MAP – Guidance for Criterion 6: Care of patients with long-term conditions

This section of MAP invites you to describe how you, as part of a team, looked after a patient with a long-term illness. This may be a terminal illness in which you describe the illness, the final stages and death, or it may be an on-going long-term condition. What we are looking for here is evidence of holistic care for a patient rather than a demonstration of long term care for an individual patient. To do this you need to satisfy the five components below*.

Cases chosen by previous candidates have been very varied, roughly 50% describing cancer, terminal care and death, and 50% describing chronic illness. These may be neurological diseases such as motor neurone disease, severe Parkinson’s disease, cerebrovascular accidents, or rheumatic disease, cardiac disease or mental illness. When choosing it might be helpful to ask yourself whether the care of the patient you have in mind involved a holistic team approach with cooperation and input from others, and whether there was a social and psychological component of the patient’s problems for you to take into consideration and to describe.

It is essential that you were centrally involved with the care of this patient. It is possible (but difficult!) to cover all the 5* components of this criterion by describing a single contact with a patient. However an example MIGHT be arranging to visit a patient at home following receipt of a letter from a psychogeriatrician outlining the diagnosis of significant dementia. Your role would be to explain that to the patient and carers, implement any drug treatment, arrange input from social services, agree to liaise with district nurse or community psychiatric nurse for particular specialist nursing support and outline help for carers such as getting benefits and respite care. You would need to show how you made sure that appropriate information was handed over to others in the team, to ensure continuity of care. To complete the criterion you would need to tell us about the clinical and social background of the patient.

Most candidates, however, need to have several contacts with an individual patient to cover all the components of this criterion.

Each of the 5 components described in the Handbook are important, so if you find yourself writing lots about three of them and rather little about, say, ‘providing psychosocial support’ then think carefully about that and ask yourself whether you actually do provide that aspect of care, or whether someone else does, and whether that is telling you something about your style of medicine.

This section can be written rather like a diary (if you have had several contacts with the patient), describing the unfolding story about the patient. To help you to write this in a diary format some candidates like to use either template A or B for this section, with the areas of involvement across the top of the table, and the entries written in a chronological format down the page, as in the MAP handbook and portfolio.