, 1996 and the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 are also relevant to child protection and welfare.

The general practitioner requires an extensive knowledge base for this section of the population with a broad familiarity with common paediatric problems and a dependable ability to recognise a sick child. The general practitioner should also integrate health promotion and the national policy framework outcomes into the care of children in their practice.



Case vignette

Fiona is a plump 4 year old who has been brought to see you by both her parents late on Friday afternoon. When collecting her from Child Care, they noted that Fiona was off form with a high temperature.

On examination, Fiona has a pyrexia of 39.2 C, is irritable, has cold extremities and has a fine erythematous rash over her trunk. You also notice some bruising on the backs of her thighs. How would you proceed?

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary Care Management

- What information would you record in Fiona’s medical record and in a referral letter if you decided to refer her?

Person-centred Care

- How would you conduct the consultation given Fiona’s age and that both parents are present?
- How might you negotiate an admission if you thought it appropriate?

Specific Problem-solving Skills

- What further information would you require both from the history and the examination in this case?
- How might you address the possibility of non-accidental injury (NAI) with the parents?
- What are your criteria for identifying serious illness and admitting febrile children?

Comprehensive Approach

- What health promotional and preventive health opportunities does this consultation raise?

Community Orientation

- What issues does this case raise for the local Crèche and for secondary care?

Holistic Care

- How do you manage the uncertainties this situation might generate?

Contextual Features

- What legal options are available to you when dealing with a case of NAI?

Attitudinal Features

- What are your feelings in relation to non-accidental injury?

Scientific Features

- Where would you look for further information on febrile conditions in children?

**Learning outcomes**

The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management and care of children. In order to demonstrate the core competences in the area of care of children and young people you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary Care Management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) As a GP you should:

- Demonstrate the ability to refer appropriately
- Record data appropriately
- Manage common symptoms like vomiting, drowsiness, developmental delay, infantile colic, 'failure to thrive' and growth disorders, behavioural problems, obesity
- Safeguard children and young people, understanding that the welfare of the child and young person must be the paramount consideration
- Deal effectively with maltreatment of children and young people by recognising the clinical features, and aware of local arrangements for child protection issues

2. Person-centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. As a GP you should:

- Act habitually to communicate at an appropriate level with the child
- Adopt a family-centred approach in dealing with patients, their families and their problems.
- Being aware of the impact of parental problems including domestic violence and abuse, substance and alcohol misuse and mental health problems
- Create an appropriate investigation and treatment plan
- Manage acute and chronic presentations in children simultaneously
- Take an appropriate history from the child and the parent/carer
- Perform an appropriate clinical examination

3. Specific Problem Solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should:

- Recognise acute severe illness
- Formulate a differential diagnosis
- Demonstrate an understanding of the effective use of drug therapy
- Perform and interpret blood pressure measurements
- Perform paediatric phlebotomy and IV insertion
- Demonstrate inhaler device technique
- Perform palpation of pulses and apical beat
- Perform auscultation of heart sounds, including added sounds
- Recognise and describe significant cardiac murmurs
- Recognise and assess features of congestive heart failure
- Recognise signs of respiratory distress
- Perform auscultation of normal and adventitious chest sounds
- Recognise and assess significant collapse/consolidation, pleural effusion, pneumothorax
- Recognise and assess abdominal masses
- Recognise normal penile, scrotal, testicular and vulval appearances
- Complete examination for hydrocoele, hernia, undescended testes
- Recognise and assess normal and abnormal fontanelle size and tension
- Perform an appropriate assessment of tone, gait, co-ordination, sensation, power
- Plot measurements on appropriate centile charts

- Perform developmental assessment at six weeks, six months, one year and 18 months
- Perform pubertal assessment
- Recognise developmental delay in children
- Diagnose and manage the following conditions
 - Common birthmarks and skin conditions
 - Snuffly babies
 - Jaundice
 - Sleep Disturbance
 - Feeding problems
 - Acute urinary tract infection
 - Acute viral illness
 - Bronchiolitis
 - Croup
 - Dehydration
 - Diarrhoea
 - Irritable child
 - Minor trauma
 - Otitis Media
 - Pyrexia
 - Sore throat
 - Acute abdomen
 - Acute appendicitis
 - Acute epiglottitis
 - Acute life-threatening episode
- Adenoid hypertrophy
- Balanitis
- Phimosis
- Child that presents with a limp
- Hirschprung's disease
- Hypoglycaemia
- Hypothermia
- Intussusception
- Meningitis
- Mesenteric Adenitis
- Non-accidental injury
- Pneumonia
- Pyloric Stenosis
- Septicaemia
- Allergy and food intolerance

- Anaemia
- Asthma, Bronchiectasis, Bronchiolitis
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Autism
- Balanitis, Phimosis
- Behavioural problems
- Cerebral Palsy
- Nutritional problems (underweight, overweight, obesity, coeliac disease)
- Constipation
- Colic
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Diabetes
- Diarrhoea
- Enuresis, Encopresis
- Epilepsy
- Musculoskeletal problems (scoliosis, congenital dislocation of the hip, gait and posture problems)
- Learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, specific learning disabilities)
- Psychiatric problems in childhood
- Recurrent abdominal pain
- Reflux
- Sleep Disturbance
- Thyroid Abnormalities
- Impetigo
- Exanthema of common infectious diseases including measles, rubella, chickenpox, scarlet fever
- Eczema
- Psoriasis
- Giant urticaria
- Diagnose and manage accidental poisoning
- Diagnose and manage acute abdomen
- Diagnose and manage acute epiglottitis
- Diagnose and manage acute urinary tract infection
- Diagnose and manage acute viral illness
- Diagnose and manage adenoid hypertrophy
- Diagnose and manage allergies
- Recognise and describe significant cardiac murmurs
- Recognise and assess features of congestive heart failure
- Recognise and assess significant collapse/consolidation, pleural effusion, pneumothorax

- Recognise and assess abdominal masses
- Recognise and assess normal and abnormal fontanelle size and tension
- Recognise and describe common rashes in childhood e.g. impetigo
- Evaluate and manage the child that presents with a limp
- Evaluate and manage congenital dislocation of hip
- Evaluate and manage scoliosis
- Evaluate the normal range of physical and mental development

4. A Comprehensive Approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should

- Participate in three-way consultations in a patient- and family-centred fashion
- Exemplify a respectful approach to children and enable them to participate in their own care-planning and delivery
- Recognise the health implications of inequalities, inequities and ethnic diversity and address these actively in a patient-centred fashion
- Understand the theory of psychological development in children and how it applies to behaviour
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate complex management strategies
- Accept and implement the role of the GP in relation to education, administration and audit of vaccinations
- Accept the role of the GP in the management of children with congenital abnormalities
- Understand the role of the GP in situations such as suspected child abuse/neglect, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or suspected non-accidental injury (NAI)

5. Community Orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Understand the systems of care for paediatric conditions, including the roles of primary and secondary care, shared care arrangements, multidisciplinary teams and patient involvement
- Accept the concept of the multidisciplinary team approach
- Accept the role of the GP in prevention and in promoting health
- Accept the role of the GP in supporting the health needs of children in residential, foster and other care placements.

6. A holistic Approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health.

A GP should:

- Provide longitudinal care for children and their families, particularly through the transition from childhood to adolescence and the accompanying changes in service delivery for those with chronic conditions
- Recognise children at risk (physically, psychologically or emotionally) and act in a patient-centred fashion with respect to the legislation on child protection
- Provide support and resources for families in relation to parenting
- Understand the concepts of capacity, consent and confidentiality as they relate to children
- Accept the role of supporting parents
- Understand the challenges of the transition from childhood to adolescence
- Explore behavioural issues with children, parents and families in a non-judgmental fashion
- Adopt a patient- and family-centred approach when dealing with children, their parents/carers and relations
- Adopt a supportive and enabling role so that children may be informed about and involved in decisions about their care, taking into account increasing autonomy with increasing maturity and the concepts of capacity, consent and confidentiality as they apply to children and young adults

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual Features:

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. A GP should:

- Understand the importance of the workload issues raised by paediatric problems, especially the demand for urgent appointments and the mechanisms for dealing with this

8. Attitudinal Features:

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care. A GP should:

- Recognise their attitudes to treating children and young people equitably, and with respect for their beliefs, preferences, dignity and rights
- Respect the sensitivities of young people about their health attitudes, behaviours and needs
- Manage the issues of confidentiality and consent
- Understand How and when to share information with other members of the primary care team.
- Exemplify a sensitive approach to the child, parents/guardians and relations

9. Scientific features:

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning. A GP should:

- Maintain knowledge and skills in the examination of the newborn child and the six-week check
- Be able to access the best evidence about clinical management and prescribing of medicines for children
- Use significant event meetings and audit as tools on which to reflect on your clinical practice in children
- Reflect on case-based discussions around child health and the identification of learning needs
- Reflect on aspects of protecting children and attending training

Learning opportunity

- Paediatric rotation in secondary care,
- Community paediatric clinics,
- General Practice,
- Day release teaching

Related Curriculum Areas

- Adolescent Health
- Multicultural Health
- Communication Skills
- Health Promotion
- Patients with Long-term Conditions



Resources

Child and Adolescent Mental Health: Diagnosis & Management: [Quick Reference Guide](#)

Asthma Control in General Practice [Quick Reference Guide](#) (2013)

Addressing Childhood Overweight & Obesity [e-learning module](#)

References

1. Central Statistics Office,. [Population By Age 2011](#). [Cited 2014 7th August]
2. Department Of Children And Youth Affairs, Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework For Children And Younger People 2014–2020, D.O.C.A.Y. Affairs, Editor 2014: Department Of Children And Youth Affairs
3. Department Of Health And Children, Children First. National Guidelines For The Protection And Welfare Of Children, 2004, The Stationary Office.

Introduction

The World Health Organisation defines Adolescents as young people between the ages of 10 and 19 years as does most international epidemiological comparisons. Irish law defines the legal age of majority in Ireland as 18 years.

However the rate at which an adolescent matures will vary greatly from person to person.

With most health care delivered to young people outside the hospital adolescent health or young people's health, now the current preference in General Practice needs to cover all aspects of physical, psychological and social health. Each contact should be used as an opportunity to promote health and education. Many suffer from chronic ill health and this needs to be addressed going into adulthood. Many adolescent consultations are less frequent, shorter and often accompanied by a third party.

As GPs we need to be competent in dealing with our adolescent patients, while at the same time recognising when referral and support is needed as well as an awareness of our own attitudes that can act as a barrier to open communication.



Case vignette

Anna age 14 is brought to the surgery by her mother as she has another sore throat. Over the past 9 months Anna has consulted frequently with sore throats occasionally requiring antibiotics. Anna's recurrent sore throats have resulted in her missing considerable time from school and her mother missing time from her workplace. Anna's mother talks about her concerns regarding Anna mainly her recurrent sore throats, her moodiness, and her isolation from the rest of the family. Recently there has been a lot of tension at home especially between Anna and her mum. Anna's parents separated 12 months ago and now Anna's mother's new partner lives with them.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary Care Management

- How would I take an adequate history and physical examination?
- How confident is my prescribing in this age group?
- What services are available specific to this age group within the practice and in the local primary care team and am I aware of them and how to access them?
- What structures would I put in place for follow up with Anna and her mother? How can I facilitate this with ease?

Person-centred Care

- Would I like to assess Anna alone and how would I approach this?
- How would I assess her level of maturity?
- What are the issues in relation to consent?
- Is a chaperone appropriate?
- What considerations would I give to the role of her mother in my assessment and management plans and how could I facilitate this?
- Is a separate consultation necessary at another time?

Specific Problem-solving Skills

- What further information would I require both from the history and the physical examination in this case?
- What investigations if any would be appropriate and is referral necessary outside of the practice?
- How would I approach and conduct a mental health assessment?
- How am I influenced by time and resource constraints and how would I manage this?

Comprehensive Approach

- What health promotional and preventive health opportunities does this consultation raise?
- Does the practice have a policy on health promotion in this age group and if not how would I implement same?
- Am I aware of immunisation guidelines in this age group?
- How would I manage issues around time missed from school?

Community Orientation

- What access is there to local services and supports for adolescents outside of the primary care setting both in hospital care and the private sector.
- What support can her school provide? How easy it is to access them? Am I aware of age limitations with paediatric and adult referral?

Holistic Care

- How do I manage the uncertainties generated by this situation?
- How would I approach each individual's expectations?
- How would I improve concordance to reach a mutual shared management plan?

Contextual Features

- What issues are raised about consent, confidentiality and capacity in this presentation?

Attitudinal Features

- What is my personal attitude to assessing adolescents? If necessary how can I improve?
- How comfortable am I in assessing alone or with a third part in the consultation?

- How do I feel about making a diagnosis relating to mental health in adolescence?
- How influenced am I by the dynamic between adolescent and parent in the room?
- How are my communications skills in a challenging consultation?
- Do I have an understanding of social media and its impact on adolescents?
- How does a consultation like this make me feel and influence my day and how can I improve on my own coping strategies?
- What are my attitudes relating to non-attending and am I aware of practice policies around this?

Scientific Features

- What is the evidence base for treatment of depression in adolescence?
- What are current microbial guidelines on sore throat?
- How accessible are you to current evidence based guidelines and continuing medical education?



In order to demonstrate the core competences in the area of adolescent health you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas: The areas of competence are:

1. Primary Care Management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) This means that as a GP you should:

- Recognising the presentation of mental health problems in adolescence
- Evaluating the role of the GP in the management of sexual health in adolescents
- Outline the links with appropriate adolescent support services in the community
- Evaluate the concepts of capacity, consent and confidentiality and their ethical and legal implications for adolescents
- Diagnose and manage chronic disease appropriately in adolescents recognising the specific needs of adolescents
- Master the ability to communicate complex medical management strategies to patients and families
- Accept the role of the GP in adolescent health with particular emphasis on age, maturity, capacity, consent and confidentiality
- Assume responsibility for the role of the GP and duties to the patient in crisis pregnancy.

2. Person Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. This means that as a GP you should:

- Demonstrate an understanding of body self-image, its implications for adolescents and how it manifests in eating disorders
- Awareness of sexual and physical abuse and recognise opportunity of disclosure
- Recognition of bullying either mental or physical inside and outside home
- Communicate sensitively respectfully and effectively and tailor consultations to the needs of adolescents
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in a three-way consultation
- Show recognition for adolescent's need to consult with the GP alone
- Manage a presentation by a concerned parent sensitively and effectively

3. Specific Problem Solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should:

- Demonstrate the ability to refer appropriately
- Discuss contraceptive and emergency contraceptive options and assist adolescents to make informed choices
- Describe the normal spectrum of adolescent development
- Understand the various contraceptive and emergency contraceptive options available to adolescents
- Define the normal spectrum of physical and mental pubertal development
- Conduct pubertal assessment
- Recognise abnormal pubertal development
- Define and manage anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, deliberate self-harm, somatisation, eating disorders, acute psychotic disorder, adjustment disorder, bipolar disorder, depression
- Conduct suicidal risk assessment
- Demonstrate ability to differentiate urgent from non-urgent psychiatric illness
- Diagnose and manage obesity in adolescents
- Identify and manage of common skin conditions, e.g. acne
- Manage acute sports injuries, gait and posture problems, back pain, foot-related problems, Osgoode-Schlatter's disease, patella-femoral syndrome, chondromalacia
- Recognise the risk of sudden cardiac death syndrome
- Manage menstrual problems and hyperandrogenism

4. Comprehensive Approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should:

- Identify the particular needs of adolescents in terms of health service delivery
- Analyse the challenges of the transition from adolescence to adulthood particularly in relation to chronic disease
- Recognise people at risk for mental health problems
- Implement longitudinal care for adolescents and their families, particularly through the transition from adolescence to adulthood and the accompanying changes in service delivery for those with chronic conditions
- Maintain continuing support and care in crisis pregnancy
- Assess competence in an adolescent
- Identify intellectual disability and the adolescent
- Demonstrate an understanding of the need to educate, empower and involve the patient in the management of their chronic illness

5. Community Orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. This means that as a GP you should:

- Describe the systems of care for psychiatric conditions in adolescents, including the roles of primary and secondary care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Teams, shared care arrangements, multidisciplinary teams
- Perfect the ability to work in partnership with other agencies to secure appropriate social interventions
- Assess and manage smoking alcohol substance misuse and addictions in adolescence
- Demonstrate knowledge of the options available in crisis pregnancy and provide information
- Implement opportunistic health promotion in adolescent consultations
- Acknowledge role of the GP in the Parental Leave Act of 1998
- Manage confidentiality and consent and justify the sharing of information with other professionals outside of general practice

6. Holistic Modelling

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. This means that as a GP you should:

- Appraise parenting tools and family dynamics
- Be aware of emerging sexuality and personal identity
- Be aware of patients' diversity including health beliefs and other cultural factors
- Acknowledge social influences on mental health including family, peer and relationship dynamics
- Understand the role of the GP in the management of bullying and harassment
- Acknowledge the role of the GP in gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender health care

Essential Features:

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks. As A GP you should:

- Identify factors to improve adolescent care in your GP setting
- Describe the importance of the workload issues raised by adolescent problems, especially the demand for urgent appointments and the mechanisms for dealing with this

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care. As a GP you should:

- Assess sexual health and STI screening in a sensitive and non-judgmental fashion
- Recognise and accept risk-taking behaviour as a feature of adolescent development
- Be able to adapt to cultural diversity
- Exemplify a sensitive approach to the specific health needs of the adolescent
- Maintain a sensitive approach to parents/guardians recognising their concerns
- Adopt a supportive role so that adolescents may be informed about and involved in decisions about their care, recognising increasing autonomy with increasing maturity

- Recognise the role of the GP in empowering adolescents to look after their own health
- Adopt a non-judgmental approach at all times
- Exemplify attitudes to treating young people equally with respect of their rights, beliefs, preferences and dignity

9. Scientific Evidence

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work and maintaining this through lifelong learning. A GP should:

- Maintaining your knowledge and skills in adolescent medicine
- Being familiar with and accessing the best evidence about clinical management and prescribing of medicines for adolescents
- Construct a best practice decision-making process determined by the prevalence and incidence of illness in adolescents
- Using significant event meetings and audit as tools on which to reflect on your clinical practice in adolescence
- Reflecting on case-based discussions around adolescent health and the identification of learning needs
- Reflecting on aspects of protecting young adults and attending training when necessary

Related Curriculum Areas

- Musculoskeletal Health
- Women's health
- Children's health
- Sexual health
- Genetic health
- Infectious diseases
- Mental health
- Drugs and alcohol misuse
- Social media
- Health promotion and unit
- Multicultural Health
- Chronic disease management



Resources

- Quick reference Guides ICGP
- Child and Adolescent mental health
- Crisis pregnancy
- Quality in practice series ICGP
- Adolescent health
- Support Groups Jigsaw and Headstrong
- CIPC
- Irish Medical Law
- Medical council ethical guidelines

Introduction

Ireland's population of older people is increasing at a rate faster than the EU average.¹ It is predicted that the population of those over 65 years of age will have increased by 66% in 2026 and by almost 160% in 2046. With this increase, the care of older people will form an increasing proportion of a GP's work.

Older adults often have complex health needs with challenges such as multimorbidity, polypharmacy, social isolation and difficulties with mobility, self-care and communication. GPs have a central role in the delivery of care tailored to the needs of the individual older person. Multidisciplinary and multi-agency working is required to address these needs and the GP has an important role in co-ordinating care with other members of the primary care team, ensuring that the right services are provided for this population.



Case vignette

Isabel Doherty is 74 and presents to the surgery with her son. She has just been discharged from hospital following investigation of a possible transient ischaemic attack. She has symptoms of early dementia and is living alone. She is now unable to cope and her son says she is incontinent and poorly mobile.

She has other medical problems including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, osteoarthritis and anxiety.

She lives in a two-storey property with an upstairs toilet. She owns her own house. Despite the blister packing of her medications she is making a number of medication errors.

Her son wants you to complete a carer's allowance application form.

Mapping to curricular domains

Primary care management

- How would you address the issues this consult presents within the time allowed?
- How would you approach the issue of attending to Mrs Doherty's health needs while maintaining confidentiality between other family members?
- What other health care professionals / services might you consider involving in this case?
- How would you approach the concept of readiness for change with Mrs Doherty?
- What treatment options and local referral pathways are available to you?
- How would you work to co-ordinate Mrs Doherty's care between the various parties involved?

Person-centred care

- How would you endeavour to develop rapport with Mrs Doherty?
- What communication difficulties might be a challenge in this setting?
- How would you ensure that Mrs Doherty's autonomy is respected?
- What would you do to inform Mrs Doherty and involve her in decision-making?
- How would you advocate on Mrs Doherty's behalf?

Specific problem-solving skills

- How would you adopt a problem-based rather than a disease-based approach to Mrs Doherty's care?
- How would you assess for hearing and visual impairment?
- How would you assess and manage Mrs Doherty's cognitive difficulties?
- How would you assess mobility in Mrs Doherty's social setting?
- How would you assess Mrs Doherty's continence problems?
- How would you address Mrs Doherty's ongoing medical conditions?

Comprehensive approach

- How would you balance multimorbidity, health promotion and disease prevention for Mrs Doherty?
- How can communication with other professionals be structured to improve continuity, for example discharge planning?
- What other options for care are available should care at home become too difficult for Mrs Doherty and her family?

Community orientation

- How would you balance the health needs of this individual patient with the health needs of the wider community?
- What is the relationship between health and social care?

