






Health Assessments and Screening

Health assessments/health checks are the second most frequent reason for encounter in Australian general practice (after prescription requests), occurring at a rate of 8.6 per 100 encounters. Health assessments, comprising preventive health activities and screening, are core elements of comprehensive general practice. They are particularly important in addressing the health disparities faced by disadvantaged population groups, like Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For many GP registrars, undertaking preventive health assessments and population screening will require the application of new knowledge and skills.

<p>TEACHING AND LEARNING AREAS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of Medicare health assessments e.g. 45-49 year old, 75+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people • Principles of effective screening programs, and the difference between screening and case finding • Guidelines for preventive health and screening activities across different ages e.g. RACGP Red Book and for different patient populations e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, refugees • Practice systems for implementing health assessments and preventive care (recalls, templates etc.)
<p>PRE-SESSION ACTIVITIES</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the summary of the 2012 Cochrane review General health checks in adults for reducing morbidity and mortality from disease
<p>TEACHING TIPS AND TRAPS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventive activities and screening can harm patients, and tests must be judiciously chosen • Where possible follow guidelines • Use a family history screening tool for genetic conditions • Ensure the patient understands the benefits and risks of all screening tests and activities offered • Use appropriate risk assessment tools when screening for bowel, breast, ovarian and prostate cancers
<p>RESOURCES</p> 	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicare Health Assessments Resource Kit • Medicare Health Assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (MBS item 715) • How to perform a 'Healthy Kids Check' - AFP article (2010)
<p>FOLLOW UP/EXTENSION ACTIVITIES</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP registrar to conduct a mini-audit of 5-10 patients who have undergone a particular type of health assessment e.g. 45-49 year old health check or over 75 health assessment, and compare the preventive activities/screening tests to best practice guidelines • Registrar to undertake the clinical reasoning challenge under exam conditions (seven minutes) and discuss results with supervisor

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Clinical Reasoning Challenge

Bob, a 53 year old teacher who presents and states that he has been sent in by his wife for a 'health check'. His wife attends the practice but he has never previously attended. He is asymptomatic, denies significant PMH, has no allergies, and takes no medications.

QUESTION 1. What other key features should be sought on history? List the most important features.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____

QUESTION 2. Further enquiry reveals no significant history. What aspects of a physical examination would you perform? List the most important aspects.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

QUESTION 3. Examination is unremarkable. Bob says that he has had no blood tests for at least five years. What screening tests would you order as part of this health check? List as many tests as appropriate.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

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ANSWERS

QUESTION 1

What other key features should be sought on history? List the most important features.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status and ethnic background
- SNAP – smoking, nutrition, alcohol, physical activity
- Family history
- Social history
- Immunisation history
- Consider depression screening (see [Red Book](#) for details)
- Risk factors for skin cancer (see [Red Book](#) for details)

QUESTION 2

Further enquiry reveals no significant history. What aspects of a physical examination would you perform? List the most important aspects.

- Height, weight and BMI
- BP
- Waist circumference

QUESTION 3

Examination is unremarkable.

Bob says that he has had no blood tests for at least five years. What screening tests would you order as part of this health check? List as many tests as appropriate.

For the age group 50-64, the RACGP Red Book identifies the need to:

- Measure fasting lipids
- Perform FOBT
- Calculate the risk of diabetes by using the AUSDRISK tool
- Review fracture risk factors for osteoporosis
- Calculate absolute CV risk

Other tests are only indicated if greater than average risk.