

RCGP Curriculum

Supercondensed Curriculum Guide

LEARNING DISABILITY

Role of the GP

- Diagnose, investigate and manage people with learning disabilities, using history, examination, monitoring and referral where appropriate
- Communicate effectively and consider the need for reasonable adjustments
- Be aware of the social and psychological impact of learning disabilities, including the benefits of diagnosis for access to support and potential issues such as social stigma
- Understand the difference between learning disabilities and learning difficulties
- Recognise the risk of diagnostic overshadowing and potentially atypical presentations, especially when unwell
- Coordinate care with carers, other organisations and professionals (including other health, education and social care services) and consider when and how best to share information
- Offer regular advice and support to patients, relatives and carers regarding prevention, prescribing, monitoring and self-management to address poorer health outcomes, reduced life expectancy and overall health inequalities.

Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment Guide

Areas to consider within the general context of primary care



- Equality and diversity
- Effect on family and carers
- Cultural and religious factors
- Educational needs and the role of education, health and care (EHC) plans
- Local services available for support, such as specialist early education services, speech and language support and financial support
- Impact on any other existing physical and/or mental health conditions, including the importance of dual diagnoses with neurodevelopmental conditions (*see separate topic guide on neurodevelopmental conditions and neurodiversity*)
- Awareness of common comorbidities (eg, dementia, malnourishment, obesity, osteoporosis)
- Safe prescribing and managing polypharmacy, including when to stop medication
- Adolescence and puberty, including menarche, safe sex and contraception
- Safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults
- Consent, capacity and confidentiality, including consideration of mental capacity assessment, power of attorney, advanced directives and 'do not attempt resuscitation' (DNAR) notices where relevant.

Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment Guide

Common and Important Conditions



- Onset before birth, including genetic and maternal issues when pregnant (such as Fragile X, Down's syndrome and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD))
- Onset during birth, such as complications causing hypoxia (eg, cerebral palsy)
- Onset during early childhood (eg, meningitis or injury)
- Profound and multiple learning disability (PMLD).

LEARNING DISABILITY

Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment Guide

Examinations and Procedures



- Tailored physical and mental state assessments
- Screening tests to detect neurological and psychiatric problems such as dementia and depression
- Skills to discuss the genetic and heredity implications of a patient's disability with family
- Reasonable adjustments to facilitate access and care for those with intellectual disability in primary care.

Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment Guide

Investigations



- Prenatal screening for genetically-linked conditions
- Physical health checks and reviews.

How this might be tested in MRCGP

AKT



- Recognition of physical or psychiatric illness associated with learning disabilities
- Safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults
- Recognition of normal and delayed child development.

SCA

- A young woman with a learning disability requests contraceptive advice
- Phone call: a carer wants to discuss differential diagnoses and possible management strategies for a young man with a learning disability and known behavioural issues who has recently developed sudden jerky movements
- A woman with a learning disability is brought to the surgery because she is limping and reluctant to weight-bear. Her medication includes Depo-Provera and sodium valproate.



WPBA



- Consultation Observation Tool (COT) about the communication skills required to teach a patient with a learning disability how to use an inhaler
- Case discussion about a couple struggling to cope with caring for the husband's middle-aged sister, who has a learning disability and lives with them.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES (Examples)

Core Content

- **Communication and Consultation**
 - Verbal and written communication tailored to individuals
 - Communication with family and carers
 - Visual/ hearing impairment
- **Prescribing**
 - Appropriate, safe prescribing, avoiding problematic polypharmacy
 - Concordance
- **Co-morbidity**
 - Diagnostic overshadowing
 - Multimorbidity, the impact of a learning disability on other physical/ mental health problems and self-management support
 - Common comorbidities (eg, dementia)
 - Impact of dual diagnoses with neurodevelopmental conditions
- **Team Working**
 - Multidisciplinary across health and social care, hospital and community
- **Medico-legal/ Ethics**
 - Consent, capacity and confidentiality
 - Patient autonomy
 - Equality Act
- **Safeguarding**
 - Abuse and vulnerable groups.

Primary care



- Holistic health checks/ care plans
- Support with managing chronic associated conditions
- Social prescribing (eg, financial support)
- Contraception
- Carer support
- Reasonable adjustments.

Acute Care



- Acute confusion/ behavioural change
- Acute on chronic illness
- Psychosocial issues and influences
- Unusual presentations of acute illness.

Community

- District nurses
- Physiotherapy / Occupational Therapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Third sector organisations
- Local council
- Special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) (additional learning needs coordinator (ALNCO) in Wales)



Other Specialties

- Psychiatry (learning disability and comorbid mental health problems)
- Psychology
- ENT (hearing impairment)
- Ophthalmology (visual impairment)
- Dietetics
- Genetics.