A holistic approach

- How would you address the way Mrs Doherty's social situation is affecting her health?
- How would you address how Mrs Doherty's son is coping in his caring role while maintaining Mrs Doherty's confidentiality?
- Are you familiar with the relevant benefits and grants available to Mrs Doherty and her family?
- What are Mrs Doherty's wishes regarding her daily activity goals, her longer-term care and ultimately her end-of-life care?
- Are there any other issues relating to social, cultural, ethical, religious and family background in the determination of Mrs Doherty's health?

Contextual features

- What are the challenges in my working life in caring for my elderly patients?
- How will I address Mrs Doherty's healthcare needs if community services are delayed or not available?
- What legal issues may arise (e.g. regarding confidentiality, testamentary capacity, power of attorney, living wills and death certification)?

Attitudinal features

- What are your personal attitudes to the elderly, to the processes of growing old, becoming frail and dying?

Scientific features

- How can you use an evidence-based approach to provide optimal medical care for Mrs Doherty?
- What are the key national guidelines that influence healthcare provision for older people?

**Learning Outcomes (according to competencies)****1. Primary Care Management**

- Describe the epidemiology of the conditions and problems commonly associated with old age and presenting in primary care, such as dementia and cancers as well as their risk factors
- Recognise the common, early, 'red flag' symptoms and signs of malignancy
- Proceed urgently with referral of suspected malignancy
- Use knowledge of the physical, psychological and social changes that may occur with age to relate to adaptations that an older person makes
- Accept that many cancers are more prevalent in the older person and may be insidious
- Adapt drug treatment according to the individual older person taking into account side-effects, concordance, hazards of polypharmacy and changes in absorption, metabolism and excretion that may occur in the older adult
- Account for the physical factors – particularly diet, exercise, ambient temperature and sleep – that disproportionately affect the health of older people
- Diagnose and manage the conditions and problems commonly associated with old age, such as Parkinson's disease, falls, gait disorders, stroke, confusion, dementia and cancer
- Organise care to allow easy access to the primary healthcare team for older people, appropriate timing of appointments and sign-posting to appropriate team members
- Organise care to allow for the systematic management of chronic conditions and multiple morbidities
- Plan continuing care as determined by the needs of the patient
- Design systems to ensure effective management of repeat prescriptions
- Design systems to ensure the appropriate use of screening and case-finding programmes for older people, including those in residential accommodation
- Delegate to other healthcare professionals, specialists and social services when necessary
- Analyse the quality of care for older people through audit, including in residential accommodation

- Recommend local support services for older patients, e.g. podiatry, visual and hearing aids, immobility and walking aids, meals on wheels, home care services
- Outline the day-care and long-term care options in the community for the older person and regulations for their appropriate use
- Outline how to use the various statutory and voluntary organisations for support of older people in the community
- Act habitually to ensure that the provision of care promotes the older person's sense of identity and personal dignity, and that the older person is not discriminated against as a result of their age
- Recognise abuse (emotional, mental and physical) in the older person and deal with it appropriately

2. Person-Centred Care

- Be aware of the theories of ageing
- Advocate for older people to carry out all the activities commensurate with their mental and physical competence (e.g. exercise, travel, sexual activity and independence)
- Describe the prognosis of diseases in old age
- Produce appropriate management plans for further investigation, management and end-of-life-care for older people
- Acknowledge how management of disease processes in old age is influenced by the psychological state and social situation of the older person
- Act habitually to communicate at an appropriate level with the patient with hearing or visual impairment
- Recognise the challenges of communicating with older people including slower tempo and possibly needing to rely on the evidence of third parties
- Adopt appropriate communication skills for shared decision-making with older people and, where appropriate, families and carers

3. Specific Problem-Solving Skills

- Exemplify a sensitive approach to older patients and their relatives or carers
- Recognise acute illness
- Demonstrate appropriate history taking including biological, psychological and social factors
- Define the demography of the practice (number of elderly patients, prevalence of chronic diseases)
- Recognise the changes in the normal range of laboratory values that are found in older people and interpret results accordingly
- Demonstrate the ability to assess mental capacity in the older person
- Demonstrate the ability to assess mobility in the older person
- Demonstrate measurement of visual acuity

- Diagnose and manage hearing loss
- Diagnose and manage constipation in the older person
- Diagnose and manage incontinence in the older person
- Apply the signs and symptoms of the early presentation of cancer to decision-making with older people
- Recognise suspected cancer early in the disease process
- Adopt a problem-based approach rather than a disease-based approach to the care of older people, who often have complex physical, psychological and social problems
- Assess the older person's potential for rehabilitation

4. A Comprehensive Approach

- Accept the complex nature of health problems in older patients
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate complex management strategies to patients and relatives
- Define the special features of psychiatric diseases in older people, including dementia
- Acknowledge how psychiatric disease in older people affects the person, the family and community
- Accept the importance of the mental state, psychosocial and mobility assessment in the care of the older person
- Outline methods to assist in effective time management to include home visits
- Identify appropriate screening services for hearing impairment in older adults
- Accept how multimorbidity will influence the management of existing disease and may delay the early recognition of clinical patterns
- Perform appropriate health promotion on an individual basis as part of the consultation in the older patient
- Describe the preventative strategies required in the care of older people
- Adapt care appropriately to provide health promotion, prevention, cure, care, rehabilitation and palliation for older people
- Organise multidisciplinary teamwork in primary care including involvement of family members nearby, or at a distance
- Identify related healthcare professionals, specialists and social services using a team approach

5. Community Orientation

- Accept the impact of poverty, ethnicity and local epidemiology in older people
- Identify inequalities in healthcare provision for older people
- Identify the positive and negative ways in which socio-economic and health features inter-relate, and the importance of this within the community

6. A Holistic Approach

- Discover the social circumstances and family structure of older people
- Identify issues related to carers, in particular the positive and negative impact of being a carer on their health and your holistic duty to address these issues
- Exemplify a sensitive approach to apparently dated social and health beliefs and cultural traditions
- Assess for possible neglect or abuse of the elderly
- Identify the legal rights of the older patient and problems arising from the disposal of their assets
- Identify the complex ethical issues posed by older people's impaired vision in relation to fitness to drive

7. Contextual Features

- Identify moral, ethical and emotional issues relating to the end of life and after death
- Make use of key government policy documents that influence healthcare provision for older people
- Recognise how geographical distance influences your support and treatment of older people
- Identify the legal issues that may arise in the care of older people, e.g. confidentiality, the Mental Health Act, capacity, power of attorney, guardianship, living wills, death certification and cremation

8. Attitudinal Features

- Act habitually to ensure that personal biases regarding the management of risk factors in the elderly do not influence management decisions
- Recognise personal attitudes to the elderly, to the processes of growing old, becoming frail and dying
- Recognise personal attitudes to the use of intensive or invasive tests and treatments and the use of limited healthcare resources in the care of the elderly
- Exemplify a non-judgmental approach to care of the older person so that personal biases do not adversely affect healthcare

9. Scientific Features

- Apply an evidence-based approach to management of health for older people
- Implement the key national guidelines that influence healthcare provision for older people
- Describe the key research findings that influence management of older people
- Accept the difficulties in extrapolating evidence from research to older people and those with multimorbidity
- Acknowledge the difficulties in designing ethically approvable research



studies with frail and elderly patients

Links with other chapters

- Medicine
- Social Health

Resources

The National Positive Aging Strategy, Department of Health, Ireland. 2013
<http://health.gov.ie/healthy-ireland/national-positive-ageing-strategy>

ICGP Forum Editions

- Volume 30 No 5 (May 2013): Nursing Home Care
- Volume 29 No 3 (March 2012):
- Safe at the Wheel - The GP's Dilemma in Certifying Older People
- Volume 28 No 6 (June 2011): Mental Capacity: Making the Hard Decisions
- Volume 28 No 11 (November 2011): Medication Misadventure: Towards Safe Prescribing in Older Patients

Further reading

- Smith, S. M., H. Soubhi, et al. (2012). "Interventions for improving outcomes in patients with multimorbidity in primary care and community settings." Cochrane Database Syst Rev 18(4).
- Barnett K, Mercer SW, et al. (2012). "Epidemiology of multimorbidity and implications for health care, research, and medical education: a cross-sectional study." The Lancet 380(9836): 37–43.
- Glynn, L. G., J. M. Valderas, et al. (2011). "The prevalence of multimorbidity in primary care and its effect on health care utilization and cost." Family Practice 28(5): 516–523.

ICGP Quick Reference Guides

- [Repeat Prescribing](#)
- [Anticoagulation in General Practice/Primary Care](#)
- [Dementia - diagnosis and management in general practice](#)

Introduction

The general practice management of sexual health covers physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality, and not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction and infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach by the GP to sexuality and sexual relationships. World Health Organisation states that for sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.

Sexual health in general practice also involves a working knowledge of legislative public health requirements of STIs and mandatory reporting. This includes a working knowledge of disease management and public health issues.

Sexual health prevention and treatment services in Ireland include a broad range of health care at different levels, both public and private, throughout the health care system. The main elements include prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and clinical care for those with STIs, contraception, screening for diseases such as genital chlamydia, psychosexual counselling and support, and specialised services for high-risk groups and diseases.



Case vignette

Roisin, a 27 year old student, was at a wedding last weekend and drank far more than usual. She comes to see you 3 days later for the 'morning after' pill as she has had unprotected intercourse. On further questioning you realise that she has had a persistent vaginal discharge for six weeks. You note that she is a smoker and has missed recent cervical smear checks.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- How could I promote sexual health and well-being, applying the principles of health promotion and disease prevention?
- What are the timing considerations for this consultation?

Person-centred care

- Communication: what 'phrases' might I use?
- What are the challenges in 'avoiding assumptions' and making an appropriate 'risk assessment' in this case?

Specific problem-solving skills

- What further questions would I like answered in order to work towards solving Roisin's issues?
- What other resources/services/healthcare professionals could I involve in the management of this case?

Comprehensive approach

- How could I approach the issues STI screening, binge drinking, smoking cessation and the cervical screening programme?

Community orientation

- If I was looking to evaluate and develop my local sexual health services how would I begin to do this?
- How could I consider making the practice more welcoming for either gender to discuss their sexual health problems?

A holistic approach

- What might be the implications for Roisin if she has acquired an STI or has an abnormal smear?
- How might I approach the issue of consent?
- What health promotion opportunities does this consultation present? Is she at risk of any other health problems?

Contextual features

- How might my approach change if she presents late on the Friday of a Bank holiday weekend?
- What resources are available should I need access for contact tracing and STI management service?

Attitudinal features

- What ethical challenges do I have in dealing with sexual health matters and crisis pregnancy?
- How would my attitude towards Maria change if I learned she was a sex worker? Or a victim of sexual abuse?
- What guidance does ICGP/Irish Medical Council give in these areas?

Scientific features

- What is my plan for keeping up to date with current management of STIs and contraceptive choices?
- What are the resources that I need to access to improve my management and keep up my skills?
- What evidence-based guidelines should I be aware of?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of sexual health problems. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should;

- Perform an appropriate risk assessment through history-taking and examination
- Apply the information gathered from the patient's sexual history and examination to generate a differential diagnosis and formulate a management plan
- Manage common as well as rare but important presenting signs and symptoms which will require subsequent examination, investigation, treatment and/or referral, as appropriate (e.g. genital skin/mucosal conditions, abnormal genital smell, discharge, presentations of pain, and vaginal bleeding)
- Perform a digital and speculum examination, and assessment of the size, position and mobility of the uterus, and be able to recognise any abnormality of the pelvic organs
- Know the limitations of investigations and how to interpret them: e.g. blood tests for HIV, Hepatitis, microbiology swabs, cervical screening, and secondary care investigations like colposcopy
- Refer to specialist services if further assessment or treatment is needed
- Promote sexual health and well-being by applying health promotion and disease prevention strategies appropriately e.g HPV vaccine, early cervical screening for at risk groups

2. Person centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should;

- Understand developmental sexuality including the physical, emotional and social changes of puberty in girls and boys
- Understand the psychology relating to sexuality and management of sexual abuse and violence
- Understand sexual dysfunction as a common issue and have the ability to discuss this with patients
- Assess the competency of young people in making their own health decisions regarding their sexual health, including contraception
- Explain to patients the strategies for early detection of sexual health problems that may be present but have not yet produced symptoms

3. Specific problem solving

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should;

- Perform and interpret results of investigations in primary care: e.g. pregnancy testing, urinalysis, approaches to the diagnosis of bacterial vaginosis
- Be aware of the guidelines of cervical screening and colposcopy

- Know how to prescribe contraception including emergency contraception and its pharmacology, use, patient concordance issues for both genders
- Manage genital dermatology issues and common uro-gynaecology problems

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Understand the GP's role and the patient's role in contact tracing
- Understand issues relating to sexual assault and refer to appropriate centres
- Understand legal/consensual issues surrounding treatment of minors, age of consent and notification of young people at risk of harm

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should;

- Recognise the prevalence of sexual health problems in the local community
- Know the principles of, and current guidance for notifiable infections and contact tracing
- Refer patients to local sexual health services, including services for specialist contraceptive care further STI diagnosis and management; HIV management; and services for relationship problems and sexual dysfunction

6. Holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Communicate effectively when talking about sex and sexual health, and display confidence with language and cultural sensitivity.
- Describe the ethical principles involved when treating patients who have sexual health concerns, e.g. contraception and abortion
- Understand the importance of confidentiality, informed choice and valid consent
- Understand the wider determinants of unplanned pregnancies and their impact on the individual and society

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks. You should be able to:

- Work in partnership with practice nurses, and other members of the practice team, including receptionists, to ensure patient services in sexual health are accessible for all groups.

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care. You should be able to:

- Manage patients in a non-judgmental way and understanding different patient groups, including young people, people in same-sex relationships, older patients, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, injecting drug users and sex workers
- Counsel impartially in areas around crisis pregnancy, implications of termination and post termination care
- Ensure that your own beliefs, about any contraceptive methods, sexual behaviour and practices do not adversely affect the management of a patient's sexual health
- Ensuring sensitivity to particular cultural beliefs and patient choice, e.g. the need for a female practitioner

9. Scientific

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning. You should be able to:

- Practice evidence based medicine and be aware of constant changes in therapeutics and management options for various conditions.

Where the learning may take place?

- Primary care: cervical screening, STI testing, trainer tutorials, day release teaching
- Secondary care: Obstetrics, Gynaecology, Infectious diseases, GUM clinics
- Specialised STI units/ clinics
- Courses: IFPA, STIF, ICGP

Related curriculum areas / other chapters

- Refer also to the curriculum outcomes in the areas of:
 - Women’s health
 - Men’s health
 - Children and adolescent health
 - Multicultural health.



Resources

- Guillebaud J, MacGregor A. Contraception: Your Questions Answered (6th edn) Churchill Livingstone, 2013 • Guillebaud J, Briggs P and Kovacs G. Contraception: A Casebook from Menarche to Menopause Cambridge Press, 2013
- Rogstad KE. ABC of Sexually Transmitted Infections (6th edn) London: BMJ Books, 2011

On line resources

- ICGP e learning modules, consent, GLEN (quality and practice)
- ICGP documents: Domestic Violence and Crises Pregnancy
- NICE Public Health Guidance 3 –Prevention of sexually transmitted infections and under age conceptions 2007 www.nice.org.uk
- Women’s Health Clinical service
- Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH). UK Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use FSRH, 2009: The faculty website provides a wealth of information on sexual health: www.fsrh.org/pdfs/UKMEC2009.pdf
- British Association for sexual health and HIV: This website provides guidelines on the treatment of sexually transmitted infections, as well as details about courses on genito-urinary medicine including the Sexually Transmitted Infection Foundation (STIF) courses: www.BASSH.org/guidelines
- Irish family Planning association: www.ifpa.ie
- <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/sexhealth/satu/satuguidelines/satuguidelines3rded.pdf>
- www.YOURSEXUALHEALTH.ie
- www.hse.ie/SATU
- <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/addiction/drugshivhelpline/bestpracticedrughelplines.pdf>
- http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/sexhealth/helpline/Drugs_HIV_Helpline_leaflet.pdf
- <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/addiction/drugshivhelpline/infohiv.pdf>

Introduction

The last 20 years has witnessed significant advances in genetic medicine and further understanding of genetic causes of disease.

International studies have highlighted the need for GP's to develop genetic literacy and to understand the role in identifying patients at risk of or who may have a genetic condition. This includes taking and considering a genetic family history in identifying families with Mendelian disorders and clusters of common conditions such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes and carrier testing for common recessive conditions and the diagnosis of inherited diseases such as Haemochromatosis and thrombophilia.¹

General practice also plays a part in pre-pregnancy counselling from a genetic perspective, including discussion of prenatal screening and diagnostic tests for genetic conditions. GP's are also in a position to identify and assess the newborn early at two and six weeks and can refer children with developmental delay, or dysmorphic features for diagnosis and specialist services.

Genetics can affect many areas of general practice care and GP's provide a supportive role to families with genetic conditions and co-ordinating their care between clinical genetics services and other clinical specialties.



Case vignettes

1. **Martin**, aged 60 years, has been feeling tired and run down. He says he has been 'putting on a bit of weight' and feels uncomfortable in his upper abdomen, but is more troubled by recent joint swelling and tenderness. He has been a construction worker most of his life and believes this is all part of the aging process. He is worried about a recent history of impotence but puts it down to stressors at work. Examination identifies hepatomegaly, but you also notice his skin is a grey-bronze colour. He is concerned and asks you to do some blood tests. His ferritin came back at 458.
2. **Brenda** aged 52, attends for a blood pressure check as she has had 2 x raised readings over the past 2 months. Today it is 152/96. She says that she is not surprised it is raised as she has just heard that her sister has been diagnosed with ovarian cancer. This has come as a shock as she has been supporting her other sister through a course of chemotherapy for breast cancer.
3. **Anna**, aged 23 years, is planning her first pregnancy. During her pre-conception counselling you discover her younger brother died when he was 16 years of age from complications of cystic fibrosis. Her husband was originally from the Middle East. She is concerned that her future children may be at risk of cystic fibrosis.
4. **Stephanie**, aged 47 years, has a younger sister who has just been diagnosed with breast cancer. Her older brother commenced treatment for bowel cancer 2 years ago. She is now worried about her own risk of developing cancer and is keen to be tested for everything. Assuming she is currently well and her examination is normal, what advice is appropriate for managing her genetic risk?

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- How can I recognise individuals or families who are at high risk of getting a genetic condition?

Person-centred care

- How can I, as a GP, help with the impact of a genetic diagnosis in a family?
- How can I communicate such complex subject matter in simple terms to the patient?

Specific problem-solving skills

- What are the best ways of taking, recording and interpreting a genetic family history?
- What is the best pathway to refer to secondary care?

A comprehensive approach

- What roles should the GP play in referral and co-ordination of screening of a family?
- What ethical and legal issues must be thought of?

Community orientation

- What impact might a genetic diagnosis have on how a patient is accepted within the community?
- What systems are in place for follow up or surveillance?

A holistic approach

- What impact might a genetic diagnosis have on how patients view themselves?

Contextual features

- How can I cover personal and family issues relating to genetics during the time available for routine consultations? Where are the local Genetic departments and how might I refer there?

Attitudinal features

- How do my attitudes as a GP influence the way I deal with genetic screening results for example results brought back from another country or tests bought over the internet?

Scientific features

- How do I know that information for my patients about the availability of genetic tests is up to date? How do I keep up to date about new developments? What resources do I have that I can access from general practice?



The following learning outcomes or objectives relate specifically to Genetic Health. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) As a GP you should:

- Aware of preventive measures or targeted treatments exist for some genetic conditions (for example: lifestyle intervention; mastectomy and/or oophorectomy for BRCA 1/2 mutations; colectomy for adenomatous polyposis coli mutation carriers, statin use for familial hypercholesterolaemia; venesection for hemochromatosis; losartan for patients with Marfan's Syndrome)
- Understand the systems in place to follow-up patients who have or are at risk of genetic conditions and have chosen to undergo regular surveillance (for example breast imaging for breast cancer or endoscopy for colon cancer)
- Describe resources available to manage genetic conditions
- Discuss the ethical, legal and social implications of common genetic tests
- Maintain confidential medical records when recording or disclosing information to, or about, other family members and show awareness when information received from or about one individual can be used in a predictive way for another family member in the same practice

2. Person-centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. As a GP you should:

- Communicate information to patients about genetics in a comprehensive and commensurate way
- Counsel the person of the potential emotional, psychological and social impacts of a genetic diagnosis can have particularly associated with guilt about "passing on" a condition

3. Specific problem-solving skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. As a GP you should:

- Take a comprehensive family history
- Understand heterogeneity in genetic disease and understand the principles of assessing genetic risk from family history i.e. likelihood of developing a certain disease

- Identify from a family history other members of the family who may be at risk and need to be referred
- Discuss common forms of inheritance e.g. autosomal dominant (familial hypercholesterolaemia and polycystic kidney disease) and autosomal recessive carrier testing (Sickle cell or cystic Fibrosis) and x linked conditions.
- Demonstrate awareness of genetic aspects of some multifactorial diseases e.g. cancer, DM, CHD

4. A Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should:

- Manage patients with or at risk of acquiring a genetic condition through co-ordination of care with other professionals including geneticists and other specialists
- Communicate with other members of the family the different implications depending on the genetic cause of the condition

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community.

