



EASOM Summerschool

Herrsching 26-28 August 2010

E- Learning in Occupational Medicine Part 1

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The virtual patient 1

- Step One:
- 1) Information:
- A 34 year old woman comes to the clinical hours of the Occupational Physician. She is a department head in the municipality of a middle sized town in the Netherlands. She is responsible for 10-15 employees. Her department is involved in different municipality affairs.
- She is a hard working, very committed and dedicated employee, feeling very responsible and having a high sense for detail

The virtual patient 2

- The symptoms:
- Fatigue
- Sleeping problems, wakes up early in the morning
- Feels down and depressive
- Low self esteem, lack of self-consciousness
- Continues to work, but has great difficulty in managing her department and meeting the deadlines of her own work

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The virtual patient 3

- 2) Question: Your diagnosis
- A depression
- A stress- related Disorder
- A Personality Disorder

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The virtual patient 4

- Step Two:
 - 1) Information:
- From anamnestic findings and questionnaire results, the diagnosis is:
- Stress-related Disorder with personality elements

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The virtual patient 5

- 2) Question: The treatment plan
- Pharmacological Treatment
- Psychotherapy
- Sick leave advice (rest and try to enjoy and distract)

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The virtual patient 6

- Step Three
- 1) Information:
- The OP advises empowerment process with cognitive behavioural treatment, the patient is referred to a psychologist and goes into sick leave
- After 6 weeks she is seen again by the OP; the situation has improved

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The virtual patient 7

- 2) Question What do you advise next?
- Complete return to work
- Partial return to work
- Continue sick leave

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The virtual patient 8

- Step four:
- 1) Information:
- OP advises partial return to work. After one week it turns out that the combination of management tasks and her own work content is difficult. The boss seems to be hesitating, at one hand appreciating the loyalty and commitment of his co-worker, at the other hand the fact that she is not managing her department very well. He does not seem to be able to help her.
- The situation is in a dead-end road (reached a deadlock)

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The virtual patient 9

- 2) Question: The next step
- Advise change of job
- Develop and improve better coping mechanisms and continue to strive for recovery and regain functional capacity
- Other?

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The virtual patient 10

- Step Five
- 1) Information:
- The patient decides to change jobs and leave the organisation. It is a real pity that an organisation like this is not able to keep such a dedicated employee in helping her back on track.
- A few weeks later another employee goes into sick leave with symptoms of work related stress. The highest functionary (Secretary General of the Municipality) asks the OP for advice

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The virtual patient 11

- 2) Question: OPs Advice?
- Employee Motivation Survey
- Training on how to manage Absenteeism and training of management styles for the department heads
- Coping mechanisms for employees (coping and building self-consciousness)

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The virtual patient 12

- Step Six:
- 1) Information:
- The OP advises a management training in a two-step approach
 - 1) The Management of Absent behaviour
 - 2) Practising proper management styles
- The main focus was “Attention” for the employees

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The virtual patient 13

- After the training given by the occupational physician together with an organisational expert a substantial drop in absenteeism rates was achieved and an improvement in working atmosphere realised

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The virtual patient (Final)

- Final question:
- Can you give me an idea as to what is, in your country, the balance between looking at a patient in a more clinical way and looking at a patient with regard to the organisational setting?
- (in other words: what is behind the story of the patient?)