COMMUNICATION WITH PATIENTS AND THOSE WHO ARE CLOSE TO THEM
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To raise awareness of the guidance set out by the GMC and MSC’s in *Achieving Good Medical Practice* on communication.
- To understand why good communication is an important part of professionalism.
- To recognise and discuss common barriers to communication, how to mitigate them and strategies to communicate effectively.
- To leave the session feeling more confident and comfortable with communicating effectively and safely to patients in a range of scenarios.
COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Try your best to find information for the patient or pass query onto a more capable person.

Supporting patients to make decisions for their treatment and their care.

Be honest when you don't know something.

Sharing information a patient may want or need, in a manner that is appropriate for them.

As a doctor on duty, you must be readily available to patients seeking advice, support, information.

Listening and respecting patient's views.

Always remain polite and considerate to anyone close to patients (including friends/family) at all times.

Barriers to communication

Patient language and communication needs

Reference:
GMC and MSC's Achieving Good Medical Practice (2016), Domain 3.42-3.44
GMC's Good Medical Practice (2013), Domain 3.31-3.34
CAN YOU THINK OF ANY BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION?
BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

External factors

Digital consultations (e.g. telephone consultations)

Patient factors, patients may be anxious or in pain

Miscommunications made in between healthcare professionals and services

Personal factors

Views about patient backgrounds

Language barriers

Views about patient lifestyle

Lack of knowledge

Lack of awareness of patient understanding

Personal factors

Own Emotions

Unconscious bias

Workload responsibilities

Time constraints

Technology/system/equipment breakdowns

Personal Protective Equipment e.g. face masks

WHAT THE GMC EXPECTS FROM YOU...

“Establish and maintain partnerships with patients”

Be **polite** and considerate at all times

Be clear with patients about the **role** you’ll take in their care

Listen and **respond** to patient’s views and concerns

Respect patient’s dignity, **confidentiality** and privacy

Treat patients fairly, with respect no matter your own thoughts about their **choices** and **beliefs**.

YOU, THE MEDICAL STUDENT

Reference: GMC and MSC’s Achieving Good Medical Practice (2016), Domain 3.54-3.55
TIME FOR SOME
CLINICAL CASES!
THE STORY SO FAR...

There is a scheduled appointment for Mrs. Jo Smith with rheumatoid arthritis at the rheumatology clinic. Due to COVID-19, appointments have been moved to online consultations with the doctors at the clinic video-calling patients at home.
1. What were the barriers to communication?

2. What examples of bad communication have you identified?

3. What would you do instead?

4. How would you convey good communication through a telephone call or through PPE?
WHAT THE GMC SAYS...

DOMAIN 3.42

01

Doctors must work in partnership with patients and good communication is vital if they are to do this successfully. Working in partnership is about supporting patients to make decisions about their treatment and care, by listening to and respecting their views about their health.

02

Working in partnership is also about sharing information patients want or need, in a way that is tailored to their needs.
CASE 2
Mark Jones has recently been diagnosed with a cancer and is currently in hospital on a busy and noisy medical ward over the weekend. The FY1 doctor has not met this patient before but is approached by Mark’s relatives down the hallway who are very angry.
1. How could the doctor improve some of these barriers?

2. What errors did the doctor make?

3. What were the barriers to communication?
WHAT THE GMC SAYS...

DOMAIN 3.44

01

Be polite and considerate to anyone close to the patient, such as relatives, carers and friends at all times - not just during a consultation.

02

When communicating with patients you must:
Be honest when you don’t know something.
As a student, you’re not expected to know the answers to all questions a patient may have but you are expected to listen to them and respect their views.
TAKE HOME MESSAGES

**Empathy and compassion**
Doctors must work in partnership with patients and good communication with the patient and those close to them is vital for success. (domain 3.42 and 3.44)

**Be aware of barriers**
Be aware of barriers to effective communication and how you can adapt to meet the patient’s language and communication needs. (Domain 3.44)

**Honesty and confidentiality**
Respect patients’ dignity, confidentiality, and privacy whilst maintaining honesty and integrity. (Domain 3.44 and 3.55)
THANKS!

ANY QUESTIONS?
FURTHER READING (CLICK ME!)

GMC’s Achieving Good Medical Practice (GMC & MSC, 2016)

GMC’s Good Medical Practice (GMC, 2013)

GMC’s Understanding communication failures involving doctors (GMC, 2019)
REFERENCES


- Presentation template by Slidesgo (available at https://slidesgo.com/)
- Icons by Flaticon (available at https://www.flaticon.com/)
- Infographics by Freepik (available at https://www.freepik.com/)
- Images created by Freepik
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