- Demonstrate awareness of the genetic aspects of antenatal and newborn screening programmes

6. A holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should:

- Manage various ethical issues that may arise including confidentiality and non-disclosure of genetic information within families
- Manage with care the use of information (for instance in access to insurance or employment issues)

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual features

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks

- Describe the reproductive options available to those with a known genetic condition e.g Congenital Muscular dystrophy.

8. Attitudinal features

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Acknowledge awareness of your own professional limits in regard to managing genetic conditions and knowing when and where to seek advice.

9. Scientific features

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning

- Describe how to access appropriate information to manage genetic conditions
- Aware of local and national guidelines on referral of specific cases.

Where the teaching may take place

- Hospitals
- General practice
- Day release



Resources

- InnovAiT (the journal for Associates in Training (AiTs)), August 2008 edn contains articles covering aspects of 'Genetics and Primary Care', <http://ino.sagepub.com/>
- Genetics in Practice Taking a genetic family history www.geneticseducation.nhs.uk
- Databases of genetic conditions GeneTests www.genetests.org/
- The National Centre for Medical Genetics, Ireland. www.genetics.ie/
- <http://www.ems-trials.org/riskevaluator/>

References

1. Qureshi N, Bethea J, Modell B, et al. Collecting genetic information in primary care: evaluating a new family history tool. Fam Pract 2005;22:663–

Introduction

The prevention and control of infection is an essential component of care in all health care settings.¹ Infectious disease can affect all patient cohorts from neonates to elderly, previously well patients to those with multi morbidity. Infectious diseases are a major cause of illness among school going children. Appropriate vaccination of children, in line with the National Immunisation Guidelines, has resulted in fewer childhood illnesses.²

The majority of infectious diseases can be managed in primary care with appropriate use of antibiotic, antiviral and anti fungal medications. With the rise in prevalence of HIV infection, resurgence of tuberculosis (TB) and increasing numbers of overseas travellers, other aspects of infectious diseases are becoming more and more relevant to GPs.³



Case vignette

A 31 year old Nigerian presented to GP Surgery with nausea, vomiting, fever, arthralgia, and severe headache after returning from 3 weeks in Africa visiting his family.

He attended prior to his holiday for a full travel health check-up and vaccination boosters. He was advised by his GP that he should take antimalarial tablets for the duration of his stay and also when he came back.

He had first become ill seven to ten days after his return with shaking chills, nausea, vomiting, arthralgia, and headache. These symptoms left him for a few days and he thought he was getting better. However similar symptoms returned and he needed to seek GP care.

His explained that he had stopped his antimalarials as he felt they were making him nauseous.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- How could I manage this acute medical illness?
- How might I arrange admission to hospital if it felt that it was necessary?

Person-centered care

- How could I understand some of the reasons behind poor medication compliance?
- How might I elicit the patient's health beliefs and other cultural barriers?
- What are the barriers for non-national patients and ethnic minorities in accessing healthcare in Ireland?
- What is my role as a GP in empowering patients to look after their own health?

Specific problem-solving skills

- What further information would I seek on history and examination?
- What would be my differential diagnosis for fever with no obvious cause (PUO) in returned traveler?
- Comprehensive approach
- What health promotion and preventative health issues does this consultation raise for me?
- Community orientation
- What steps would I take in managing a notifiable disease?
- A holistic approach
- What issues might I consider that raises for the patient's family and community?
- How might I understand the emotional impact of acute illness on this patient?

Contextual features

- Can I recognise the variations in health and health seeking behaviour according to ethnicity, socioeconomic status and the community in which I practice?

Attitudinal features

- Have I an awareness of your my own beliefs, ethics and attitudes towards the care of patient and those that fail to comply to treatment give?.
- Am I aware of the difference between what I think is an appropriate medical course of action and the course of action desired by patients, their relatives and their carers?

Scientific features

- What local antibiotic guidelines are you aware of for managing infectious disease in the community?
- What resources would you consult for patients undertaking foreign travel?



The following learning outcomes or objectives relate specifically to the management of infectious disease cases in primary care. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary Care Management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should:

- Know of use, availability, efficacy and safety and storage of travel vaccines and other vaccines
- Carry out appropriate investigations on a patient with suspected infection

2. Person-Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them.

A GP should:

- Counsel and advise on health matters pre-travel
- Take and record accurately pre-travel medical and travel history
- Perform risk assessment appropriate to the traveler, including consideration of specific groups (e.g. the elderly, immunosuppressed) and the hazards of specific types of travel

3. Specific Problem Solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should:

Obtain clinical competence in the assessment, investigation, diagnosis and management of infection through history taking and clinical examination

- Suspect, diagnose and manage an infection and refer appropriately
- Diagnose and manage pyrexia of unknown origin
- Manage fever in the returning traveller
- Recognise specific Infections related to post-operative sepsis
- Know of use, efficacy and safety of antimalarial prevention measures and to prescribe appropriately

4. Comprehensive Approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should:

- Exemplify appropriate use of communication skills when dealing with sensitive issues and confidentiality
- Commit to working with patients, their family, friends and carers and use their expertise to manage their condition collaboratively
- Formulate and communicate appropriate verbal and written advice for traveller, and to motivate them to apply the advice

5. Community Orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Interact and liaise with other healthcare teams in the community (public health) and in the hospital (infectious disease physician)
- Obtain an understanding of the role of the local microbiologist and virologist and local pathways to investigations

6. Holistic Approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should:

- Manage longer-term conditions e.g. hep c, HIV and other immune-compromised patients
- Understand different cultures health beliefs and working with them in managing their illness

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual Features

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Demonstrate the ability to use personal protective equipment for infection scenarios
- Understand infection control policies in the practice and Use of Health and safety statements

8. Attitudinal Features

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Adopt a non judgmental approach particularly regarding disease, race, gender, life style, sexuality and religion
- Recognise the potential impact of long term infectious disease conditions on the patient and the aftercare that is needed

9. Scientific Evidence

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning and a commitment to quality improvement.

- To be able to order and use the various tests and forms for the microbiology and virology laboratories
- Become competent in the management of antibiotic use according to Local and National Antibiotic Control Policies and Guidelines
- Prescribe and administer immunisations as appropriate
- Know the various geographical patterns of disease, risk factors for their acquisition, and the availability of paper, electronic and other resources (e.g. vaccination guides, websites; fit for travel)

Learning Opportunities

- Hospital medical rotation
- Emergency Department Rotation
- General Practice
- Day Release

Links With Other Chapters

- Sexual health
- Gender specific health; women and men's health
- Child and young person's health
- Surgical



Resources

- [TRAVAX](#)
- [Fit For Travel](#)
- [Childhood Immunisation, ICGP](#)
- [SARI Guidelines](#)

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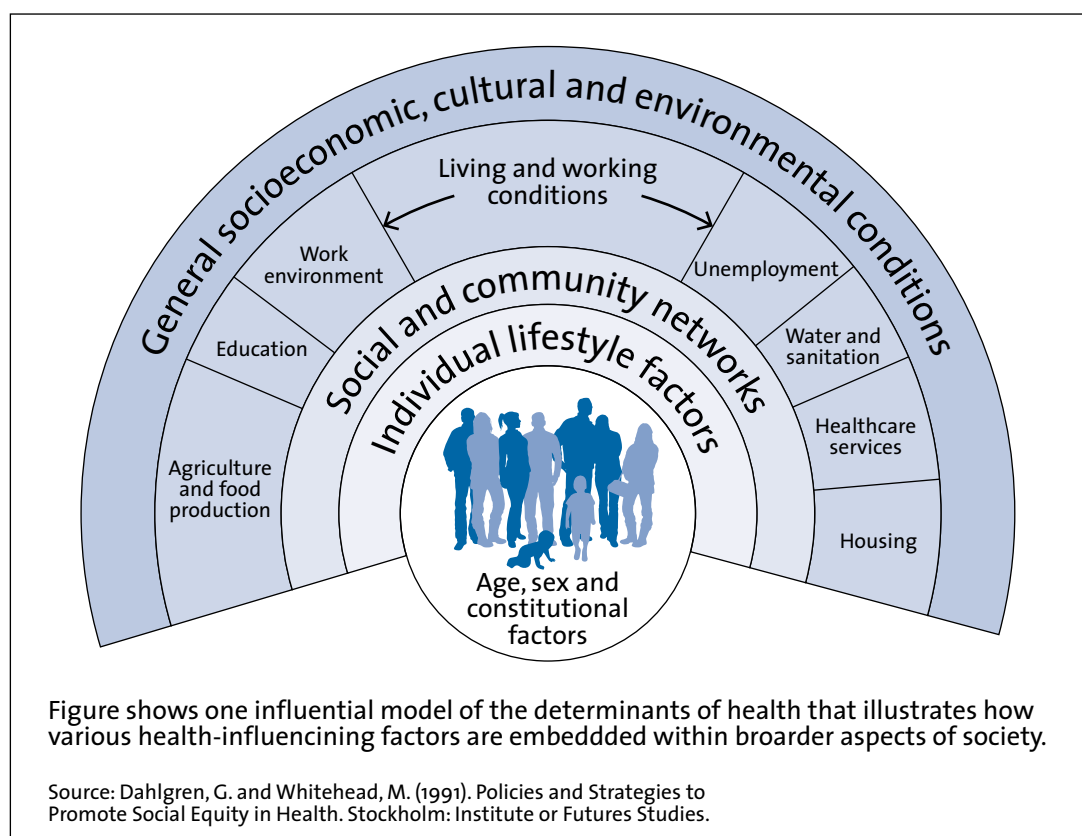
“Social injustice is killing people on a grand scale”..and... “the toxic combination of bad policies, economics and politics is, in large measure, responsible for the fact that a majority of people in the world do not enjoy the good health that is biologically possible” WHO 2008’

Introduction

The field of social medicine seeks to understand how social and economic conditions impact health, disease and the practice of medicine and foster conditions in which this understanding can lead to a healthier society.¹

It is important for GPs to understand the social causation of poor health as well as the causes and effect of inequity on health.

Figure 1:– A Model of the Determinants of Health



GPs should understand their role as part of a range of health and social services and networks aimed at keeping people well and challenging inequity which influences health. The GPs requires the knowledge and skills to support patients to self-care and to advocate for patients appropriately and access social supports rights and entitlements necessary for realising their health potential.



Case vignette

Janet, a 56 years old woman has been diagnosed with hypertension. She is unable to go for a back operation because her blood pressure is too high and needs to be better controlled to have a GA. She has a chronic cough and complains of shortness of breath when going upstairs. She has been on the waiting list for a long time for this operation. She has had to self-certify as well as get sick note certifications for her housekeeping job over the last few months.

Her home life is very volatile her husband is a heavy gambler and has been long-term unemployed. They live in rented accommodation and there is a lot of drug use and anti-social behavior in the area. She is concerned for her four children as one of them is playing truant from school and the eldest has fallen into a bad crowd who use drugs. There is some risk to tenancy as a result of this and rent arrears.

She admits to feeling down and anxious and her history indicates a depressive episode with associated insomnia. She admits to using her sister's sleeping tablets. She is also smoking heavily. Her medical card is up for review and she has not completed and returned the forms. She also wants a letter for local authority housing.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What practice management strategies are in place to address the high level of smoking related respiratory disease within your community e.g. COPD / Smoking cessation practice interventions.
- How does my practice respond to the high level of multi-morbidity among the practice population?
- What other organizations, support groups, social supports and services should I involve in assisting Janet and what is my practice relationship with these?
- What is the practice policy on social welfare / housing forms?
- How can the practice support Janet in accessing her entitlement to free health care?

Person-centred care

- How can I manage Janet's multiple problems taking into account a 10 minute appointment time?
- How quickly might lifestyle changes lower Janet's blood pressure levels?
- Do Janet's family circumstances mean she is more or less likely to respond to (a) brief intervention during the consultation (b) additional one-to-one help from a smoking cessation advisor or dietician?
- What are my non-drug management plans for Janet?

- What can I do regarding Janet's anxiety and self-medicating behaviour?
- How do I encourage Janet to begin to prioritise her health and engage with the health system?

Specific problem-solving skills

- What occupational factors about a patient's working environment are vital to developing a management plan?
- What techniques can I use to help patients overcome anxiety about hospital investigations/procedures?
- How do I secure her commitment to long-term changes to her lifestyle?
- What action should I take when a patient refuses to attend follow-up after a screening test?

A comprehensive approach

- How should the disclosure that Janet's husband is gambling again affect my management plan?
- What coping strategies besides smoking could she adopt to deal with the stress in her life? How do non-smoking women in Janet's situation cope?
- What sources of support and advice could I offer to her in her role as carer for other family members?

Community orientation

- In my own practice community, what are the factors that encourage people like Janet to get help for her family members that suffer with addiction?
- What are the social determinants of Janet's health?
- What are the factors that cause children in lower SES areas to leave school early and what are the impacts of early school leaving on health?
- What community groups and organisations are in the area that could be a resource in helping Janet and family?

A holistic approach

- What is the role for the GP in exploring the multiple 'clinical' and 'non clinical' social problems Janet faces?
- How do the social problems impact on the 'clinical' ones?
- What scope is there for a whole-family intervention to improve their overall health? Who could help me with this approach?
- How do I determine if any of the children are at risk?

Contextual features

- How will the guidelines on prescribing benzodiazapines influence my decisions in treating Janet's anxiety in the context of self-medication?
- What can you do to gain an understanding the specific social determinant of health for your local community as well as the culture and health seeking patterns?

Attitudinal features

- How do I uncover and check my attitudes toward Janet and her situation? Can I identify where my own attitudes derive from social stigmatising attitudes and

where my own behaviour results in discrimination against individual patients / patient groups? Do I believe Janet's health problems her own responsibility and her family problems a matter for her to sort out herself?

- What is my role as a GP in encouraging patients to participate in population screening programmes, even if the evidence of benefit for that particular type of patient is equivocal?

Scientific features

- What are the clinical implications of having multi-morbidity?
- What does the literature say on difficulties faced by people from lower SES areas when seeking to stop smoking?
- What are the barriers created by appointment systems for people from lower SES areas or marginalised groups?
- What is the evidence base for the effectiveness of having accessible General Practice for addressing healthcare inequalities?
- How do I assess whether or not a trial of lifestyle modification is worthwhile for mild hypertension?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of social health problems. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should;

- Carry out consultation in a trusting and respectful manner which encourages the patient to return no matter what their social background
- Understand the concepts of stigma; stereotyping; prejudice and discrimination and their effects on doctor-patient relationships
- Understand the specific needs of and barriers to accessing primary healthcare for marginalized groups including:
 - Homeless people
 - Drug users
 - Travellers
 - New communities
 - LGTB community members
- People with mental health problems etc
- Manage challenging behaviours in a manner that protects and maintains the doctor patient relationship
- Manage a request for benzodiazepines using a rational prescribing policy and in a manner that maintains a healthy doctor patient relationship

2. Person centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should;

- Adapt to taking a focused social history from patients
- Record and build a social history over time which allows for change and a deep understanding of social factors affecting patient health
- Recognise and manage the heavy load of multi-morbidity found in disadvantaged communities at the individual and practice levels
- Communicate effectively to develop trusting relationships with patients who due to their familial and social background may have difficulty forming these
- Communicate effectively with patients who are not fluent in English
- Understand the consulting behaviors of specific marginal groups – homeless, travelers' drug users, new communities etc
- Understanding the healthcare needs and difficulties accessing healthcare for economic and political refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants

3. Problem solving skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should;

- Adapt health information effectively in particular for those with health literacy problems
- Manage specific healthcare issues pertinent to marginalised groups including:
 - Management of children at risk cases.
 - Management of drug addiction.
 - Detection and management domestic violence.
 - Management alcoholism.
 - Consulting using an interpreter.
- Consulting sensitively and appropriately with a patient with a differing cultural background

4. A comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Train practice staff in awareness of social issues including disability and cultural awareness
- Be aware of the different accommodation options for those in poor housing or using homeless or asylum-seeking services

- Understand the differences between the social and medical models of disability
- Know the principles of Independent Living and the role of the Personal Assistant
- Understand the Inverse Care Law and barriers to accessing health services faced by patients from areas of deprivation
- Understand the effect of childhood disadvantage on the development of health inequalities
- Understand the differences between blanket and pocket deprivation and the implications for the effective delivery of primary healthcare
- Understand the Social Determinants of Health Model
- Understand the Primary Care Team model and its importance for areas of deprivation
- Understand how public policy can enforce or address health inequities

5. A Community approach

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should;

- Understand the pathways in and out of homelessness, addiction, and crime
- Understand roles and responsibility of key workers & outreach workers and how to access key working for vulnerable patients
- Address poor uptake of preventative health services in areas of deprivation
- Be aware of cultural diversity between the Irish settled community and those from other cultures (including Travellers) and the effect of these on health and implications for healthcare delivery

6. A holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Advocate on behalf of a patient who is not receiving optimum care due to their lack of social status
- Advocate on behalf of the community to address health inequities in their own community
- Advocate for patients to enable access to accommodation and other non medical services that impact a patients' health
- Know the social causes of marginalization and their effect on health

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual Features

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Self-care effectively to prevent stress and burnout
- Know how to identify the health inequities within her/his own general practice population / community
- Know the full range of community and social service involved in Primary Health Care
- Know the full range of Primary Healthcare stakeholders and how to interact with them as part of general primary care
- Know referral pathways for social and community services for disadvantaged communities and marginalized groups
- Know the national and local community resources for patients
- Know where to access information on key services in local area working with key vulnerable groups

8. Attitudinal features

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Address prejudicial attitudes and discriminating behaviour that they and practice staff might have towards marginalized groups including drug users, homeless people, travellers, new communities, disabled people, and members of LGBT community
- Respect all patients irrespective of background and choices (e.g drug use or smoking)
- Identify where their own attitudes derive from social stigmatising attitudes and where their own behaviour results in discrimination against individual patients / patient groups
- Be sensitive to the differing cultural needs of non-Irish patients and travellers
- Be sensitive to the effects of disempowerment on patient's attitudes to doctors and other health professionals
- Engage positively with relevant community and social services in implementing primary healthcare
- Value other healthcare professionals and workers (including keyworkers) opinions

9. Scientific features

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Know the evidence base for how health inequities impact on the health of their patient population
- Know the evidence base of the effects of global health inequities
- Know the methodologies used to research health inequities
- Describe the evidence base for health inequalities aspects of common conditions such as obesity, diabetes, cardio-vascular disease and mental health in the UK and globally

Related curriculum areas /LINKS

- Refer also to the curriculum outcomes in the areas of:
 - Women's Health
 - Multicultural health.
 - Drugs and alcohol addiction
 - Disability

Where the teaching can take place

- Primary Care
 - Tutorials with trainers
 - Primary health care teams
 - Working with refugee and asylum seekers/ traveler groups/ homeless
 - Workshops at day release teaching:
 - International and migrant health workers
 - Aspects of different groups accessing health services e.g. learning difficulty, ethnicity, religious, race, gay lesbian/ transgender groups
 - Using an interpreter; role plays
 - Use of Film to explore attitudes
 - Visit to prisons
 - Visit to community addiction clinics
 - Personal reading and self-directed group work reflective essays
 - Reflect on stereotyping, self awareness and stigma
- Secondary care:
 - Addiction services
 - Mental health community services
 - A/E rotations



Resources

- Tudor Hart J. The Inverse Care Law. The Lancet 1971; 297:405-412
- Royal College of General Practitioners. Addressing Health Inequalities: A guide for General Practitioners. 2008. London, RCGP.

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Introduction

At one time or another, about half of us will experience some kind of mental health problem, and many will turn to the GP for help and support. Studies find that, on average, about one third of GPs' patients experience mental health problems.¹ GPs often see patients who present with unexplained physical symptoms and may have underlying psychological distress.

Depression and anxiety are common in people with long-term physical conditions, and increase the morbidity and mortality from these conditions. People with severe mental health problems have an increased risk of morbidity and mortality, including cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Good communication skills, particularly listening skills, empathy, understanding and compassion, are key to managing people with mental health problems.²⁻⁸



Case vignette

John is 17 years old and in Leaving Cert year in school. His parents have made an appointment for him with you. He tells you he is just there to get his parents off his case. He is sullen, looks bored and states he does not know what you can do for him.

He states his parents are worried about his drinking and that his school-work is suffering, he did badly in his mocks and his parents are really worried about his results.

John admits to drinking heavily most weekends. He can have 10–12 cans on a night out. He also smokes a “bit of weed”. He does not see a problem with any of this. He denies using any other drugs.

John feels very anxious a lot of the time but he is unsure why: sometimes it feels as if he cannot breathe properly. He does not care about his drinking. He feels numb a lot of the time. He does not care about his school-work or his exams. John states he does not care about things and is ambivalent about the future. In fact, he would not mind if he did not wake up in the morning.

You see from the notes that John's uncle (paternal) committed suicide 8 years ago.

John finally admits that recently he has started collecting boxes of pills, paracetamol mainly, and hiding them in his room. He states he does not know if he will take them but that it is good to have them there, in case things get too much.

John does not understand what depression is really; he does not feel sad; he just does not care.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- From this case illustration what mental health problems are presented and how do I manage them?

Person-centred care

- How do I demonstrate to John that I understand his distress?
- How do I explore his ideas, concerns and expectations?
- How do I explore his health beliefs?

Specific problem-solving skills

- How can I assess the severity of anxiety and depression?
- How can I assess the level of his alcohol abuse and dependence?
- What features might alert me to an emerging psychosis?
- What further questions would I like answered in order to work towards managing John's issues?
- What other resources/services/healthcare professionals could I involve in the management of this case?

