

CSA EXAMINATION CARD

Patient Name: Ester Van Dryva 24

Examination findings: Weight 79kg height 162cm BMI 30. Any other requested examination findings normal.

2 fibromyalgia pressure points: Right trochanteric bursa and right sacro-iliac joint. Good range of movement of hips and back.

Trainer's comments

Dr Birrell types as he consults – it's important that patients feel listened to. Sometimes our work is an almost impossible compromise between needing to get the job done (and recorded) and truly listening. We recommend that you avoid typing until you have connected with the patient. Typing whilst maintaining eye contact is not a skill that all can use.

Lots of good skills to pick up:

A significant positive is that the GP actually asks very little about the pain itself (which is probably of little use in this chronic case) and spends a lot of time finding out about impact etc.

He explores what she's tried before and if any actually helped and doesn't just increase – accepts may not be helping.

The GP sounds understanding of all her many problems – gives space for her to tell him about all the problems - by end of consultation we have a pretty good picture of Ester's life

The doctor is positive about keeping moving and exercising, but perhaps the mention of Tai Chi was slightly out of the blue! Signposting might have helped.

There is a lot going on in this consultation. The "magic wand to solve the issue" is a very good way to try to manage the consultation.

Just a few areas I questioned:

The question "how much of that is emotional" may be confusing to some patients – it does seem a little left field, coming directly after he's asked if the pain is on the right side etc.

She is beginning to break down and starts to cry talking about how hard she finds it to be a mother, and the GPs next question is "so you've been to see the physiotherapist?" More touch and go empathy would have helped at this stage.

"Do you get fibromyalgia?" It would have been more appropriate to have asked the patient if she had heard of fibromyalgia at this stage.

There is a lot to try and cover in a consultation – trying to explain the whole functional pain thing is tricky. Giving a leaflet was a good strategy. Arranging follow up with the same GP is likely to be the way forward!

I think trainees definitely need to learn these skills. It is possibly too ambitious for trainees to do this well in a 10-minute CSA type practice.

Perhaps your group might want to pick out a few of the core skills such: as focusing on "what else is going on"; not giving opiates; agreeing to see the patient again.