

Communication Strategies with Patients



Patient History Checklist

- ☐ Introduction to Patient
 - Name
 - Role: Student doctor
 - Team: You are working with Dr. ___ & report back to team.

- ☐ Nonverbal Communication
 - Maintain appropriate eye contact.
 - Sit when talking to patient (be at eye level with patient.)
 - Consider body posture.

- ☐ Listen Actively
 - Be fully engaged with patient.
 - Listen without distractions.

- ☐ Questions
 - Ask questions to understand & clarify patient's health concerns.
 - Do not use medical jargon.

- ☐ Wait time
 - Give patient sufficient time to answer one question before asking another.

- ☐ Concern/Empathy
 - Demonstrate interest in the patient as an individual.
 - Respond to patient's emotional needs.

- ☐ Organization
 - Be prepared for the interview.
 - Be sequential when obtaining medical information during the interview.

- ☐ Gather info
 - Create a comprehensive list of patient's concerns.
 - Prioritize patient's concerns when necessary.

- ☐ Closure
 - Summarize patient's concerns.
 - Ask patient if there any additional questions/concerns.

History of Present Illness

The goal is to understand why the patient is presenting to the clinician. Allow the patient to explain their main concern in their own words first and then ask follow up questions. Use mnemonics OLD CART or OPQRST-A as guides.

☐ OLD CARTS

- Onset
- Location
- Duration
- Characteristics
- Aggravating & Alleviating factors
- Radiating factors
- Relieving factors
- Timing
- Severity

☐ OPQRST-A

- Onset
- Provokes/Palliates
- Quality
- Region/Radiating
- Severity
- Time Course
- Associated Symptoms

☐ Review of Systems

The ROS aims to uncover symptoms, dysfunction, and disease within the 14 organ systems of the human body.

☐ Past Med History

☐ Allergies

☐ Past Hospitalizations

☐ Obstetrics History*

☐ Past Surgical History

☐ Family History

☐ Medications

☐ Social History

*If appropriate.

Source: Goldberg, C. (2018). Practical guide to clinical medicine. UC San Diego's Practical Guide to Clinical Medicine. Retrieved January 26, 2023, from <https://meded.ucsd.edu/clinicalmed/introduction.html>



Review of Systems

ROS typically includes questions from 14 different organ systems. It may be unnecessary to ask questions regarding all organ systems. Focus on those relevant or associated with the suspected underlying cause(s) of the patient's condition.

- ☐ **General:** Weight loss? Weight gain? Feeling fatigued? Fevers? Chills? Night sweats? Change in sleep? Change in appetite? Feeling well or poorly in general?
- ☐ **Vision:** Decrease or change in vision? Blurry vision? Double vision? Eye pain? Eye discharge? Red eyes? Dry eyes?
- ☐ **Ears, Nose, & Throat (ENT):** Sores or non-healing ulcers in or around the mouth? Headaches? Change in hearing acuity? Ringing in the ears (tinnitus)? Ear pain or discharge? Nasal discharge? Post-nasal drip? Hoarseness? Tooth pain or problems? The sensation of lump in throat with swallowing?
- ☐ **Respiratory (Resp):** Shortness of breath? Chest pain? Cough? Phlegm/sputum with cough? Color of phlegm or sputum? Blood in sputum (hemoptysis)? Wheezing? Snoring?
- ☐ **Cardiovascular (CV):** Chest pain or pressure? Shortness of breath with rest or exertion? Shortness of breath with lying flat (orthopnea)? Wheezing? Coughing? Hemoptysis? Sudden awakening from sleep with shortness of breath (paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea)? Lower extremity swelling? Sudden loss of consciousness or passing out (syncope)? Sense of rapid or irregular heartbeat (palpitations)? Calf or leg pain or cramps? Wounds/ulcers in feet?
- ☐ **Gastrointestinal (GI):** Heartburn/sub-sternal burning? Abdominal pain? Pain with swallowing (odynophagia)? Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)? Nausea/vomiting? Abdominal swelling or distention? Vomiting blood (hematemesis)? Black/tarry stools (melena)? Bright blood in stool (hematochezia)? Constipation? Diarrhea?
- ☐ **Genito-Urinary/Gynecologic (GU/GYN):** Blood in urine (hematuria)? Burning/pain with urination (dysuria)? How often do you wake up at night to urinate (nocturia)? Urinary incontinence? Urgency? Urinary frequency? Incomplete emptying? Change in urinary strength or stream? Vaginal discharge or sores? Penile discharge or sores? Pain with intercourse? Issues with erections?
- ☐ **Integumentary (skin/breast):** Hair loss? Skin eruptions/rashes? Growths? Itching? Dry skin? Hair and nail changes? Breast mass, pain, or discharge?
- ☐ **Hematology/Lymph:** Easy bleeding or bruising? New lumps? Hypercoagulability?
- ☐ **Immunology/Allergy (IMM/ALL):** Any allergies (rash, itching) to food, animals, or environmental exposures? Any h/o anaphylaxis (throat closing, mouth or tongue swelling, trouble breathing)? Nasal congestion or rhinitis? Frequent infections?
- ☐ **Endocrine (Endo):** Feeling extremely thirsty (polydipsia)? Drinking excessive amounts of liquids? Feeling extremely hungry (polyphagia)? Urinating more than usual (polyuria)? Feeling extremely tired? Weight loss? Weight gain? Heat or cold intolerance? Sweating? Tremors? Skin changes?
- ☐ **Neurological (Neuro):** Abrupt loss/change in level of consciousness? Witnessed seizure activity? Numbness? Tingling? Dizziness? Balance problems or gait instability? Headache? Weakness? Tremors? Confusion? Memory loss?
- ☐ **Musculoskeletal (MSK):** Joint pain, stiffness, swelling, or redness? Muscle aches or cramps? Low back pain?
- ☐ **Psychiatric (Psych):** Sad? Depressed? Alcohol/Substance abuse? Anxious? Memory problems? Confusion? Insomnia? Poor concentration?