Comprehensive approach

- How would I talk /engage John in relation to his mental health, his social stressors and his harmful behaviour?

Community orientation

- What community resources are available for patients with mental health problems in my neighbourhood?
- What impact might a recent episode of self-harm or suicide in his school have on John?

A holistic approach

- How can addressing John's family, social and school-life be incorporated as part of the management plan?

Contextual features

- How might my approach change if I was unable to access mental health services?

Attitudinal features

- Am I affected by judgemental or prejudicial feelings in John's case, particularly in relation to harmful behaviours including drug-taking? If these feelings arose would they affect my consultation?

Scientific features

- What is my plan for keeping up to date with current management of mental health disorders?



The following learning outcomes or objectives relate specifically to the management of mental health problems. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.)

- Understand the influence of physical and emotional factors on the development of mental health problems
- Understand the social influences on mental health including family and marital dynamics
- Understand risk factors for mental health problems, including long-term physical health, learning disability, social exclusion, unemployment and old age
- Understand the difference between depression and emotional distress and avoid medicalising distress
- Understand normal behaviour patterns including response to injury and illness from birth to adolescence
- Understand the emotional impact of hospitalisation on children
- Recognise abnormal child behaviour patterns
- Recognise fabricated illness and injury in children
- Describe the system of care for psychiatric conditions, including the roles of primary and secondary care, shared care arrangements, multi-disciplinary teams and patient involvement
- Recognise the need for involvement of secondary mental health or more experienced mental health personnel
- Protect and support colleagues where appropriate where known violence or aggression can be exhibited.

2. Person-centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should:

- Demonstrate the ability to communicate appropriately with patients, relatives and guardians
- Recognise need to take a focused history, including psychosocial causes which may require social services or Garda intervention
- Perform a mental state assessment
- Assess suicidal risk

- Demonstrate appropriate counselling skills
- Demonstrates tolerance and understanding when dealing with patients who present in a distressed state
- Demonstrate a sensitive approach to the patient and their family

3. Specific problem-solving skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP Should

- Understand the use of scoring tools to assess mental health problems
- Understand the range of psychological therapies available including cognitive behavioural therapies, mindfulness, counseling, psychodynamic, psychosexual and family therapy
- Understand the need to refer appropriately
- Understand the need to work in partnership with other agencies to secure appropriate social interventions for individuals
- Understand the initial management of those who present following violent behaviour (domestic, sexual assault, staff safety, restraint)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the appropriate use of drug therapy
- Demonstrate awareness of the pharmacology of major drug classes, which may be prescribed in secondary mental health service, with a dosage above what is normal in general practice.
- Demonstrate ability to manage common mental health issues and psychiatric emergencies in general practice
- Understand the primary care management of depression
- Understand the principles of managing a patient following self-harm, and suicidal ideation.
- Understand the need to deal with the postvention of suicide in family, friends and community.
- Understand the primary care management of anxiety
- Understand the primary care management of chronic mixed anxiety and depression
- Understand the primary care management of panic disorder
- Understand the primary care management of phobias
- Understand the primary care management of alcohol misuse
- Understand the primary care management of drug misuse
- Understand the primary care management of addiction
- Understand the primary care management of pain disorders
- Understand the primary care management of psychosomatic disorders
- Understand the initial management of grief, loss and relational conflicts
- Understand the primary care management of personality disorders

- Understand the primary care management of psychosis and other severe psychiatric disorders
- Understand the initial management of a child/adolescent with suspected psychotic illness
- Understand the primary care management of an eating disorder.
- Understand the primary care management of trauma/abuse

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP Should

- Understand that people with severe mental illness are at increased risk for cardiovascular disease and that such risk can be minimized through appropriate management.
- Understand the need to identify co-morbid psychiatric problems in people with physical health problems
- Demonstrate an awareness of child protection concerns where appropriate

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should

- Understand how to access support and advice from other agencies including specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Understand about the multi-disciplinary nature of child and adolescent mental health services

6. A holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should

- Be aware of the need to promote hope and demonstrate compassion and their use as resources to aid healing

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual features

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Understand the role of the GP in relation to the law pertaining to psychiatry, i.e. certification and testamentary capacity, confidentiality, Coroner's Act, and Mental Treatment Act
- Understand the Mental Treatment Act and how to create an immediate safety plan with a suicidal patient

8. Attitudinal features

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Demonstrate respect for patient's attitudes, values and beliefs in decision-making and choice of treatment

9. Scientific features

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Understand the evidence base for care of people with mental health problems: evidence gathered from clinical controlled trials may not capture the complexities of working with people with mental health problems in primary care.

Related curricular areas/links

Refer also to the curriculum outcomes in the areas of:

- Children's Health
- Adolescent Health
- Sexual Health
- Women's Health
- Men's Health
- Multicultural health
- Communication skills
- Health Promotion
- Patients with long-term conditions
- Drug and Alcohol Misuse



Resources

ICGP Quick Reference Guides:

- Child and Adolescent mental Health: diagnosis and management
- Communicating risk to Patients
- Dementia-diagnosis and management in general practice
- Domestic Violence
- Early Psychosis: diagnosis and management from a GP perspective
- Helping Patients with Alcohol Problems-A guide for Primary Care Staff
- Lesbian Gay & Bisexual Patients: The Issues for General Practice
- Referral of People with Depression to Specialist Mental health Services

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Introduction

Alcohol is an integral part of Irish culture and is fundamental to most of our social occasions. The National Substance Abuse Strategy highlighted that Irish adults drink in a more dangerous way than in nearly any other country with over half of drinkers were identified as having a harmful drinking pattern. This equates to nearly one and a half million adults in Ireland drinking in a harmful pattern.⁵ The strategy also highlighted that binge drinking is a common phenomenon in Ireland, and Irish adults binge drink more than any other European country, with one-quarter of Irish adults reporting that they binge drink every week. Furthermore Irish children are drinking from a younger age and we have one of the highest levels of underage drinking in the developed world.⁶

Recent and current levels of illegal drug use were mainly stable in Ireland between 2006/7 and 2010/11, though lifetime use of drugs rose from 24 to 27%. The most common used illegal drug, used in the previous month was cannabis at 2.8%.⁷

Addiction is wide-ranging. The most common addictions are to tobacco and alcohol. Other addictions include prescription drugs and illegal drugs. Gambling, social media, shopping, over working, over eating and sexual addiction are some of the behavioral addictions affecting our society. All addictions have harmful consequences for the individual affected, their families and friends, their work colleagues and wider society.

There is no question that people with severe addictions are a challenging population to work with. They trigger our judgments and anxieties. They threaten the comfortable self-image we've worked so hard to establish for ourselves as cool competent and powerful professionals.⁸ The GP needs to be very aware of his or her emotions both during and after consultations in order to effectively engage with patients and avoid alienating this difficult group further. Primary care has a lot to offer these patients in reducing and aiding recovery.



Case vignette

Tom is a 52 year old man who presents with his son. He has a long history of alcohol abuse. He has been homeless for most of the past fifteen years. 6 months ago, Tom did a residential detoxification course and remained abstinent for 3 weeks afterwards. His son had allowed him to live with him when he completed the course. The amount Tom has been drinking has gradually increased since. He now drinks 12–15 cans per day and drinks first thing in the morning before he gets up. He denies any drug use but does occasionally buys sleeping tablets on the street. His son would like blood tests for his dad as he has noticed that he has lost weight since discharge from his residential course.

His daughter in law is distressed with this behaviour and is worried about the affect this is having on their two children. His son would like to help his Dad get his own accomodation as he is worried about him living on the streets.

Tom reports that he is happy to try to cut down his drinking but feels he is unable to stop. He does not wish to do another residential detoxification course as he found it too religious and feels that it messed with his head afterwards.

How do you help Tom and his family address his problems?

Mapping the case to the curriculum domains

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What is my practice's policy in managing people who request help in drug and/or alcohol detoxification.
- Are there other members in the primary care team or local voluntary groups that I could involve in his care?
- How does my practice interact with these groups?
- What is my practice policy on social welfare / housing forms?

Person-centred care

- What communication skills could I use to help Tom address his drinking again.
- How would I help him to prioritize his health?
- How would I screen for underlying depression and other mental health problems.

Specific problem-solving skills

- How do I prioritise the issues that need to be addressed within the time constraints that the appointment has been given?
- How would I assess the issue of weight loss?
- How would I follow up with Tom if he fails to re-attend for investigations?

A comprehensive approach

- What are the possible negative outcomes of Tom's drinking on other family members? Can I make any interventions to try to reduce these?
- What are the housing options available to Tom? Is there a way I can influence how they manage his case?

Community orientation

- In my own practice community, what are the factors that help people with addiction and their family members seek help?
- What are the social determinants of Tom's health?

A holistic approach

- How do I help Tom to engage in addressing all aspects of his health, his alcohol dependence, his mental health and his physical health.
- How do I support his son in coping with his Dad's issues?
- How is Tom's housing issue impacting on his health?

Contextual features

- What local detoxification and addiction services are available to me?
- What are the local housing options?

Attitudinal features

- How do I feel about Tom's drinking and his failed detoxification?
- How do I feel about his son's approach to caring for his Dad?
- Can I identify when my attitudes result in barriers that impeded patients in accessing health care? How do I address these?

Scientific features

- What evidence is there regarding the effectiveness of in-patient or out-patient detoxification?
- What are the clinical implications of having multiple co-morbidity?
- What is the incidence of dual diagnosis of mental health problems in patient's with addiction problems?

**Curricular outcomes**

The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of Drug and alcohol misuse.

In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary Care Management:

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should:

- Demonstrate the ability to take an appropriate history exploring problem alcohol and drug use and assess the co morbidities, both mental and physical, associated with these
- Can successfully and safely run an alcohol detox programme for a patient at home
- Knowledge of secondary complications and infective risks arising from drug use and how to manage these
- Recognise the barriers that people with drug and alcohol addiction face in accessing healthcare and design ways to reduce them in their practice

2. Person Centred Care:

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should:

- Manage challenging behaviours in a manner that protects and maintains the doctor patient relationship
- Carry out consultation in a trusting and respectful manner encouraging the patient to return regardless of how they are managing their addiction. The trainee needs to be aware of the barriers society and health systems create that prevent people with addictions accessing health services
- Respect all patients irrespective of background and choices (e.g. drug use or smoking)

3. Problem solving skills:

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should:

- Recognize the symptoms and signs of drug and alcohol misuse as well as the signs and symptoms of withdrawal
- Manage a request for benzodiazepines and other drugs with a street value using a rational prescribing policy and in a manner that maintains a healthy doctor patient relationship
- Can apply screening questionnaires to assess drug and alcohol miss-use where appropriate
- Knowledge of the common side effects of drug use and how these present in general practice

4. A comprehensive approach:

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should:

- Recognize that drug and alcohol problems are often unrecognized in older adults
- Assess the possible degree of harm to at risk children and adults and contact social services if concerns are raised

5. Community Orientation:

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Understand roles and responsibility of key workers & outreach workers and how to access key working for vulnerable patients
- Understand the benefits of opiate substitution and how to access treatment for their patients

6. A holistic approach:

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should:

- An awareness of the multifactorial causes of addiction and the multiple factors that hinder recovery
- Communicate effectively to develop trusting relationships with patients ensuring that all patients are treated with compassion

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual Features:

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks

- Insure that repeat prescriptions are monitored for long-term prescribing of addictive drugs and that corrective action is taken when a problem is identified
- Refer to and liaise with local specialist and secondary care services when appropriate thus enabling the patient to get the most comprehensive care possible
- Direct patients to voluntary groups such as alcoholic anonymous and narcotics anonymous which may help empower the patient in managing his/her addiction.
- Be aware of the different accommodation options for those in poor housing or homeless and how to advocate on behalf of the patient

8. Attitudinal Features:

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Identify where his/her own attitudes derive from social stigmatising attitudes and where their own behaviour results in discrimination against individual patients / patient groups
- Be sensitive to the effects of disempowerment on patient's attitudes to doctors and other health professionals

- Have an awareness of addictions in themselves and colleagues and how to best address these
- Value other healthcare professionals and workers (including keyworkers) opinions
- Instill hope for the future and belief in recovery
- Prioritize own self-care

9. Scientific features:

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Understand and apply their knowledge of the cycle of change and motivational interviewing in order to intervene with patients effectively to reduce behaviours that are having a negative impact on their health
- Understands the legislation on drink and drug driving and the guidelines issued in relation to suspending driving and be able to recommend appropriate changes if needed
- Have a knowledge of current government policy on drug and alcohol treatment



Related curriculum areas / links

Refer also to the curriculum outcomes in the areas of:

- Social medicine
- Multicultural health
- Mental health

Where the teaching might take place

- Hospital: ward rounds, specialised addiction services, outpatients
- GP/ community: Tutorials, OOH, Homeless aid, bus, Methadone practices, pharmacy

Resources

ICGP e-learning addressing alcohol misuse

ICGP Substance misuse programme

Other web links

www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

Self help group for alcohol dependence

www.aware.ie

Aware - Support organisation for patients/families with elation/depression.
Support groups/Literature/Lectures

www.nacda.ie

National Advisory Committee on Drugs: useful review articles on drug issues in Ireland including Dual Diagnosis

www.na-ireland.org

Self help group for drug dependence

www.nida.nih.gov

US National Institute on Drug Abuse; wide ranging site on all aspects of substance abuse

www.rcpsych.ac.uk

Excellent user friendly information on alcohol, drugs and mental health

Role of GPs in the Recovery Process

YouTube link - UK based but relevant to the Irish setting

www.icgp.ie/go/in_the_practice/health_in_practice/sick_doctor_scheme

Sick Doctor Scheme

www.smmgp.org.uk

National newsletter on substance misuse management in primary care

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3. All Ireland Drug Prevalence Survey 2007 & National Advisory Committee On Drugs And Drug And Alcohol Information And Research Unit
4. Gabor Mate. In The Realm Of Hungry Ghosts, Close Encounters With Addiction. Vintage Canada 2009 Chapter 33 Pg 384

Introduction

One of your essential roles as a GP is to help your patients die with dignity and with minimal distress if they opt to die at home and dying at home is a strong preference for most patients but have fears around the process. GPs must be able to identify such patients at an early stage when the disease is no longer curable. Through coordinating team working, interagency working and communication a GP can assess and make plans for future patient care needs.

Most patients die of non-cancer causes (circulatory 34% Cancer 29%)¹. In 2011, 11% populations are over 65. It is estimated that by 2036 over 25% of the population will be over 65 years. In 2010, 2/3 patients died in community without specialist palliative care. Therefore to ensure our patients achieve best care at this time requires organisation and leadership within the practice. Early referral to palliative care services is essential to significantly alter the quality of life and end of life care for the family and caregivers.

Palliative Medicine is the branch of medicine involved in the care of patients of all ages with life-limiting illness for whom the focus of care is to optimize their quality of life through expert management of their physical symptoms as well as psychological, social and spiritual support as part of a multi-professional team. Support is essential for the caregiver's family or other throughout the illness but also after.



Case vignette

Gertie, a 66 year old lady who you referred to hospital with abdominal pain and weight loss was recently diagnosed with metastatic oesophageal cancer and discharged home. She was not fit for surgery or chemotherapy was referred to Palliative Care. You are called out as the patient has uncontrolled pain. You park outside the house and are met by the patient's daughter, Angela, at the gate who says:

"You can ask her about the pain but you can't tell her she has cancer it would kill her. We just told her she has a bug so best to tell her that if she asks. Don't mention the word Palliative"

Angela is also distressed because her brother George lives in Australia and sister Geraldine lives in Canada. They have been on the phone regularly asking when they should come home and Angela asks your advice on what to tell them.

You visit Gertie some days later and get an opportunity to speak to her alone. She asks you "Am I dying?" She expresses feeling very distressed and wishes it all would end. "I wish I would just die now".

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- Where in this case am I demonstrating my ability to function as both leader and member of end-of-life teams?
- Am I aware of the principles of palliative care and end-of-life care and how these apply to cancer and non-cancer illnesses such as cardiovascular, neurological, respiratory and infectious diseases?
- How would I approach taking a history and relevant examination to assist clinical decision making to diagnose dying and initiate appropriate care plans in the community?
- What structures can I put in place for following up with Gerties family and how can I facilitate this with ease?
- Is a separate consultation necessary?
- How confident is my prescribing in this area?
- How defined is the role of other members of the practice in the area of palliative care and is there a member with a special interest or skills?
- How do I refer and access for the patient home palliative care services and what is my awareness of their role?
- How can I communicate with other health professionals in particular the local specialist palliative care services and hospice?
- How my doctor's bag is stocked for palliative care house calls and who is responsible for the appropriate stock?

Person-centered care

- How might I attend to the spiritual religious and cultural needs of this patient and her family?
- Would I like to assess Gertie alone and how would I approach this?
- How would I assess her level of understanding of her illness and its prognosis?
- How can I communicate effectively with the patient, her family and carer(s) regarding difficult and sensitive information around disease progression and prognosis to a level of their understanding and priority?
- How will I describe how continuity of care will be managed through various health care professionals to limit distress with the aim of maximizing quality of life?

Specific problem-solving skills

- Which specific problem-solving elements are demonstrated in the vignette?
- What potential palliative care emergencies might arise in this situation?
- How can I create repeated opportunities for the patient to discuss end of life care?
- How can I provide medical care that is structured around the patients and in this case family's needs?
- How am I influenced by time and resources constraints and how would I manage this?

A comprehensive approach

- How would I explain disease progression and processes around death and dying in Gertie's case?
- How can I demonstrate an ability to fulfil medical, legal and professional obligations?
- How can I advocate for the best level of care for my patient in the home setting?
- Understanding the administrative tasks associated with such care, death certification, cremation forms and how to become familiar with same?

Community orientation

- What services might be available to my patient and his carers through the wider primary care team and how do I access them?
- What impact can Gertie's cancer have on her family and friends and what community voluntary services and supports are available outside of primary care team?

A holistic approach

- How could I manage the grieving process in Gertie's family?
- Am I aware of normal and abnormal grieving processes and its impact on symptomatology?
- How can I manage the uncertainties generated in this home visit?
- How can I approach each individual's expectations?
- Am I aware of the spiritual and psychosocial aspects related to end of life care?
- Am I aware of the various components of the experience of disease and dying in terms of the patients and families understanding and the consequences of such in reaching a mutual shared management plan?

Contextual features

- How can I access training and resources to upskill and pursue knowledge to be more confident in this area?
- What is my approach to time and its management in this home visits?
- How can I consider cultural differences that will influence my management?
- What issues are raised about confidentiality and capacity in this case?

Attitudinal features

- What are my personal feelings about advance care planning and adhering to my patient's requests?
- How may personal circumstance and life events influence your role in this setting?
- What is my approach to open disclosure of a terminal prognosis shown to be favoured by patients?
- How are my communication skills in a challenging consultation?
- How can I maintain the challenge of professional boundaries in this case?
- How can I deal with the impact of death and bereavement in my normal working day and what is my approach to self-care?
- How can I respect and preserve the patient's autonomy in this case?
- What would be my approach to issues around privacy when talking to a patient in the home?

Scientific features

- What is the evidence-base for end-of-life care and what are the difficulties associated with research in this area?
- What is my understanding and how do I access and then implement within my practice current evidence based guidelines in this area?



The following learning outcomes or objectives relate specifically to the management of End of life care. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary Care Management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.)

- Understand the principles of palliative care and end-of-life care and how these apply to cancer and non-cancer illnesses such as cardiovascular, neurological, respiratory and infectious diseases.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the natural history and role of disease specific treatments in advanced life limiting illness
- Demonstrate an understanding of issues surrounding confidentiality, disclosure/release of information; discovery (FOI) of records.
- Master the ability to communicate complex medical strategies to patients and families
- Exemplify a sensitive approach to the specific needs of the dying patient
- Maintain a sensitive approach to family/carer recognising their concerns

2. Person-Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them.

- Outline patients' rights and be informed sufficiently to enable them to be involved in decisions about their treatment and care
- Demonstrate how to ensure confidentiality and respect of privacy for the patient
- Identify and focus investigation on patients' needs and expectations
- Implement and deliver with discussion a care plan appropriate to patients and caregivers needs and wishes
- Demonstrate ability to identify from an early stage family and patient insight into their condition
- Adopt a supportive role so that patients are involved in their care decisions and recognise their need for autonomy

3. Specific Problem Solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality.

- Manage distressing symptoms, e.g. nausea, pain, shortness of breath and confusion.
- Use appropriate drug/nutrition delivery systems, e.g. a syringe driver
- Describe the conversion of drugs from oral dosage to other appropriate delivery systems
- Describe palliative care emergencies and their appropriate management: e.g. bone fractures, spinal cord compression and haemorrhage.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the legal and ethical issues in context of resuscitation, organ donation/transplantation
- Demonstrate the ability to take and analyse a clinical history and conduct a reliable and appropriate examination and assessment to diagnose a dying patient and activate appropriate care plans
- Outline correct procedures for obtaining consent (for treatment, investigations, procedures, research project, and post-mortem)
- Describe legal responsibilities surrounding death/disease certification; regarding mental illness; referrals to coroner; also in criminal cases
- Assess and conduct investigations carefully and appropriately, considering patient's needs, risks, and values.
- Demonstrate a good knowledge of the pharmacology, therapeutics of treatments prescribed, choice of routes of administration, dosing schedules, compliance strategies; the objectives, risks and complications of treatment
- Recognise and deal with reactions and side effects
- Perform regular reviews of medications so that drugs and inappropriate interventions are discontinued

4. Comprehensive Approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting

- Understand the main principles of medical ethics including beneficence, autonomy and justice/equity
- Implement opportunistic disease prevention and lifestyle changes using the correct channels and providing suitable health education and promotion
- Counsel and explain to patients and their carers issues of symptom control, disease progression
- Understand patients concerns and issues of advance care planning

5. Community Orientation

This area of competence is concerned with the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community.

