

Instructions to Candidates – Aim for 8 minutes

You are a Foundation doctor working in a GP practice.

Your next patient is Katie Shaw, a 24-year-old lady who is complaining of tiredness.

Task:

Please take a history and formulate your differential diagnoses.

At 6 minutes the examiner will ask you a few questions.

Script for simulated patient:

Katie Shaw, Age 24, C/O: Tiredness

HOPC:

You have been feeling tired for past 2 weeks – unsure if it is work related, started gradually, worse when you exert yourself. Sometimes, you find yourself feeling short of breath when walking up and down the stairs. No other symptoms. You have tried to counter the tiredness by drinking up to 3x cups of coffee a day. Sometimes, you feel heart flutter a bit faster but unsure if this is caffeine related. (– please give vague history)

Only if asked about diet. – You are vegetarian. You had just changed your diet 6 months ago when lockdown started. It was a spontaneous decision you made when your friends became vegetarians too. You had lost about 1kg over past 6 months after the change of diet. No unexplained bruising or recent illness.

Only if asked about periods. – You are currently on your period, use about 8x pads/day. Your periods are painful during first 2 days and you usually bleed for about 5 days. No clots. You

Important questions for candidates to ask:

No feeling of anxiousness, no increase in weight, no change in bowel habits.

No feeling down. Still motivated to work although lockdown has been quite tough. No waking up too early or trouble sleeping.

No increase in frequency of passing urine. No increased in thirst. No increase in appetite

No blood in stools or bleeding disorder. No food intolerance.

PMH: Nil || *PSH:* Nil || *DH:* Nil, *Allergy:* NKDA

FH: Nil. No family hx of Coeliac/Inflammatory Bowel Diseases/cancers

SH (LOST):

Living situation:

Lives in a house with parents, has stairs.

Occupation:

Work in marketing – working from home currently but parents are doing a makeover at home so you help out by moving boxes and things – you find that you sometimes get chest pain when doing these activities.

Social: Smoking, Alcohol, Recreational drugs, Exercise

No smoke. Drinks occasionally. No recreational drugs. Exercises once a week – usually 3x but been feeling too tired.

Travels: N/A

I: No idea what is causing this.

C: You are quite concerned as this is starting to affect your work. You have been too tired to focus on meetings and your company is making cuts next month.

E: You hope the doctor can figure out what is going on? Ask them what they think it is and is there any medication to help?

Questions:

1. What are your differential diagnosis?

Iron deficiency anaemia secondary to menstruation/blood loss, Vitamin B12 or folate deficiency, depression, coeliac disease, hypothyroidism, diabetes, malignancy

Which is your top diagnosis? Anaemia

2. What investigation would you order for this patient?

Bedside: finger prick random capillary glucose

Bloods:

FBC – looking for MCV, MCH, Hb }macro or microcytic anaemia; WCC, Neutrophils, Lymph, platelets} malignancy?

Ferritin levels, Iron studies, B12, folate levels

Coeliac screen (IgA TTG, Ig EMA), TFT, HbA1c

Answer sheet:

Area	Clear Fail	Fail	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
C/O & HOPC					
PMH					
DH					
SH					
FH					
ICE					
Differential dx					
Investigations					
Rapport/ Comm skill					
Overall					

Question	No elements mentioned	Some elements	Most elements	All elements
1				
2				
3				
Overall	Fail	Low pass	Pass	Excellent

Feedback

Tiredness is a very vague complaint and has wide differentials. Do not fret if you cannot cover the entire history by the end of 6 or 8 minutes because in real life, you'll have more time. What's important in this history is to ask very specific questions relating to the differentials you want to rule in or out, and your differentials can be confirmed with investigations. Also do not forget to ICE!

References:

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/anaemia-iron-deficiency/>

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/coeliac-disease/>

Tags: Anaemia, B12, Folate, Iron, Thyroid