

GPSA
GENERAL PRACTICE SUPERVISION AUSTRALIA

SKILLS
CONSULATION SKILLS

Preventative health and screening

Preventive healthcare is an important activity in general practice, and a core aspect of many consultations. It includes the prevention of illness, screening activities for the early detection of specific disease, and the promotion and maintenance of health. Preventive health can be opportunistic or formalised into health assessments. It is 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.

TEACHING AND LEARNING AREAS		• The difference between screening and case finding • Consultation skills for opportunistic preventive health, including motivational interviewing for smoking and alcohol • Preventive health and screening activities across different ages and for different patient populations e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, refugees • Principles of effective screening programs • Range of Medicare health assessments e.g. 45-49 year old, 75+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people • Practice systems for implementing health assessments and preventive care (recalls, templates etc.)
PRE- SESSION ACTIVITIES		• Read the first section of the RACGP Red Book
ACTIVITIES		• Consultation skill tips for preventive health are best taught through role play • See over page of activities
TEACHING TIPS AND TRAPS		• 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, and prostate cancers
RESOURCES	**Read**	• 2019 Cochrane review General health checks in adults for reducing morbidity and mortality from disease • 2015 CFP article Rational Test Ordering in Family Medicine • Choosing Wisely Australia • Medicare Health Assessments Resource Kit • Medicare Health Assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (MBS item 715) • 2010 AFP article How to perform a 'Healthy Kids Check'
	Listen	• RACGP The Good GP podcast National Bowel cancer screening program
FOLLOW UP AND EXTENSION ACTIVITIES		• Undertake the Medcast 'Testing, testing 1, 2, 3' online learning activity



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Activities

ACTIVITY 1

Ask the GP registrar to conduct a mini-audit of 5 patients who have undergone a health assessment e.g. 45-49 year old health check or over 75 health assessment.

Compare the preventive activities/screening tests to best practice guidelines.

ACTIVITY 2 - CLINICAL REASONING CHALLENGE

Bob, a 53 year old teacher who 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 _____



Activities

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)
- Risk factors for fracture

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
- Calculate absolute CV risk

As a fit, asymptomatic 53 year old man with no significant risk factors, the only tests recommended by evidence-based guidelines are lipids and FOBT. There is no evidence to support further testing at this stage.

- According to both the Red Book and the recently published Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Management in Primary Care guidance (2020), Bob does not have any specific risk factors for CKD and therefore does not require a Kidney Health Check at this point.
- The Red Book lists thyroid function tests as 'a screening test of unproven benefit'.
- The Red Book makes no mention of the following tests – FBC, LFT, B12/folate, iron studies, calcium/magnesium/phosphate – in the context of routine screening of the asymptomatic patient.

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