- Adapt to recognise and respect input from others as part of a MDT and be able to work co-operatively
- Delegate and refer cases appropriately
- Perfect good communication skills in liaising, discussing and negotiating effectively with those undertaking investigation
- Identify and utilize support provided by voluntary agencies and patient support groups, as well as expert services Utilise palliative care services appropriately
- Complete documentation of clear management plans in MDT to achieve safe and effective quality patient care
- Assume responsibility for the role of the GP within the MDT involved in terminal care
- Manage confidentiality and the sharing of information with other health professional

6. Holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health.

- Assessment and knowledge of boundaries limiting consultations including ethical and duty of care to the patient
- Demonstrate an understanding of the psychosocial and spiritual issues that impact on and influence end of life care in the community
- Exhibiting empathy and show consideration for all patients, their impairments and attitudes irrespective of cultural and other differences
- Recognising that incapacity and illness has an impact on relationships and family, having financial as well as social effects
- Awareness of any religious or spiritual needs they may have

The essential features of you as a doctor

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences in real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Recognise potential obstacles such as cultural, educational, ethical that may influence the quality of your care to the patient
- Demonstrate the ability to cope with changing circumstances, variable demand, being prepared to re-prioritise

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Aware of your own and others preconceptions and prejudices
- Aware of the extent and limitations of own areas of practice/expertise
- Exemplify a non-judgmental approach to patient's problem
- Aware of the impact of breaking bad news on your working day
- Aware of your own limitations and seek help
- Be comfortable in the area of breaking bad news and discussing poor outcomes with the patient and care providers
- Adopt a non-judgemental approach at all times
- Value the role of the GP in end of life care for all patients

9. Scientific

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work and maintaining this through life-long learning.

- Awareness that the evidence base for care at the end of life, which is less rigorous because there are very few trials available.
- Demonstrate and ongoing commitment to CME to improve knowledge skills and experience in the area of end of life care

Where the teaching will take place

- Hospital /Hospice rotations
- Hospice visits
- Day release
- GP practice
- Nursing home rounds
- Tutorials



Resources

- www.dyingmatters.org
- www.goldstandardsframework.org.uk
- www.cancer.ie
- www.icgp.ie Competence and compassion: End of Life Care Map
- www.hospicefoundation.ie
- www.rcgp.org.uk End of Life and palliative care strategy

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Introduction

ENT problems compromise a considerable part of the work load in general practice. A survey of 225 general practitioners showed that 50% of children seeking medical care from their general practitioners had problems in this area.¹ Waiting times to see ENT specialist in Ireland have traditionally been very long and commonly over two years.² These waits increase the need for GPs to be very competent and proficient in dealing with ENT problems.



Case vignettes – presented in the format of a morning's surgery

1. Ear

Carmel is 81 years old. She is brought in by her daughter Joan. Joan has arranged a hearing test for Carmel for the following day, in main street opticians, that have recently started to perform hearing tests and sell hearing aids. She just wants you to make sure her mother has no wax “so that they can do the test”. This is the first time anyone has ever mentioned to you, that Carmel might have a hearing issue. How do you proceed?

2. Nose

Mary, a receptionist, presents with persistent nasal obstruction, runny nose, watery eyes and regular sneezing. The problem is perennial and has been getting worse for years. She is concerned about house dust and grass allergy as it can be worse if exposed to both those triggers. It is interfering with her work and in particular when she is talking to customers on the phone. The use of steroid sprays and antihistamines only marginally improves things and she tells you she is ‘fed up with these symptoms’ and has researched the possibility of using immunotherapy. Your examination reveals some swelling in the nose, more noticeable on the right than the left. Mary’s mother is the next patient in. She presents with recurring nose bleeds for the last week.

3. Throat

Winston is a 30 year old smoker. He has a sore throat of one week’s duration. He is also hoarse with palpable cervical nodes. He has no fever in the surgery but he feels hot and cold when at home.

4. Orofacial

Harry is 66 – he complains of pain in his right ear but ear examination is entirely normal. The pain occasionally radiates towards temple, and towards jaw. He had rear molars removed 6/12 earlier. This pain has been going on for a few months now but is recently worse. Life has been stressful of late, his wife died last year. He is tender on palpating the jaw joints and, opening and closing the mouth. Sometimes there is a crunching noise when he eats.

With each patient – explore the most salient features with respect to the following:

- **history taking**, and **why** are those the most salient features **to you**?
- **focused examination**, and **why** are those the most salient features **to you**?
- **differential**, its order, and **why** did **you** choose this order?
- **immediate management plan**, and **why** are these the most salient features of **your plan**?
- **plans for follow up**, and **why** are those the most salient features **to you**?

With each patient – now consider changing the patient's story – make the following changes, in turn, and see whether these altered scenarios affect your thinking regarding history, examination, differential, immediate and subsequent plan.

1. If the symptoms were sudden recent onset
2. If the symptoms were chronic
3. If the symptoms were bilateral
4. If the symptoms were unilateral
5. If the patient was a child
6. If the patient was elderly
7. The patient does not want hospital involvement

At all stages, as you proceed, keep in mind the following generic domains that the college would like you to use, as lenses, to expand your perspectives on your patients.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What can be done for the patient, in general practice, and in the community, that need not be done in a hospital clinic or A&E department?
- What skills can you develop with regard to each case, to make it more likely that the patient gets optimal care without resource to hospital specialists?
- Discuss when and where hospital needs to be involved.
- What are possible red flags to outrule in each case?
- What red flags would initiate referral?
- In each case, what features would you seek to elicit, to reassure yourself, that community management is appropriate?

Person-centred care

- What issues could be going on in the patient's life, which could impair an optimal outcome?

- What issues could be going on, that could increase the likelihood of an optimal outcome?
- What can you do for the patient, to help overcome any issues that could lead to a suboptimal outcome?
- What can you do for the patient, to encourage his/her best efforts at helping themselves?

Specific problem-solving skills

- Can I recognise the normal?
- How do I know if this ear examination is normal or abnormal?
- How do I know if this nasal examination is normal or abnormal?
- How do I know if this throat examination is normal or abnormal?
- How, through examination, can I tell if this hearing loss is conductive or sensorineural. What difference does it make to me, once I can establish the difference?
- What ENT medication treatments, OTC and Prescription, work?
- Which don't?
- Which have evidence, which don't?
- Which are the most cost effective and which are least cost effective?
- Which ENT procedure treatments work?
- Which have strong evidence supporting use?
- Which have less strong evidence?
- Can you think of any with equivocal or no evidence?

A comprehensive approach

- What else should I be addressing in this consultation, and if not appropriate in this one, in subsequent ones?
- How can I empower patients to adopt self-treatment options for self-limiting conditions?
- What resources can I recommend to patient to help with management of conditions?

Community orientation

- ENT Public OPD access is a finite stressed resource.
- ENT medication treatments vary in cost between cheap to expensive.
- What can I do to ensure that these resources are used appropriately, and with consideration to them being available to my patients when they definitely do need them?

A holistic approach

- How might these symptoms affect the patient's day to day life? How might you advise to minimise the impact of these and other ENT symptoms on the patient. What can others do to help?

Contextual features

- Are there accessible, secondary care ENT services, available to your patients?

- Is there a paucity of public ENT specialist availability in your area?
- If there is a gap, what can you do to bridge that gap?
- Would you ever see yourself developing a special interest and skills in ENT to support your patients and colleagues?
- How does your surgery accommodate people who have impaired hearing and or speech?

Attitudinal features

- Do I lose interest in the patient's problem, when I feel it might be one that I cannot cure and that nature should sort out with time?
- Do I get frustrated with patients who don't take their treatments as prescribed, or who stop them, and come back and tell me they are no better?
- Do I get cross with the patient, if the patient expresses disappointment that they are not getting an antibiotic?

Scientific Features

- Do I have sufficient knowledge of ENT and facial anatomy to allow me to detect any abnormality?
- If not, what are the ways to improve my knowledge?
- What is the evidence for the effectiveness of common ENT treatments?
- Can I demonstrate an evidence-based approach to antibiotic prescribing with common ENT presentations?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of facial and ENT problems. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should:

- Manage primary contact with patients who have a common/important ENT, oral or facial problem, e.g. vertigo or tinnitus
- Know the epidemiology of head and neck cancers, including the risk factors, and identify unhealthy behaviour
- Identify symptoms that are within the range of normal and require no treatment such as small neck lymph nodes in healthy children and 'geographic tongue'
- Understand how to recognise rarer but potentially serious conditions such as oral, head and neck cancer
- Understand when watchful waiting and the use of delayed prescriptions are indicated

2. Person centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. This means that as a GP you should:

- Communicate effectively with patients with hearing impairment and deafness, or speech impairment, some of which may occur together
- Prepare an ear for syringing
- Syringe an ear- safely and consistently
- Understand and relate to your patients as individuals and develop an ability to formulate shared management plans

3. Problem solving skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. This means that as a GP you should:

- Carry out appropriate examination of the nose, throat, neck and sinuses
- Carry out detailed tests where indicated, e.g. audiological tests and the Dix–Hallpike test to help diagnose benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV)
- Examination of the balance centres, and being able to recognise what is normal vs abnormal
- Elicit from the history what the patient means when he or she mentions being “dizzy”
- Demonstrate to a patient how to install ear drops, whether medications, or cerumenolytics
- Recognise various causes of vertigo and advise accordingly

4. A comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should:

- Understand the relationship between factors in the patient’s environment, such as smoking or noise levels, and the cause and management
- Appreciate that pathology in other systems may lead to ENT-related symptoms
- Understand when urgent (or semi-urgent) referral to secondary care may be indicated, e.g. in trauma, epistaxis, quinsy (peritonsillar abscess), severe croup or stridor
- Understand that ENT pathology can lead to developmental delay, e.g. ‘glue ear’ can impair a child’s learning
- Understand that systemic disease such as haematological, dermatological and gastrointestinal problems may present with oral symptoms, e.g. glossitis caused by iron deficiency anaemia

- Demonstrate an ability to elicit parental concerns about ENT conditions such as tonsillitis and otitis media and develop shared management plans that correlates with national prescribing guidelines for antibiotics

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Refer patients with oral disease to appropriate specialist services in oral medicine or oral and maxillofacial surgery
- Know the community services that may be available, e.g. for audiological assessment Refer patients with dental or gingival problems to their dental services

6. A holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. This means that as a GP you should:

- Appreciate the impact of hearing loss on quality of life and understand the community and cultural attitudes to deafness
- Understand that patients in poorer socio-economic situations (including the homeless) have higher rates of head and neck malignancy
- Know how community-specific aspects of oromucosal disease may be related to lifestyle (e.g. chewing paan, tobacco, betel nut, khat/qat, or reverse smoking)
- Know that certain ENT, oral and facial symptoms may be manifestations of psychological distress, e.g. globus pharyngeus, atypical facial pain, burning mouth syndrome
- Demonstrate effective strategies for dealing with parental concerns regarding ENT conditions such as recurrent tonsillitis or otitis media with effusion, e.g. explain why antibiotics are not always indicated Understand the significant quality-of-life impairment that may arise from common ENT and oral complaints, e.g. snoring, rhinosinusitis, persistent oral ulceration and dry mouth
- Recognize that certain oral facial and neck symptoms can be in response to psychological distress
- Explain and develop a shared management plan with the patient on how to manage these distressing symptoms
- Be able to communicate effectively with patient who have hearing impairments and/or speech impairments.
- Understand the barriers faced by our Deaf community in obtaining health care and demonstrate advocacy skills required to reduce inequalities in access

- Understand the quality of life implications and frustrations that arise for patients with chronic conditions such as hearing impairment, tinnitus and chronic rhinitis and the ability to empower them with self-management and coping plans

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual features

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks. A GP should

- Ensure that your working environment is equipped to ease communication with patients who are hard of hearing and does not create barriers to accessing your services
- Ensure the practice welcomes patients from low socioeconomic classes and is active in reducing risk factors for head and neck malignancy

8. Attitudinal features

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Ensuring that a patient's hearing impairment or deafness does not prejudice the information communicated or your attitude as a doctor towards the patient
- Demonstrating empathy and compassion towards patients with ENT symptoms that may prove difficult to manage e.g. tinnitus, facial pain, unsteadiness
- Avoiding a negative attitude towards homeless patients, which can lead to less vigilance in early detection of head and neck cancer in this group

9. Scientific features

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning and a commitment to quality improvement

- Recognising that your training in ENT, oral and facial problems might need to be supplement
- Demonstrating knowledge of the scientific backgrounds of symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of ENT, oral and facial conditions

- Demonstrating an evidence-based approach to antibiotic prescribing
- Understanding and implementing the key national guidelines that influence healthcare provision for ENT problems

10. Contextual features

- To differentiate when not to refer and use watchful waiting as the best plan.
- To be aware of the clinical and non-clinical resources available to your patients in your locality and on a national level.

11. Attitudinal features

- To recognise, within oneself, any doctor frustrations, regarding patients attending with conditions that might be short lived and respond to conservative , non prescription measures
- To recognise, within oneself, any doctor frustrations, regarding patients who may not comply precisely with treatment plans and, once recognised, then modify same, to ensure they do not adversely affect the patients progress to optimal outcome
- Understand the quality of life implications and frustrations that arise for patients with chronic conditions such as hearing impairment, tinnitus and chronic rhinitis
- Understand the barriers faced by our Deaf community in obtaining health care and demonstrate advocacy skills required to reduce inequalities in access

12. Scientific features

- To know each ENT red flag and how to elicit same, and to be able to formulate a management plan
- Being able to elicit whether hearing loss is sensorineural or conductive, and to appreciate the significances in different situations (unilateral vs bilateral : acute vs chronic : presence vs absence of coryzal/URTI features)
- To understand the importance of whether hearing loss is sensorineural or conductive, and to appreciate the significances in different situations (unilateral vs bilateral : acute vs chronic : presence vs absence of coryzal/URTI features)



Web resources

- Modern ENT Practice: A Clinical Text [Paperback]
- Rogan Corbridge (Author), Will Hellier (Author)
- www.patient.co.uk - both patient information leaflets and healthcare professional sections
- John Murtagh – “Practice tips” McGraw Hill : Third edition.
- <http://www.cochrane.org/cochrane-reviews/cochrane-database-systematic-reviews-numbers>

Links with other chapters

- Social medicine
- Care of the elderly
- Paediatrics

References

1. Ir J Med Sci. 1995 Jul-Sep;164(3):209-11. ENT and general practice: a study of paediatric ENT problems seen in general practice and recommendations for general practitioner training in ENT in Ireland. Donnelly MJ1, Quraishi MS, McShane DP.
2. Irish Medical Times March 24 2011 ENT outpatient waits of nearly three years www.imt.ie › News › Latest News

Introduction

An NCBI study in 2008 into the prevalence of blindness and vision impairment in Ireland found that there are more than 13,000 people who are blind or vision impaired¹. This figure underestimates the prevalence as it does not take account those people not known to the NCBI. Visual impairment is a significant cause of physical and psychosocial morbidity, and is a barrier to accessing healthcare. However, an effected individuals quality of life and psychosocial situation can be maximised with appropriate rehabilitation and supports.

The GP has a key role as part of the multidisciplinary team in coordinating access to community and secondary care services. It is important that GP surgeries are accessible to their patients with impaired vision. Many other eye complaints cause patients to attend their GP for assessment and management. Systemic illnesses can also present with visual symptoms. As part of opportunistic health screening, GPs are well placed to ensure that patients have regular eye tests and are referred appropriately and in a timely manner.



Case vignette

Bet is a 56 year old mother of three. Her husband died last year and her youngest child has recently left home. She has some financial difficulties since her husband died and has been doing a course for the last year with a view to getting into full time employment. She was married soon after leaving school and became a stay at home mother, so has never worked. She has been having headaches recently which she has been putting down to using the computer on her course. She has been meaning to get her eyes tested but has not gotten around to it. They were “not too bad” so had not attended you with them. She has had general aches and pain over the last few months and finds getting out of chairs difficult. Reaching for dishes in the top cupboard is also becoming increasingly difficult.

For the last two days she has been feeling a bit run down. She has a headache which is different to her previous headaches; it is only on the right side. She found brushing her hair painful this morning and thinks her vision is a little blurred which is what made her come into you today. She took paracetamol which has helped “a bit” with the pain. She is anxious to get back to her course as she has already missed a number of days. She is hoping you will give her some painkillers and maybe some drops for her eyes.

She has no floaters or flashing lights. She has not vomited and ate her breakfast this morning though she didn’t really feel hungry. She is not febrile and her blood pressure is normal. She has a BMI of 32. Fundoscopy is normal. Examination demonstrates a reduced pulsation over her right temporal artery but is otherwise unremarkable.

You have no access to blood testing today as there is no transport for samples.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What are the clinical issues I will prioritise in this consultation?
- How can I develop a collaborative relationship with Bet to improve her health outcomes?
- What referral pathways are available to me locally to have Bet seen by a specialist in a way that is acceptable to Bet and efficient in terms of resources?
- How can I ensure that borderline or abnormal test results are followed up in my practice?

Person-centred care

- Bet is very worried about missing any more days of her course, how will I communicate my concerns to her and proceed to a collaborative management plan?
- How can I improve upon my communication skills to better develop a doctor-patient partnership?
- What resources are available to me regarding patient-education?
- How do I balance Bet's chronic needs with this acute presentation?

Specific Problem Solving Skills

- What other questions would I like to ask Bet prior to aid the formation of a collaborative management plan?
- If I had access to near patient testing what investigation(s) would I like to undertake?
- What local referral pathways are available to me?

Comprehensive Approach

- What chronic conditions should I be cognisant of in Bet's case?
- How do I balance the management of these conditions with the acute presentation in this case?
- What screening is appropriate for Bet, e.g. Diabetic Retina Screen or other national and local screening programmes?
- What health promotion would be appropriate for Bet? How would I approach the topic of Bet's weight?
- What services are available in the community and in secondary care to optimise Bet's health and wellbeing?

Community Orientation

- If Bet did have permanent impairment of her vision:
 - what services are available to help her live an independent life?
 - what effect would this have on her ability to drive?
 - how accessible is my practice to her in regard to this visual impairment?

- Bet delayed having her vision tested due to (among other reasons) the cost of it, what support might Bet be entitled to in this regard?

A Holistic Approach

- If Bet did have permanent impairment of her vision:
 - how would her social circumstances affect her ability to live independently?
 - how would this loss of vision affect her social situation and intentions of entering gainful employment?
- What is my understanding of how social circumstances effect health and health seeking behaviour?

Contextual Features

- How do the socio-economic factors in my practice community effect the care I provide my patients?
- When seeking secondary care for my patients, what role does geography play?
- What equipment would help me better serve the needs of my patients with visual impairment both acute and chronic?
- Considering the limited resources available to me, how can I optimise the care I provide to Bet?

Attitudinal Features

- What assumptions have I made about Bet and how do these effect my interactions with her?
- If Bet does not take my advice how will it affect my consultation with her and how will it affect my own values?

Scientific Features

- With the ever changing world of medical evidence how do I stay up to date with current best practice?
- What resources can I use for deepening my knowledge of eye pathologies I rarely see?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of eye problems in general practice. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should;

- Manage primary contact with all patients who have an eye problem
- Understand the common eye conditions in primary care and manage them appropriately (see list)

- Make timely, appropriate referrals on behalf of patients to specialist and community eye services
- Understand the importance of early diagnosis of ocular conditions to optimise outcomes
- Accept the role of screening for early identification of ocular pathologies eg diabetic retinopathy
- Appraise the role of the GP in screening for and managing those at risk of ocular complications of systemic diseases
- Recognise ocular manifestations of neurological disease, e.g. hemianopia, nystagmus

2. Person centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should;

- Appreciate the importance of the social and psychological impact of eye problems on the patient
- Understand the importance of exploring the ideas, concerns and feelings of patients who are threatened with sight loss
- Know how to communicate with a visually impaired person and their carers, and help them to participate fully in planning the management of their problem

3. Specific problem solving

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should;

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of common eye complaints including history and exam to be able to formulate a differential diagnosis
- Know how to assess and manage acute ocular complaints including visual disturbance, the red eye and the painful eye
- Assess the range of visual disturbances to distinguish the underlying cause, eg blurred vision, double vision, hemianopia, floaters and flashes
- Illustrate an understanding of refractive errors and the ways in which they can present
- Recognise ophthalmic emergencies and refer appropriately, e.g. new visual distortion in wet age-related macular degeneration, sudden loss of vision
- Understand the use and side effect (risks) of medications for eye problems including mydriatics, topical anaesthetics, corticosteroids, antibiotics and glaucoma agents, and be able to explain these to your patient
- Manage superficial ocular trauma, including assessment of foreign bodies, abrasions and minor lid lacerations
- Apply knowledge to assess infants for eye disorders at routine checks, and in response to parental concern

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Promote a healthy lifestyle for your patients and manage co-morbidity in an attempt to reduce the prevalence of blinding eye conditions
- Manage the underlying systemic disease to reduce further complications, e.g. diabetes, vascular disease, connective tissue disorders and infections such as herpes
- Understand the significance of visual impairment for a patient's ability to self-manage other chronic illness

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should;

- Know the RSA driving regulations for people with visual problems, and your role in relation to your patient
- Facilitate patients' access to sources of social and charity support for visually impaired adults and children
- Recognise your responsibility to facilitate access to the services you provide, including the practice environment
- Be aware of the resources for the blind

6. Holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Understand the significant psychological impact of sight loss for the patient and their family
- Understand the impact eye problems may have on co-morbidity/disability and fitness to work, and on independent living

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, and culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Developing your understanding of how you might organise screening for eye problems in your practice, e.g. six-week baby check, checks for diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, squint
- Understanding what influences the patients in your practice to take up regular eye examinations to prevent sight loss

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Maintain the GP's role as coordinator with other primary care health professionals, of effective and appropriate care for patients with eye problems
- Justify the complex ethical issues posed by impaired vision in relation to fitness to drive and work, along with any associated legislation
- Adopt a collaborative approach to assessing and managing the needs of those with visual impairment
- Advocate for patients with visual impairment ; Recognising that patients with visual impairment may have difficulty receiving written information and accessing healthcare services, and your role in implementing measures to overcome these obstacles to effective health care
- Understanding your role in balancing the autonomy of patients with the need to address visual problems and public safety

9. Scientific

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Understanding and implementing best practice that influences the provision of eye healthcare including prevention and management of eye problems, visual impairment and blindness
- Being aware of major advances in therapy for eye conditions
- Demonstrate an understanding of the GP's role in diagnosing and managing common eye conditions (including but not limited to)
 - Arc eye
 - Blepharitis
 - congenital abnormalities of the eye
 - corneal abrasion
 - dry eyes

- episcleritis
- ectropion and entropion
- glaucoma
- lens opacities including cataracts
- macular disease
- Meibomian cysts
- pinguecula
- pterigium
- refractive error
- retinal detachment
- retinal vascular occlusion
- retinopathy including diabetic and hypertensive
- sty
- squint
- temporal arteritis
- vitreous haemorrhage
- Perform examination of the eye, and understand when each assessment is appropriate (including but not limited to)
 - examination of conjunctiva
 - colour vision testing
 - eversion of the eyelid
 - fluorescein staining
 - measure visual acuity
 - ocular movements
 - pupil size and reactivity
 - visual field testing by confrontation
 - Irrigation of the eye

Where the learning can take place

- Primary care
 - General practice is an ideal setting for you to learn how to manage eye problems with some GP's having a special interest in this area.
- Secondary care
 - As a GP specialty trainee you should be able to attend secondary care-based ophthalmology clinics and/or eye casualty to learn about both acute and chronic conditions.
- Self-directed
- A very useful site for GP's, developed by a UK based GP with previous experience in ophthalmology. <http://eyes.gp-surgery.com/>



Web resources

- Driving and Health, Slainte agus Tiomaint from the Road Safety Authority www.rsa.ie
- National Council for People with Sight Loss www.ncbi.ie
- Association of Optometrists in Ireland. <http://www.optometrists.ie/>
- International Glaucoma Association Provides readable material for patients. It also aims to raise public awareness of glaucoma and support those who already have the condition. www.glaucoma-association.com
- Macular Disease Society in Ireland. www.amd.ie
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines Glaucoma: diagnosis and management of chronic open-angle glaucoma and ocular hypertension (CG85), 2009. <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG85>
- Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth) A useful resource for press releases on topical subjects in ophthalmology. www.rcophth.ac.uk
- Moorfields Hospital. <http://www.moorfields.nhs.uk/listing/conditions>
- Eyes on the Future, Ireland 2008. NCBI Website

Introduction

Pain is defined by the International Association for the Study of Pain: (IASP) as, “an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage” (www.iasp-pain.org).

The definition is important because it links emotion to the sensory experience. This means that the only way of deciding whether someone has pain is by asking them, or watching them. Stimuli that cause pain may be associated with actual or potential tissue damage. While this sensation in itself may be unpleasant, there is also an accompanying emotional experience including fear.

Chronic pain is a common complex sensory, emotional, cognitive and behavioural long-term health condition which occurs when pain cannot be resolved by available medical or other treatments. Many different healthcare professionals including doctors, nurses, psychologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists play a part in effective pain management care. (britishpainsociety.org.uk)

Some people report pain in the absence of tissue damage or any likely pathophysiological cause, which may indicate a psychological basis. There may be no way to distinguish their experience from that due to tissue damage. If a patient regards their experience as pain, and if they report it in the same ways as pain caused by tissue damage, this should be accepted as pain. This definition avoids tying pain to the stimulus. Patients who are unable to communicate verbally can still experience pain and therefore also need appropriate pain relieving treatment.

The Irish Pain Society believes that every individual suffering from a chronic pain condition has the right to access appropriate information for the better understanding of his/her condition. The society endeavours to promote public awareness of persistent pain as a chronic illness, which seriously impacts quality of life for patients and their families. (REF)

Figure 1:– Changing the impact of pain experience

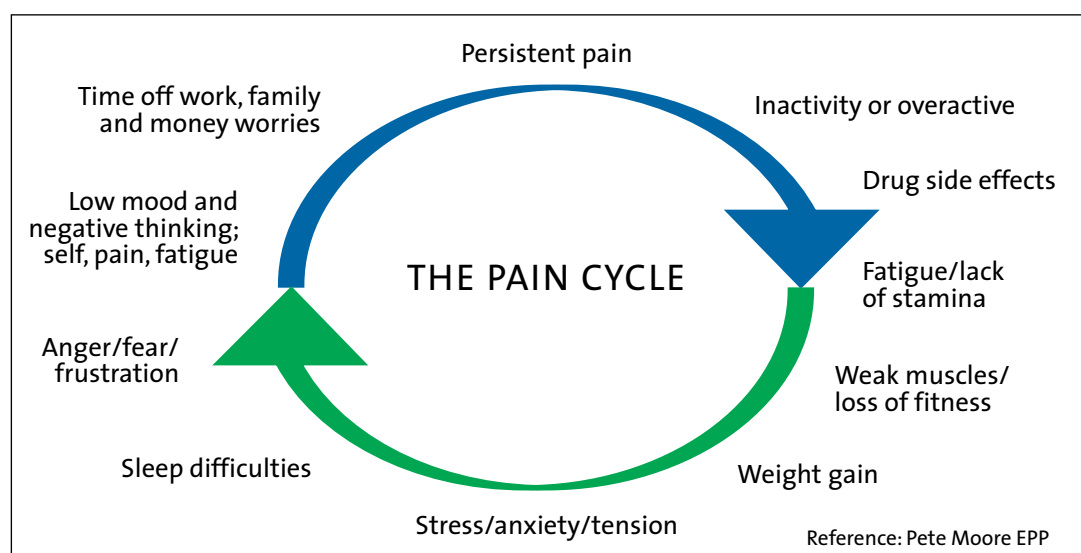
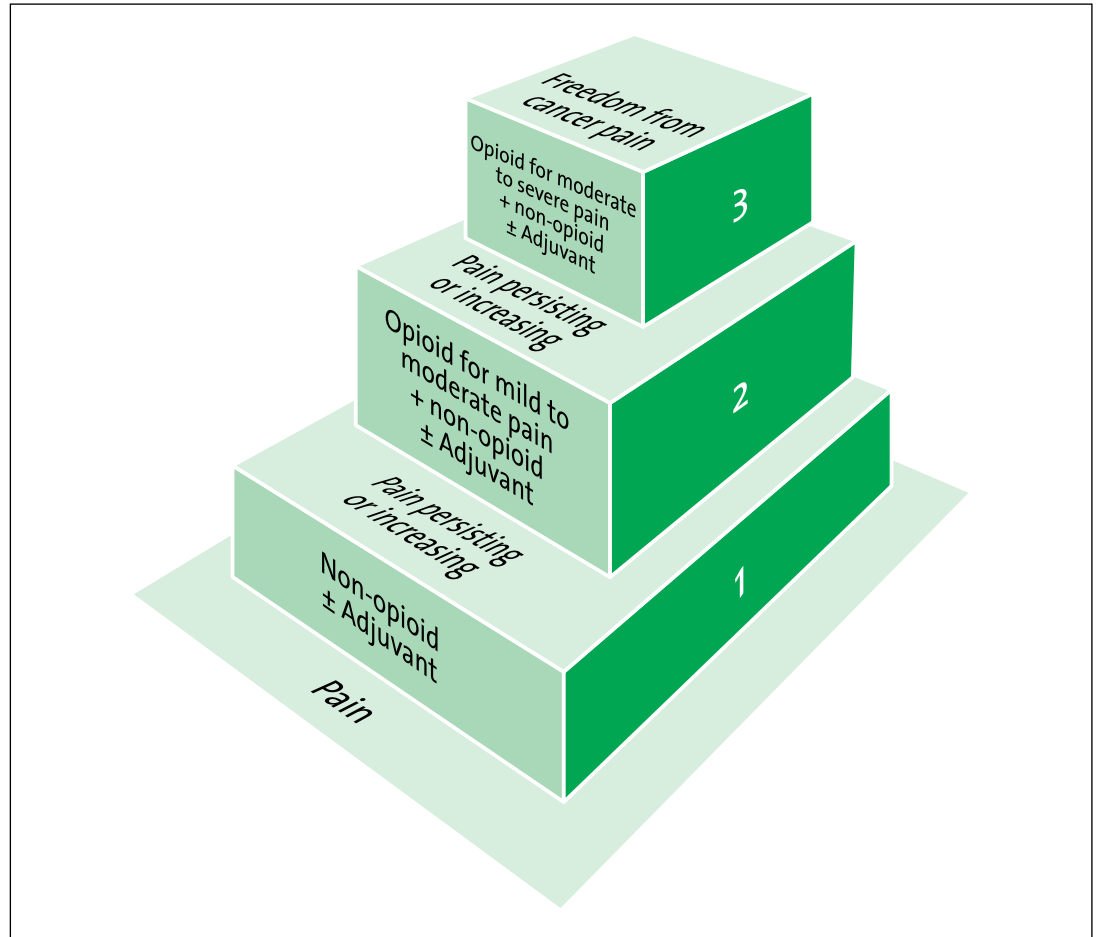


Figure 2:– WHO's three step ladder to use of analgesic drugs
www.who.int/cancer/palliative/painladder



International Association for the study of pain: IASP



Case vignette

Kevin is a 35 year old factory worker. He was involved in a RTA 3 months ago. He was the driver of a car hit from behind by another car. Despite initial assessment in hospital including x-rays, and physiotherapy arranged privately, he continues to complain of persistent low back pain radiating to the back of his left thigh. Coughing and sneezing do not affect the pain. No medication you have prescribed has made any difference.

Examination shows very little physical signs to match his symptoms however, all his movements are slow and deliberate. When he flexes his spine his extended fingers are at the level of his knees. When lying he cannot bring his hips to 90 degrees without expressions of pain, yet earlier he was sitting at one stage with his legs crossed. Light palpation of his spine shows diffuse widespread non anatomical tenderness.

His place of work has offered light work for about 4 weeks to encourage him to return.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What can I do to help patients post RTA?
- Are there guidelines that can give some structure when I am doing a report or prescribing analgesia?

Person-centred care

- How will I approach this case?
- Should I prescribe him stronger analgesics or should I take a more cautious approach involving other health professionals?
- How will I manage advising a potential return to light work?

Specific problem-solving skills

- Am I certain there are no subtle neurological findings and have I addressed all his concerns appropriately?
- What are you going to say?
- What are you going to prescribe?
- When do you see the patient again?
- Who else do you involve in the management of the patient?

Comprehensive approach

- Have I linked him in with all services?
- Do I need to consider a psychological assessment or counselling?
- Who are the other team players with managing this patient?
- Are there other players, not necessarily on the same team?
- How do you communicate with them?
- How do you make sure they all have a common goal?

Community orientation

- Am I aware of what services are available to GMS and Private patients?
- How might I get this person back integrated into the community to work?
- What treatments can be delegated to others?
- How to delegate?
- How to ensure they report back with their progress?

A holistic approach

- Is there anything in his past history that might indicate a more psychological cause for his pain?

Contextual features

- How is he managing financially being off work?
- Is it impacting on his mood? Are there any concerns with overuse of medications?

Attitudinal features

- Have I been judgemental in dealing with him over many consultations?
- Am I treating his ‘true pain’ even if I objectively can’t find any concerning features?

Scientific features

- Am I aware of the therapies he may need and how to increase and decrease accordingly?
- Am I confident in my ability to examine a patient post RTA and complete a legal report?
- Do I practice best evidence when it comes to initiating therapies?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of pain in patients. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should;

- Take a complete pain assessment, which includes location, duration, intensity, quality, associated symptoms, aggravating and relieving factors
- Knowledge of the red and yellow flags within systems and how they influence management
- Discriminate between physiological and neuropathic pain categories.
- Differentiate between tolerance, dependence, and addiction.
- Describe pharmacologic interventions for pain.
- Be able to convert from parental opioids to oral opioids to transdermal opioids using analgesics charts.
- Be able to write Morphine, Hydromorphone, fentanyl PCA orders.

2. Person centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should;

- Individualise a pain treatment plan based on clinical and personal goals, while setting objective outcome criteria by which to evaluate a client’s response to interventions for pain.

3. Specific problem solving

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should;

- Identify subjective and objective data to collect and analyse when assessing pain.
- Know how to act as a team member and delegate work as necessary.

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Identify risks and benefits of various analgesic delivery routes and analgesic delivery technologies.
- Describe non-pharmacologic pain control interventions.
- Describe the World Health Organization's ladder step approach developed for cancer pain control.

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should;

- Recognise that pain management should be considered a priority.
- Accept scheduled dosing of opioids as the norm.
- Understand the difference between opioid tolerance and physiologic dependence as addiction.
- Identify potential barriers to effective pain management

6. Holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Describe how the physical, mental, spiritual, and social aspects of pain contribute to concepts such as pain tolerance, suffering, and pain behaviour.
- Instruct patients in the importance of communicating about their pain using various scales, where 0 = no pain and 10 = worst possible pain.

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment

in which you work, including your working conditions, community, and culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Participate willingly in sharing care with other primary and secondary care providers

8. Attitudes:

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Aware if the patient requires you to advocate on their behalf for any particular services needed.
- Understand the psychosocial components of acute and chronic pain and its potential impact on family dynamics.
- Understand and respect cultural and spiritual differences and how this may impact history taking, physical exam, and response to treatment.
- Recognise how personal biases and judgments may limit appropriate assessment and treatment of pain. Develop strategies to avoid this.
- Recognise when a patient's need demands an advocacy role.

9. Scientific

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Aware of recourses available to you in the management of pain in patients.
- Practise with best evidence the new therapeutics in the area of pain control



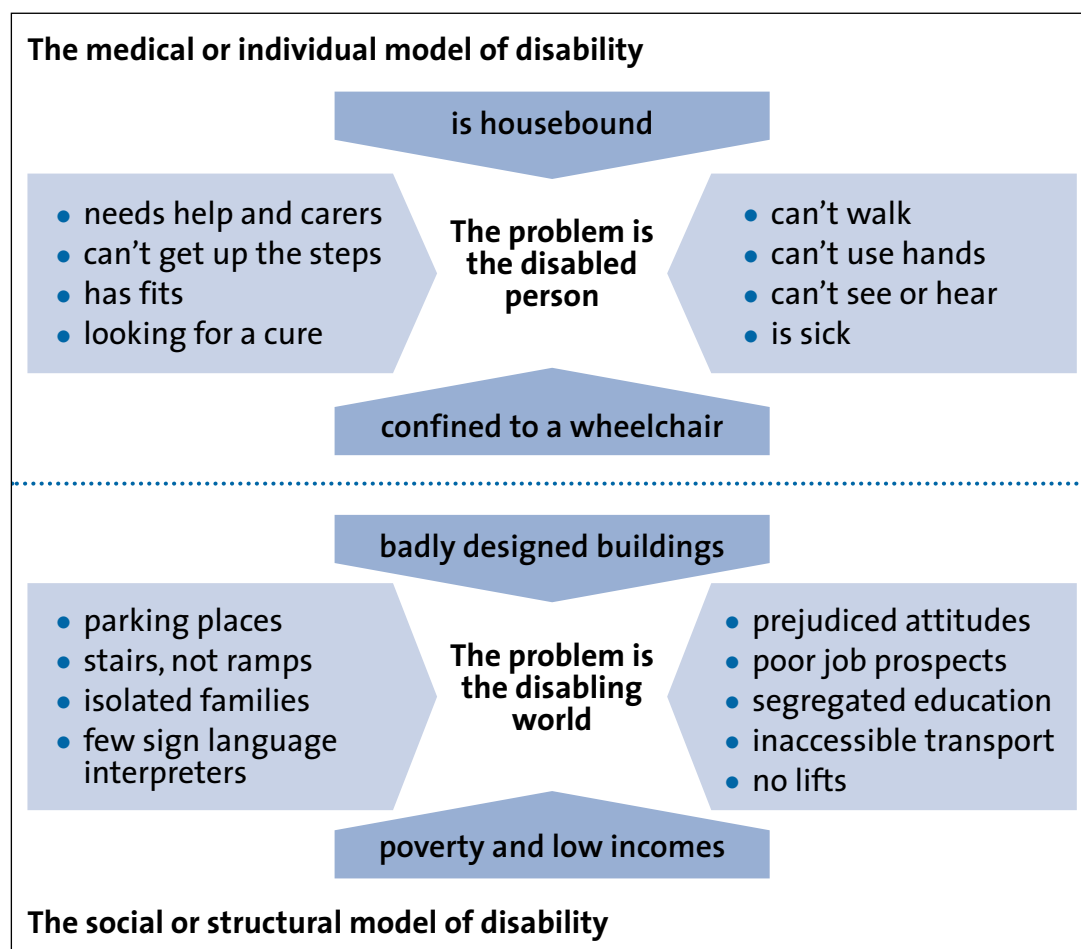
Resources

- www.irishpainsociety.com/
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4xUgVSpXqA&feature=player_embedded (excellent)
- www.chronicpain.ie
- www.arthritisireland.ie/go/information/booklets/coping_with_pain (PILS)
- www.efic.org (good e-learning resources)
- ICGP lower back pain e-learning module

Introduction

The disability chapter deals with physical disability. It addresses the general practitioners role in providing holistic primary care to people with disabilities. The concept of disability has changed from a medical focus on impairment to a social focus on addressing how the effect of that impairment depends on individual patient's environmental and social context. Thus people in wheelchairs are only mobility impaired if their environment does not have inaccessible entrances; stairways or facilities; blind people can have equal employment opportunities if their rights are protected by equality legislation etc.¹ They are also more likely to suffer the negative consequences of health inequalities.^{2 3 4} The social model also focuses on how to remove the barriers that prevent people with disabilities fully participating in society. It has been demonstrated that negative attitudes held by healthcare workers towards people with disabilities create substantial barriers for people with disabilities accessing health services.^{5 6 7 8} For medicine, this also involves doctors reviewing the physical, administrative, attitudinal and internalised barriers that prevent our patients with disabilities having complete access to the services we offer all our patients.

Figure 1:– The Medical versus the Social Model of Disability



Source: Disability Rights Commission, Citizenship and disability, Lesson 3, Worksheet 2.

At www.drc.org.uk/citizenship



Case vignette

Maria is 18 years of age and has a severe physical congenital disability due to cerebral palsy. She lives at home with her mother and father. She has just finished school and is awaiting her leaving certificate results. She uses an electric wheelchair and has a speech impairment. She waited in the corridor as there are steps down to your waiting room. Her mother comes in with her. Her mother starts the conversation and says that Maria can be hard to understand and she will help relay her story. She says that Maria has been feeling feverish and unwell. She has a history of urine infections and she is wondering if Maria might have a recurrence. Maria attempts to speak and her mother asks her what is she trying to say. Maria speaks. The GP finds it hard to hear. Her mother tells him that Maria wants to discuss contraception. She tells the GP that she knows Maria has been having difficulties with heavy periods and she thinks that this is why she wants to discuss contraception. She then looks at the doctor and mouths that she is not sexually active so that Maria cannot hear her.

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- How do I ensure that my practice is fully accessible where accessibility encompasses the removal of physical, administrative and attitudinal barriers?
- In this case, how could I promote the management of disability issues, applying the principles of health promotion and secondary prevention?
- How do ensure that my practice is recognised as a disability friendly practice.

Person-centred care

- How do I ensure that Maria's rights as a fully functioning competent adult are recognised and ensure the focus of the consultation is kept on her and her needs?
- How do I protect Maria's right to confidentiality taking into account her mother being present in the consultation and also acting as interpreter?

Specific problem-solving skills

- How do I manage communication with a patient with a speech impediment?
- How do I handle a consultation with an adult where a parent is present?
- Do I have any knowledge of sexual issues for people with disabilities or resources for people with disabilities who wish to explore their sexuality?

Comprehensive approach

- How would I talk her through the cervical screening programme, STI screening? Binge drinking and smoking cessation.
- Am I aware of the Independent Living Movement approach to maximising the independence of people with disabilities.

Community orientation

- What community and health sector resources are available to me in working with Maria?

A holistic approach

- How do you provide routine GP care for Maria, while recognising she may have particular medical needs deriving from her disability and also ensuring that you do not ‘over-medicalise’ her situation.

Contextual features

- How would I manage if Maria’s disability was different e.g. deafness or blindness?

Attitudinal features

- Do I have any difficulty with Maria having a sexual life?
- Do I have any reservations about people with disabilities ability to have an independent and socially productive life?
- Am I at ease in communicating with people with speech impairments?

Scientific features

- What are the possible medical complications Maria may face from her immobility and dependency on a wheelchair?
- How the curricular outcomes are divided to knowledge, skills, attitudes.



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of patients with physical disabilities. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should:

- Reach shared and mutually acceptable management plans with patients with disabilities.
- Manage familial concerns about their family member with a disability while respecting the autonomy of the person with the disability.
- Understand how to assess the impact of disabilities on patients’ activities of daily living.
- Know how to advise people with disabilities on how to access the medical and social entitlements and supports including support organizations.

2. Person centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should;

- Demonstrate an awareness of the particular importance of a **person-centred approach** when consulting, often with communications involving **carers**
- Perform a history and exam in a manner that respects the patient's autonomy and right to independence.
- Communicate effectively with people with speech, eyesight or hearing impairments and know of the aids that will improve such communication (e.g. loop systems).
- Understand how to ensure that a general practice is fully accessible, physically, administratively and attitudinally.
- Understand the varying emotional impacts of both congenital and later onset disability on patients' and their families' lives.

3. Specific problem solving

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should;

- Understand the range of physical disabilities associated with the more common conditions (please note this is not an exhaustive list):
 - Cerebral palsy
 - Down syndrome
 - Neural Tube Defects
 - Polio and Post Polio Syndrome
 - Cystic Fibrosis
 - Epilepsy
 - Multiple Sclerosis
 - Friedrichs Ataxia
 - Motor Neurone Disease
 - Arthritic Conditions
 - Acquired brain injury
 - Spinal Cord Injury
 - Limb amputation
 - Stroke
- Manage the common problems associated with various disabilities including pain; contractures; pressure sores; muscular spasms; urinary catheter management etc.
- Understand the importance of when to refer patients for genetic counselling

4. Comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Understand of the Independent Living Movement and also Patient Advocacy Programmes
- Have a clear understanding of the legal, ethical and medical issues involved in assessing capacity and **and consent**, and the mechanisms by which these can be determined
- Understand the legal implications of Equality Legislation as applying to the rights of people with disabilities

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should;

- Demonstrate an awareness of **residential situations**, and attendance at day centres
- Understand the importance of multi-disciplinary team work when supporting people with disabilities

6. Holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of **continuity of care** in this group
- Advocate effectively for patients with disabilities who's right to healthcare is being infringed.

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Context

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Know how to ensure their practice is organised to ensure people with disabilities can access the full range of therapeutic and preventative health services available in general practice.
- Understand the importance of appropriate house-call arrangements for people with disabilities who cannot access the surgery for routine GP and/or preventative care.
- Promote equal opportunity employment policies in their practice for people with disabilities.

8. Attitudes

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Critically reflect on your own and society's attitudes to disability and how those attitudes affect their interactions with people with disabilities.
- Show respect for people with disabilities by using appropriate language and avoiding stigmatising or negative words/phrases.
- Address negative attitudes towards people with disabilities displayed by practice staff or partners.
- Be aware of and respect the necessity for extra time in the consultation for people with disabilities.
- Recognise the commonly held negative attitudes towards sexuality and disability and how these attitudes negatively impact on people with disabilities right to a fulfilling sexual life.

9. Scientific

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Know where to access information where they have knowledge gaps concerning rare disabilities that affect their patients

Related curriculum areas /LINKS

Refer also to the curriculum outcomes in the areas of:

- Learning Disability
- Health Inequalities

Further Reading

- BMA equal opportunities committee and patient liaison group 2007 Disability equality within healthcare. The role of healthcare professionals
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Disability. 2011 The RACGP Curriculum for Australian General Practice

References

1. Oliver M. Sapey, B. Social Work with Disabled People. 2006 Palgrave MacMillan
2. DRC (2006) Equal treatment: closing the gap, a formal investigation into physical health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities and/or mental health problems. At www.drcgb.org/newsroom/health_investigation.aspx#Finalreportsandsummaries (accessed December 2006).
3. Shah S & Priestly M (2001) Better services, better health – the healthcare experiences of Black and minority ethnic disabled people. Leeds: Leeds Involvement Project.
4. Royal National Institute for the Deaf (2004) A simple cure – a national report into deaf and hard of hearing people's experiences of the National Health Service. London: RNID.
5. DRC (2006) Equal treatment: closing the gap, a formal investigation into physical health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities and/or mental health problems. At www.drcgb.org/newsroom/health_investigation.aspx#Finalreportsandsummaries (accessed December 2006).
6. Shah S & Priestly M (2001) Better services, better health – the healthcare experiences of Black and minority ethnic disabled people. Leeds: Leeds Involvement Project.
7. Royal National Institute for the Deaf (2004) A simple cure – a national report into deaf and hard of hearing people's experiences of the National Health Service. London: RNID.
8. Morris J (2004) 'One town for my body, another for my mind', services for people with physical impairments and mental health support needs. London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Introduction

Intellectual disability or learning disability are terms that are often interchangeable and have the same meaning. Intellectual disability involves a greater than average difficulty in learning. The range can extend from people with borderline or mild difficulty learning to those with more severe or profound disabilities. Caring for people with disabilities can represent a small but significant proportion of a GP's caseload. Recent figures show that there are 27,000 people with intellectual disability registered on the national Intellectual disability Database in Ireland. That is a prevalence rate of 7.38 per 1000 of the total population. (Disability database division, Health research Board)

A person is felt to have intellectual disability when the following actors are present.

- Intellectual functioning is significantly below average
- Difficulties with everyday life skills including social functioning and communication.
- The condition is present from childhood (18 yrs. or less).

Many Prenatal, Postnatal, Perinatal and environmental factors have been identified as causes. The most common genetic condition associated is Down's syndrome and the most common identifiable inherited cause is Fragile X.

Patients with learning disabilities have 2.5 times as many associated medical problems as non-learning disabled control patients. Patients with learning disabilities have an increased incidence of psychiatric illness, epilepsy and behavioural difficulties. 30% have epilepsy, and perceptual problems are very common as over 30% have visual problems and over 30% have hearing problems.

A large proportion of those with Down's syndrome develop dementia and some become hypothyroid. Continence and ambulation problems are extremely common. Many are unable to take responsibility for their own health or read instructions, and are dependent on a range of family and carers, because of their limited intellectual capacity.

Improved antenatal, obstetric care and screening tests (PKU) have all played a role in preventing many cases of Intellectual disability. Use of vaccines MMR and Hib along with accident prevention child car and bicycle helmets. Agencies and organisations funded by the HSE to support adults with disability must comply with 'New Directions'. New directions is the HSE policy for non-residential supports (day services) to adults with disability. According to New Directions these supports should be individualized outcome-focused supports which will enable adults with disabilities to live a life of their choosing in their community with their own wishes.

For adults the emphasis is on encouraging as independent a life as possible and supporting the person in their own home or in an informal group or community home setting. GP's need to be aware of the likely associated conditions in

managing patients with learning disabilities and where then to obtain the specialist help and advice, understand how the psychiatric and physical illness may present atypically and use of additional skills of diagnosis and examination in patients unable to describe or verbalise symptoms.



Case vignette

Sharon a 41 year old girl with Down's Syndrome. She lives at home with her mother and younger brother who is 30yrs. She has moderate intellectual disability. She is able to carry out some independent jobs at home but in the last year she has slowed down a lot and is becoming more dependent on her mother. She has put in a request for a home visit to discuss about Sharon's periods getting very heavy and her increased agitation and nighttime waking.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- How can I prepare for acute episodes of illness in adults with intellectual disability?
- What services are in place to help get the right gynecology advice for Sharon?
- Does Sharon's mum have access to the right grants and support as her main carer?

Person Centred Care

- What does patient autonomy mean for this patient?
- Does she need any a blood test to check for Hypothyroidism?
- Does she need her medications reviewed to help with recent sleep pattern changes?

Specific problem solving skills

- What are the difficulties in obtaining a history of behaviour change in an adult with intellectual disability?
- What is my differential diagnosis here and how would I explore it?
- What do I know about night sedation and is appropriate for this case?

Comprehensive approach

- Who are the other members of this patient's care team?
- Is a referral to OT or physiotherapy necessary to check for patient safety around the house?

Community orientation

- What are the community resources available to this patient in my practice area?
- Community support/ day care centre respite groups

Holistic

- How can I screen for the possibility of depression or cognitive decline being a problem?

Context

- Is my practice patient centred for this group of patient?

Attitude

- How might my attitudes differ when dealing with patients who have a learning disability?
- How do I think my own feelings and attitudes impact on difficult decisions in the care of adults and children with intellectual disability?

Science

- What are the difficulties of getting research evidence about the management of patients with intellectual disability?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of patients that have intellectual disabilities. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should;

- Understand that a significant minority of any practice population will include patients who have mild learning disabilities, who may need no particular special services, but who may have reading, writing and comprehension difficulties.
- Accept that there will be a few with special needs accessing services with moderate, severe and profound learning disabilities that need to be identified, monitored and reviewed appropriately.
- Demonstrate an awareness of likely associated conditions, the high mortality, the high morbidity and the difference in morbidity compared with the rest of the population.
- Understand the support needed with adolescents who have intellectual disability as they become adults and no longer have the multidisciplinary support of community paediatricians.

2. Person-centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should;

- Demonstrate appropriate communication skills to patients affected with learning disabilities as often communications involves a carer or other person and this may affect the doctor–patient relationship.
- Understand the importance of continuity of care in this group.
- Manage the issues of capacity and consent, and the mechanisms by which these can be determined.

3. Specific problem-solving skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should:

- Describe how psychiatric and physical illness may present atypically in patients with learning disabilities that have sensory, communication and cognitive difficulties.
- Understand the need to use additional enquiry, appropriate tests and careful examination in patients unable to describe or verbalise symptoms.
- Accept the significance and prevalence of oropharyngeal disorders and dysphagia in people with intellectual disability and its relevance to the high prevalence of respiratory disorders in these patients
- Demonstrate how to conduct a physical and mental state assessment with patients who have a learning disability.

4. A comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Describe the associated medical problems in commonly encountered conditions that make up learning disabilities, including Down's and fragile X syndromes, cerebral palsy and autistic spectrum disorder.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the psychiatric disorders prevalent in the adult with intellectual disability and how his or her diagnosis, detection and management differs.
- Understand the diagnosis and management of patients with autistic spectrum conditions.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how patients with borderline intelligence have difficulty coping with complex functions and how this can affect their behaviour.
- Manage safe prescribing systems as adults with intellectual disability are subject to poly-pharmacy.

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and

social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Describe the roles of carers, respite care opportunities, voluntary and statutory agencies and an ability to work in partnership with them so there is cooperation without duplication.
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the risk to adults with intellectual disability of physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

6. A holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Apply a holistic approach to patients with learning disabilities, considering likely bio-psycho-social and cultural factors.
- Describe the impact of learning disabilities on family dynamics and the implications for physical, psychological and social morbidity in the patient's carers.
- Understand that by the time the patient with intellectual disability has reached adulthood the parents have gone through a different series of transitions from other parents..

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual aspects

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care.

- Demonstrate an awareness of the need to provide more time in the consultation in order to deal more effectively with people with learning disabilities.
- Understand the impact of the doctor's working environment on the care provided to patients with intellectual disability, e.g. access, atmosphere in the waiting area, the measures taken to compensate for sensory impairment

8. Attitudinal aspects

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Demonstrate an understanding that all citizens should have equal rights to health, and equitable access to health and health information according to their needs.

- Understand that PWLD are more prone to the effects of prejudice and unfair discrimination, and that doctors have a duty to recognise this within themselves, other individuals and within systems, and to take remedial action.

9. Scientific aspects

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Aware of the evidence regarding the health needs of people with learning disabilities.
- Demonstrate the use of screening tests for adults with intellectual disability to detect neurological and psychiatric problems such as dementia and depression.

Where the learning may take place?

- Primary Care: community clinics, Nursing Homes, surgery consultations, tutorials
- Secondary Care: Day Hospital, Community clinics,
- Self directed work: e- learning modules : BMJ learning



Resources

- Ali A and Hassiotis A. Illness in people with intellectual disabilities is common, under-diagnosed and poorly managed British Medical Journal 2008; 336: 570–1
- Lindsay P (ed). The Care of the Adult with Intellectual Disability in Primary Care Oxford: Radcliffe Press, 2011
- Martin G and Lindsay PJ. Dying and living with learning disability: will health checks improve the quality of life? British Journal of General Practice 2009; 59(564): 480–1

Web resources

- www.namhi.ie
- www.inclusionireland.ie
- www.intellectualdisability.info

HSE reports

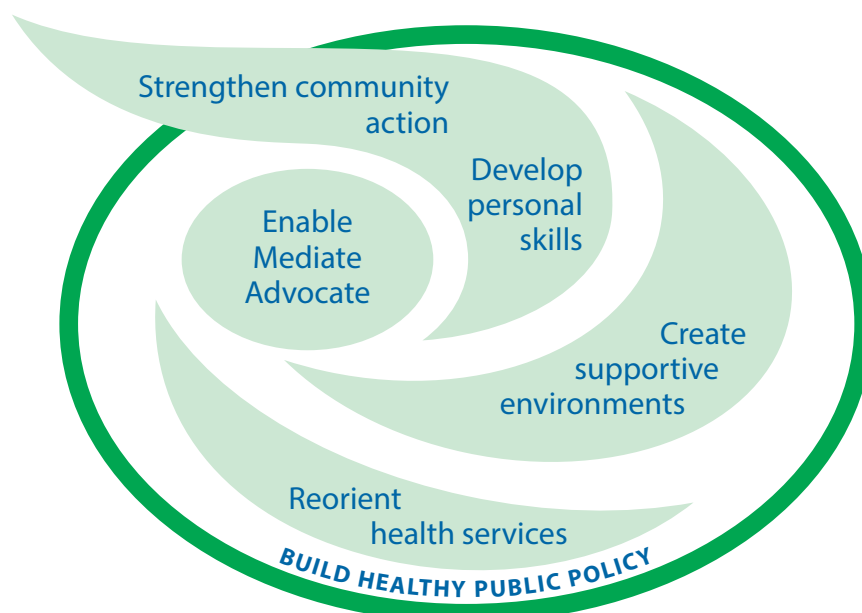
- ‘New directions’ 2012 HSE policy for non- residential supports (day services) to adults with disability

Introduction

‘Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health.

To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Therefore, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy life-styles to well-being.’¹

A schematic representation of the Ottawa charter mission.



There is a degree of overlap with the fields of social medicine, in relation to understanding and challenging inequity. The GP’s role may include supporting patients in vindicating those rights and entitlements necessary for realising their health potential.

There is further overlap with the field of preventative medicine. The GP needs to understand the benefits and risks of screening and immunisation.

Opportunistic health promotion has been described as one of the four pillars of the consultation². The GP requires the knowledge and skills to encourage patients towards self-care, including where appropriate the delivery of brief advice and interventions to promote health and prevent disease. The role of work in promoting health and well-being should be recognised.



Case vignette

Philomena, aged 45, works part-time as a care assistant. She requests a repeat prescription for migraine medication and a sick cert. She seems stressed and admits that she is finding it hard to cope with running the family on a very tight budget.

Philomena smokes 10 cigarettes a day. She says she is too busy to exercise. She drinks alcohol occasionally. She has never attended for cervical screening.

Her partner is unemployed and has recently started to drink more alcohol than usual. The care of the home and the three children seems to fall entirely to Philomena.

On examination you find her BP is 150/90, her BMI 29.5 and a recent fasting blood sugar was 5.8.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What issues are raised by this consultation?
- How will I prioritise matters that need to be addressed?
- What actions should I take when a patient fails to attend follow-up?

Person-centred care

- What strategies is Philomena using to cope and what are her priorities today?
- How might I develop a therapeutic relationship with Philomena and secure her commitment to long-term changes in her lifestyle?
- Do I think Philomena's circumstances mean she is more or less likely to respond to brief intervention during the consultation or additional one-to-one help?
- What non-drug options are available for Philomena?

Specific problem-solving skills

- What is my approach to headache: what information do I need to gather from history and examination to formulate a management plan?
- What occupational factors about Philomena's working environment are important in developing a management plan?
- What use of time/incremental investigations might be appropriate here?
- How can I cope with any elements of uncertainty in the management plan?

A comprehensive approach

- What strategies are in place within the practice for managing repeat requests for sick certs?
- Can I suggest structures, systems or procedures to improve handling of requests for continuing sickness certification? What barriers need to be overcome?
- How should the disclosure about Philomena's husband's drinking affect my management plans?

Community orientation

- What needs are suggested by Philomena's role? What supports might be available within the practice and within the wider community to support her in coping or to support her in making changes?
- What voluntary and statutory organisations are at work in a typical Irish community? Can I describe the function of some of these? Can I speculate as to how they see the role of the GP? Have I ever asked them?
- What role might I have as a professional in advocating locally or nationally for unmet needs in relation to this sort of presentation? Has the ICGP, Community Health Organisation or the IMO/NAGP any such function?

A holistic approach

- In what way might Philomena's background influence her perception of what is and what is not a problem?
- Are there particular cultural groups whose thinking might be very different from my own?
- What does my approach to Philomena say to her about whether I am considerate of her views? How could I check that I am being respectful?

Contextual features

- What aspects of the general practice contract(s) support or inhibit health-promoting practice?
- How does my work situation influence my ability to work effectively with this family? How much time can I devote to understanding complex social presentations? Have I the resources to allow me participate in multidisciplinary working or in community engagement?
- How do my personal needs affect my capacity to work with this family or in community action?
- How does my personal background, (language, culture, education) affect my ability to work effectively in promoting the health of this family?

Attitudinal features

- Have I checked my attitudes to unemployment, obesity, mental illness, smoking, alcohol or drug misuse?
- Can I tell when I am being judgemental in my attitude?
- How might this influence my performance?

Scientific features

- What literature or training have I encountered that provides evidence for how I might address the specific aspects of this case?
- Am I aware of the philosophical basis for health promotion as opposed to disease management and the scientific evidence that supports this approach to human health?
- Am I conversant with public policy at a national, local and organisational level that seeks to assess need, plan and act in the interest of health promotion?
- What are the characteristics of a good screening programme?



Curricular outcomes

1. Primary Care Management

- Assess a healthy individual patient's risk factors
- Understand the interaction between work and illness in patients
- Understand the links between health and work, including the positive benefits of work on well-being

2. Person-centred care

- Understand the concepts of promoting health, and quality of life as perceived by patients
- Understand approaches to behavioural change including “Stages of Change Model” and their relevance to health promotion, self-care and behavioural change.
- Demonstrate ability to practice motivational interviewing, to link brief interventions with clinical practice.
- Negotiate a shared understanding of problems and their management (including self-management), so that patients are empowered to look after their own health and have a commitment to health promotion and self-care
- Encourage patients, their carers (and family when appropriate) to access further information and use patient support groups
- Understand the concept of risk and be able to communicate risk effectively to patients and their families
- Demonstrate ability to explain to patients the long-term impact on health of risk factors such as alcohol and substance misuse, poor diet, inadequate exercise and risky sexual behavior
- Explain to the patient and/or their relatives the evidence about a screening programme and debate whether it is worthwhile for individuals or groups
- Be able to explain the benefits and risks of child immunisation and vaccination in order to reassure parents effectively

3. Problem solving skills

- Distinguish between the different perspective required in managing work and health issues (e.g. back pain, repetitive strain injury, anxiety) and the range of professionals who can help you support patients at work such as occupational health staff, physiotherapists and counselors
- Apply the same scientific discipline to elements of practice concerning healthy people as those who are sick

4. A comprehensive approach

- Describe how to work with other members of the primary healthcare team to promote health and well-being through appropriate health promotion and disease prevention strategies

5. Community orientation

- Recognise and contend with the potential tension between the health promotion role as a GP and the patient's own agenda
- Describe importance of promoting people with a disability in the workplace by encouraging and advocating for disabled patients

6. A holistic approach

- Explain the importance of promoting the positive benefits of work and health to patients
- Explain the importance of promoting return to work and rehabilitation after illness or accident

7. Contextual feature

- Understand the ethos of own workplace and need to embrace preventive care and health promotion
- Be aware of the impact of overall GP workload on own ability to deliver health promotional care to well patients
- Be aware of the interaction of work and private life and need to strive for a good balance between both, and own personal example in healthy living

8. Attitudinal features

- Acknowledge insight into personal or systematic bias that can marginalize individuals or groups
- Justify own views in relation to ethical aspects of prevention, pre-symptomatic diagnostics, asymptomatic therapy and factors that influence lifestyles
- Justify own views on the universal right to healthcare, the prioritisation and costs of healthcare, and the minimisation of barriers to accessing care when vulnerable or unwell

9. Scientific Feature

Be aware of the theoretical basis underpinning health promoting practice generally and as it applies to general medical practice, including concepts such as

- The individual as a being with a capacity to strive for and attain maximum health
- Community action towards health gain
- Reorientation of the health service towards promotion of health as a social goal
- The health-supporting environment at home, in the community and in the general practice
- Health equity, social justice and relative poverty

Be aware of the factual elements underpinning health-promoting practice such as

- Legislative and Executive initiatives aimed at Health Promotion
- The social determinants of health.
- The impact of social and cultural diversity on health and health beliefs.
- The theoretical basis for behavioural change.
- Health promotion within models of the GP consultation.
- Health promotion in relation to physical activity, sexual health, smoking, cancer prevention, nutrition, men's health, women's health, mental health, drug misuse, alcohol misuse, oral health, children's health.



Related curriculum areas/links

Refer also to the curriculum outcomes in the areas of:

- Social Medicine
- Sexual Health
- Men's Health
- Women's Health
- Mental Health
- Drug and Alcohol Misuse
- Children's Health

Online resources ICGP e-learning modules

- Addressing Alcohol Misuse
- Addressing Childhood Overweight and Obesity
- Chronic Condition Self-management module
- Physical Activity e-learning module
- Promoting Smoking Cessation e-learning course
- Suicide Prevention e-learning module

On-line resources ICGP Quick Reference Guides

- Communicating risk to patients
- Helping Patients with Alcohol Problems- A Guide for Primary Care Staff
- HSE/ICGP Weight Management Treatment Algorithms
- Repeat Prescribing

Other on-line resources

The HSE produces a wide range of Health Promotion material including the material available at the following sites:

- <http://www.getirelandactive.ie/>
- <https://www.healthpromotion.ie/>
- <http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie/>
- Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland <http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/>
- Medical Certification Under Social Welfare Legislation-Instructions for Medical Certifiers <http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Medical-Certification-Under-Social-Welfare-Legislation-Instr.aspx>
- National Learning Network provides a range of flexible training courses and support services for people who need specialist support (job seekers, unemployed, people with an illness or disability) in 50 centres around the country. www.nln.ie
- The National Screening Service (NSS) encompasses BreastCheck - The National Breast Screening Programme, CervicalCheck - The National Cervical Screening Programme, BowelScreen – The National Bowel Screening Programme and Diabetic RetinaScreen – The National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme. <http://www.cancerscreening.ie/>

References

1. World Health Organisation.Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion
Copenhagen:World Health Organisation, 1986.
2. Stott N, Davis R. The exceptional potential in each primary care consultation. J R Coll Gen Pract. Apr 1979; 29(201): 201–205

‘Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or health service, or among professionals, which enable the organisation or those professionals to work effectively in cross cultural situation.’¹

Introduction

A patient’s cultural background has multiple influences on their presentation in general practice. The most obvious influence is language difference. However, it also influences how they perceive and interpret symptoms and how they perceive the doctors role and therapeutic options she/he can offer. People from culturally diverse backgrounds often have difficulties accessing healthcare due to a number of factors including difficulties navigating the system, institutionalised discrimination/prejudice and lastly, due to the fact that many come from socio-economically deprived backgrounds and so are affected by health inequities. The GP’s role is to develop a personal and practice cultural competency.



Case vignette

Cecilia presents to the surgery. She is an asylum seeker from Central Africa and has been staying in an asylum hostel with her two children (5 and 8 year old boys) for the last three years. She had a very sad story of having to leave her home country quickly due an outbreak of extreme violence in her home town against her ethnic group. She lost her two parents in this and has not had contact with any of her other family members or husband since she left. She is French speaking and has poor English and is accompanied by her 8 year old who speaks good English.

She has several problems.

- She has a fever which is very high and makes her muscle aches for the last three days.
- She has been feeling very depressed for 6 month. She still has not heard about her asylum application and is in constant fear that she will be deported back to the country.
- Her five year-old has not being doing well at school particularly at reading and writing and she is concerned for him.
- Lastly, she tells you in passing that the last two times she has been in the waiting room patients have made comments that she could not understand but she felt were insulting. Her sons tell you they told her to go back to her own country.

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- How does the practice deal with requests from non-English speaking patients seeking appointments?
- Is there a written policy to promote the use of bilingual healthcare workers or trained interpreters (face to face or by phone) rather than family members/ companions or computer aided translating software?
- Have my staff, both medical and administrative, had cultural awareness training.
- What is the practice policy on filling in forms for citizenship?
- Are administrative and educational materials available in the languages of non-English speaking patients?

Person-centred care

- Do doctors, nurses and staff know how to use an interpreter effectively? How would my consultation change with an interpreter present?
- Does staff recognise that as well as difficulty with English, literacy may also be a problem for non-English speaking patients?

Specific problem-solving skills

- How up to date is my knowledge on the illnesses that may affect recent migrants into the country.
- How aware am I of the mental health needs of migrants and how to address them.
- Am I aware of support services for migrant victims of torture or violence?
- Is practice staff aware that they need to be conscious that female patients from certain cultures may have been affected by genital mutilation and its consequences?

A comprehensive approach

- Are staff aware of the barriers to health services faced by immigrants e.g. the non-Habitual Residency Clause?

Community orientation

- What other culturally aware organisations, support groups, social supports and services should I involve in assisting my patient and what is my practice relationship with these?
- What are the non-formal community supports for patients from this ethnic group e.g. churches, community of people from similar ethnic group etc.
- How aware am I of the cultural manifestations of mental health and the sensitivities that can occur/vary across cultures?

A holistic approach

- Am I aware of how the cultural lens of a patient may influence their interpretation of symptoms, diagnoses and treatments?

Contextual features

- What measures are in place to show the practice's interest in other cultures e.g. world map on the wall, health information leaflets in different languages, posters with e.g. website info on links to translated materials re Irish healthcare

Attitudinal features

- Do I understand that the same standards of confidentiality apply in non-English speaking patients and to avoid using family members or companions to translate?
- How aware am I of the way my culture influences my outlook/work as a GP?
- How aware am I of my attitudes towards people from other cultures?
- How aware am I of how I should interact with people from other cultures?

Scientific features

- Am I aware of specific illness that affects non-nationals such as haemoglobinopathies and infectious diseases?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of multicultural health issues.

In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary Care Management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should:

- Address immunisation deficits in children who have not received adequate vaccination and organise vaccination catch-up protocol
- Compose written policies for interpretation
- Adapt guidelines to apply screening services for new migrants
- Design systems for accessing available interpreting services
- Design systems for managing appointment requests for non-English speaking patients
- Know how to obtain cultural awareness training

2. Person-Centred Care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should:

- Recognise that (like all patients) migrants have their right to shared decision making protected
- Communicate effectively to develop trusting relationships with patients from differing cultural backgrounds
- Know the importance of offering interpreting services to non-English speaking patients

- Be able to conduct an effective consultation with the use of an interpreter in person or on the phone
- Demonstrate the ability to use alternate (and less favoured) methods of communication when a translator is not available e.g. using internet based translation software

3. Specific Problem Solving Skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP Should:

- Manage specific healthcare issues pertinent to marginalised groups including:
 - Management of children at risk cases
 - Management of common tropical diseases
 - Recognition and management victims of torture or violence
 - Detection and management of female genital mutilation
 - Management of drug addiction
 - Detection and management domestic violence
 - Management of alcoholism
- Know the common tropical conditions that may present to the surgery in new migrants including infectious disease (e.g. malaria) and inherited haemoglobinopathies

4. Comprehensive Approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, co-ordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should:

- Know of the mental health problems of migrants and have an understanding of the concept of resilience and its importance for mental health
- Know the evidence base of the effects of global health inequities
- Understand the concepts of multi-culturalism and oppression of minority cultures including work based oppression and/or trafficking
- Understand the differences between asylum seekers, programme and non-programme refugees and economic migrants
- Understand how a cultural lens can affect a patient's interpretation of symptoms, diagnoses and treatments

5. Community Orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Know the full range of community and social service available to support the healthcare of people from other cultures
- Know referral pathways for social and community services for multicultural communities

6. Holistic Modelling

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP Should

- Advocate on behalf of a patient who is not receiving optimum care due to being from another culture
- Advocate on behalf of the multi-cultural communities

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual Features

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks. A GP should:

- Afford non-English speaking patients full respect for their right to confidentiality
- Be aware of the importance of having professional interpretation when obtaining consent from non-English speaking patients
- Balance respecting the different cultural understanding of gender roles for patients attending while managing not to tolerate abusive or disempowering behaviours
- Be aware of barriers to health and preventative health services such as breast, cervical screening, immunisation, family planning etc. for immigrant patients

8. Attitudinal Features

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care. A GP should:

- Adopt a trusting and respectful manner which encourages the patient to return no matter what their cultural background

- Be aware of the impact of bias, class and power in consultations
- Address and manage prejudicial attitudes and discriminating behaviour by practice staff including fellow doctors towards people from other cultures
- Recognise the importance of effective self-care to prevent stress and burnout

9. Scientific Evidence

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning. A GP Should:

- Know the screening guidelines for new migrants
- Keep up to date with best practice in multicultural areas of medicine

Related curriculum areas / links

- Women's Health
- Social medicine
- Management of Addiction
- Disability



Resources

- *Traveller Health*
- *Health Inequalities and Irish General practice in areas of deprivation*
- *A guide to interpretation services and cultural competency*
- *Cultural Diversity in the Irish Health Care Sector: Towards The Development of Policy and Practice Guidelines for Organisations in the Health Sector*

References

1. Multicultural Health The RACGP curriculum for General Practice 2011 RACGP

Introduction

Acutely ill people of all ages present unpredictably, interrupting work and routines, and requiring an urgent response. They may be seen in familiar contexts such as the surgery, on home visits and in out-of-hours centres. The general practitioner also may be asked to give assistance in unfamiliar and unsupported surroundings such as at the roadside or airplane. Providing out of hours, acute or emergency care can be difficult for both doctor and patient. Patients are presenting at their most vulnerable and they can be frightened and GP's have a duty of care to ensure that their access and transition through the system is as easy as possible.

The GP practice is the first place that most people go when they have a health problem. Effective and timely responses in General Practice benefits patients and reduces acute referrals to Hospital. To ensure that patients get good access to care sufficient appointments should be allocated to meet demand. A well designed practice or out of hours service with properly trained receptionists and triage staff can help identify those who need to be urgently reviewed. A GP in an OOH setting must be able to manage the common medical, surgical and psychiatric emergencies. They will need to manage their own personal security and have an ability to manage and cope with stress.

One of the key roles of a GP is to determine how urgent a case may be and then to take the most appropriate action. These situations are relatively infrequent, making it difficult for the doctor to maintain the appropriate skills, some of which may be complex. Remembering this fact along with periodic emergency care training e.g. CPR/ BLS will help doctors to maintain an effective response.



Case vignette

A mother presents to the surgery in a panic stating that her 4 yr. old child has a strange feeling in her mouth and her throat feels very tight. She has just picked her up from crèche after they alerted her by phone that she didn't feel well after lunch. You see her straight away and note hives over her chest and back and swelling of her lips and tongue. The child appears very weak and is only barely audible due to hoarseness.

You are aware from her notes that she has a history of asthma and mild eczema as a baby.

You decide to get the emergency bag and call in a colleague. How might you continue this consultation?

Mapping the competencies of general practice to this case

To help you understand how the GP curriculum can be applied to this case, ask yourself the following questions:

Primary care management

- What are the possible outcomes in the above case?
- How would you equip your practice for the management of emergencies?
- What systems need to be in place to ensure timely care?

Person-centred care

- How do I manage taking an accurate history and examination during a life threatening situation?
- How do I communicate in a way that does not cause increase anxiety for the patient or their carer?

Specific problem-solving skills

- What questions would I ask to the mother to be clear about my diagnosis?
- What other areas might I need to cover?
- What do I need to know about the creche?

A comprehensive approach

- What other factors do I need to know about this case?
- What other conditions do I have to consider?
- Am I comfortable in OOH managing acute conditions?

Community orientation

- What do I know about the incidence of acute anaphylaxis in the community?
- What are the routes and sources for getting that information for my locality and nationally?

A holistic approach

- How would I explore the impact of carrying long- term adrenaline pens/ anaphylaxis kit with the parents in the future?
- What do I need to know about their understanding of the meaning and potential outcomes of their daughters illness?

Contextual features

- Would my approach to the management of this case differ if I was in an OOH centre or on my own on a Saturday morning surgery?

Attitudinal features

- What are my attitudes towards parents and families who might over use the OOH service or are frequent attenders in urgent appointments?

Scientific features

- How might I keep up to date with best practice for the management of acute allergic conditions?
- What do I understand about the factors that affect the demand for OOH and unscheduled GP care in different communities, and at different times of the day and the year?



The following learning outcomes relate specifically to the management of cases in an acute or urgent setting. In order to demonstrate the core competences in this subject you will require knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

1. Primary care management

This area of competence is about how you manage your contact with patients, dealing competently with any and all problems that are presented to you. (This area of competence is not limited to dealing with the management of the practice.) A GP should;

- Assess and evaluate acutely ill patients.
- Know the presentation of common severe illnesses and where symptoms may be confused with less severe illnesses
- Recognise those illnesses where immediate action is needed to reduce death and significant morbidity
- Understand how patients from different cultures and social backgrounds may interpret and report symptoms and how the presentation may be changed by age, gender, pregnancy and previous health.
- Demonstrate an ability to make complex ethical decisions demonstrating sensitivity to a patient's wishes in the planning of care.
- Take responsibility for a decision to refer on an acutely ill person and not be unduly influenced by others, such as secondary care doctors who have not assessed the patient

2. Person-centred care

This area of competence is about understanding and relating to the context of your patients as individuals, and developing the ability to work in partnership with them. A GP should;

- Describe ways in which the acute illness itself and the anxiety caused by it can impair communication between doctor and patient, and make the patient's safety a priority.
- Demonstrate a person-centred approach, respecting patients' autonomy whilst recognising that acutely ill patients often have a diminished capacity for autonomy.
- Understand the challenges of maintaining continuity of care in acute illness and taking steps to minimise this by making suitable handover and follow-up arrangements.
- Attend to the needs of carers involved at the time of the acutely ill person's presentation.
- Demonstrate an awareness of any conflict regarding management that may exist between patients and their relatives, and act in the best interests of the patient at all times.

3. Specific problem-solving skills

This area of competence is about the context-specific aspects of general practice, dealing with early and undifferentiated illness and the skills you need to tolerate uncertainty, and marginalise danger, without medicalising normality. A GP should be able to:

- Describe a differential diagnoses for each presenting symptom.
- Decide whether urgent action is necessary, thus protecting patients with non-urgent and self-limiting problems from the potentially detrimental consequences of being over-investigated and over treated
- Demonstrate an ability to deal sensitively and professionally with people who may have a serious diagnosis and refuse admission.
- Demonstrate an ability to use telephone triage and advise the patient as to whether they need further review and to modify your own communication skills to accommodate this.
- Evaluate a patient's presentation without access to his or her medical records.
- Perform and interpret an electrocardiogram
- Carry out Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) of children and adults including use of a defibrillator.
- Manage and control a haemorrhage.
- Identify and manage wounds that need to be sutured/ glued.
- Manage and preform catheterization on acute urinary retention.
- Manage an acute asthmatic attack and set up a nebulizer.
- Manage an acute anaphylaxis and appropriate use of adrenaline pen.
- Manage drug treatment for patients with an urgent or emergency condition

4. A comprehensive approach

This area of competence is about how you as a general practitioner must be able to manage co-morbidity, coordinating care of acute illness, chronic illness, health promotion and disease prevention in the general practice setting. A GP should;

- Recognise that an acute illness may be an acute exacerbation of a chronic disease.
- Describe the increased risk of acute events in patients with chronic and co-morbid disease.
- Recognise patients who are likely to need acute care and offer them advice on prevention, effective self-management and when and who to call for help.

5. Community orientation

This area of competence is about the physical environment of your practice population, and the need to understand the interrelationship between health and social care, and the tensions that may exist between individual wants and needs and the needs of the wider community. A GP should:

- Demonstrate an ability to use the knowledge of patient and family, and the availability of specialist community resources (e.g. palliative care) to decide whether a patient should be referred for acute care.
- Manage and address health seeking behavior where appropriate to help achieve effective and efficient use of OOH services
- Understand the wider community of the population of patients presenting to the out-of-hours service.
- Advise on the other sources of help that they may access for urgent and unscheduled care.

6. Holistic approach

This area of competence is about your ability to understand and respect the values, culture, family structure and beliefs of your patients, and understand the ways in which these will affect the experience and management of illness and health. A GP should;

- Demonstrate an awareness of the important support that a GP needs to provide to patients and carers at times of crisis or bereavement including certification of illness or death.
- Understand cultural and other factors that might affect patient management.
- Know how different communities respond to and manage episodes of acute illness.
- Discuss the different health beliefs that patients have about the need to ask for medical help

Essential Features

The three essential features (EFs) below are concerned with the features of you as a doctor which may influence your ability to apply the core competences to real life in the work setting.

7. Contextual aspects

This essential feature is about understanding your own context as a doctor and how it may influence the quality of your care. Important factors are the environment in which you work, including your working conditions, community, culture, financial and regulatory frameworks.

- Demonstrate an awareness of legal frameworks affecting acute healthcare provision especially regarding compulsory admission and certification in mental health emergencies.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the local arrangements for the provision of out-of-hours care including IT set up, house visits and follow up of test results and patient consultations.
- Understand your ability to work in a busy and time-pressured environment and self-awareness of how you respond to stress.

8. Attitudinal aspects

This essential feature is about your professional capabilities, values, feelings and ethics and the impact these may have on your patient care.

- Demonstrate an awareness of personal values and attitudes to ensure that they do not influence professional decisions or the equality of patients' access to acute care.
- Understand the value of effective teamwork in the out-of-hours situation and the roles and responsibilities of all staff, both administrative and clinical.
- Recognise your personal attitudes to patients who may request unscheduled care inappropriately as part of a disorganised lifestyle or working schedule.
- Demonstrate good practice in the recording of learning areas encountered in the out-of-hours session in order to consolidate learning goals that may need to be addressed at a later time and date.

9. Scientific aspects

This essential feature is about the need to adopt a critical and evidence-based approach to your work, maintaining this through lifelong learning.

- Describe how to use resources to make your interventions evidence-based, e.g. BMJ Best Practice etc.
- Demonstrate an understanding of written protocols that are available from local OOH centres and how these may be adapted.
- Evaluate performance in regard to the care of the acutely ill person; including an ability to conduct significant event analyses and take appropriate action.
- Understand the factors that affect the demand for out-of-hours and unscheduled GP care in different communities.
- Understand the information that out-of-hours providers use to audit and map the service that they provide

Where will the learning take place?

- Experience in an emergency department and in General Practice
- Self-directed learning with evidence of the completion of individual tasks (log book)
- Attendance at recognised meetings / lectures / tutorials on specific relevant topics
- Under the supervision of a GP trainer in OOH centre.
- As part of a recognised university course (e.g. Immediate Care Course)



Resources

- Drug Ther Bull. 2015 May;53(5):56-60. doi: 10.1136/dtb.2015.5.0328. Drugs for the doctor's bag: 1-adults.
- Drug Ther Bull. 2015 Jun;53(6):69-72. doi: 10.1136/dtb.2015.6.0334. Drugs for the doctor's bag: 2-children.
- <http://dtb.bmj.com.proxy.icgp.ie/content/53/6/69.full>
- www.irishanaphylaxis.org/
- www.stroke.org/stroke-resources
- <https://www.asthma.ie/>
- www.escardio.org/
- www.epilepsy.ie/
- www.ndep.nih.gov/.../sample-emergency-care-plans-for-hypoglycemia

References

1. <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/91/5/12-112664/en/>

Appendix 1 – Curriculum document mapped for assessment

GP Curriculum	ICGP Competence	Coverage by Assessments		
		CKT	MEQ	CCT
Primary Care Management	Clinical Management	✓	✓	✓
	Working with colleagues and in teams		✓	✓
	Practice Management	✓	✓	✓
Person-Centred Care	Communication and consulting skills		✓	✓
Specific problem solving skills	Data gathering interpretation	✓	✓	✓
	Making a diagnosis/making decisions	✓	✓	✓
Comprehensive approach	Managing medically complexity	✓		✓
Community Orientation	Community orientation		✓	✓
Holistic Approach	Practising holistically		✓	✓
Contextual Features	Community Orientation		✓	✓
Attitudinal Features	Maintaining an ethical approach to practice		✓	✓
	Fitness to practice	✓	✓	✓
Scientific features	Maintaining performance, learning and teaching	✓		✓

Appendix 2 – Mapping core domains of general practice to medical council domains of professional practice

	Specific chapters	Specific core skills	Specific application of core skills in three aspects
Domain 1: Patient safety and quality of care:	Non-clinical chapter 4	All six core skills	All three aspects
Domain 2: Relating to patients	Non-clinical chapters 2, 3 and 4	All six core skills, especially skills 2 and 6	All three aspects
Domain 3: Communication in interpersonal skills	Non-clinical chapter 2	All six core skills especially skills 2 and 6	All three aspects
Domain 4: Collaboration and teamwork	Non-clinical chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4	All six core skills especially skills 1, 2, 4 and 5	All three aspects
Domain 5: Management including self-management	Non-clinical chapter 1	All six core skills especially skills 1, 3, 4 and 5	All three aspects
Domain 6: Scholarship	Non-clinical chapter 5	All six core skills	All three aspects, but especially aspect 3
Domain 7: Professionalism	Non-clinical chapter 1	All six core skills	All three aspects, but especially aspects 1 and 3
Domain 8: Clinical skills	Clinical chapters 1–22	All six core skills	All three aspects



The Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) is the professional body for general practice in Ireland. The College was founded in 1984 and is based in Lincoln Place, Dublin 2. The College's primary aim is to serve the patient and the general practitioner by encouraging and maintaining the highest standards of general medical practice. It is the representative organisation on education, training and standards in general practice.

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