How to help your GP Trainee increase their chances of passing the CSA exam

Dr Sunil Gupta and Dr Claire Giles
GP Trainers and Examiners for RCGP
Your experiences so far
Group tasks

- What is the CSA testing?
- What factors may suggest to you that a trainee may need intensive support to prepare?
- What resources could you advise a trainee about to aid preparation?
- How can you help a trainee that you have concerns about/who has failed the CSA?
Feedback
What is the CSA testing?

How trainers can help

- Lots of video analysis, joint surgeries and CSA practice.
- In video consultations at critical points ask the trainee what they are thinking (e.g. diagnostic dilemmas, treatment choices etc.)
- Best preparation is seeing lots of patients.
- Make sure your trainee is expanding their knowledge base at the same rate as their consulting skills.
How trainers can help

- Watch your trainees for clunky / embarrassed / formulaic phrases and replace with more comfortable and natural ones.
- Encourage the use of open questions early on and help with time management in consultation.
- Identify the barriers to fluent consulting – any social/cultural barriers?
- Encourage patient centeredness.
- Encourage study groups.
Where things go wrong

- Too narrow a focus - making assumptions too quickly.
- Physical examinations - too much, too little, not done or simply wrong.
- Poor clinical management plans.
- Poor time management (not finishing).
- Formulaic consulting.
Passing
- Fluent, interactive and relevant
- Is able to take patient into medical world as a shared partner
- Open about lack of knowledge or certainty and may use this constructively
- Active monitoring during consultation

Failing
- Patronising
- Uneasy with or unable to acknowledge own ignorance or uncertainty
- More scripted summary and checking understanding
- Poor use of time
- Does not appear to care about the patient
- Not curious
- Unaware of personal space
Key features in Data-gathering

Passing
- Can take a focussed but full history
- Open, listening style then closed questions
- Embedding of questions in previous response

Failing
- Formulaic questioning which can become interrogative
- Different types of info elicited in the same way
- Sequence of questions does not seem to make sense
Key features in Clinical Management

**Passing**
- Appears knowledgeable and refers to recognised algorithms or modes of practice
- Able to suggest solutions to problems or a range of reasonable management options likely to be agreeable to patient

**Failing**
- Insufficient knowledge base, or ability to think of realistic and effective alternatives
- Fails to integrate and apply knowledge
- Puts off making clinical decisions or a clear diagnosis
- Doesn’t appear to grasp the dilemma if there is one
Key features in Interpersonal skills

**Passing**
- Connects instantly with patient
- Non-judgemental
- Interested in the patient
- Reformulates explanations using helpful metaphors
- Can meet patient half way – identifies patient’s agenda,

**Failing**
- Patient concerns not addressed
- Unable to explain effectively – may be wrong or not tuned to patient
- Inappropriate use of terms
- Over patient-centred to the detriment of clinical outcome
The Notes

- Read the notes.
- They provide information about patient’s name, age, sex and background.
- They may contain important information about prior events, e.g. a consultation with a colleague or the practice nurse, test or X-ray results, or a letter from a consultant.
- Past history is generally kept to a minimum to avoid distracting the candidate.
Patient Centeredness

- Can be extremely valuable.
- Increases compliance and patient satisfaction.
- Increase diagnostic accuracy.
- Misunderstood as being nice or giving patients what they want.
- Needs to be demonstrated in the CSA.
Summarising

- Can both check understanding and lead to shared management.
- “Summarising is like showing your workings in Maths exams.”
- “Thinking aloud.”
- Making cognition clear.
- Creates order out of disorder.
- Facilitates clinical reasoning.
Things not to do

- “Is it ok to ask you a few questions” repeatedly.
- “Can you tell me a bit more about it” inappropriately.
- Clumsy ICE.
- Generate inappropriate management options.
Things to do

- Selective and appropriate examination.
- Selective and appropriate tests.
- Selective and appropriate referrals.
- Make a decision.
- Explain test or examination.
- Listen to the role player.
Persuading patients

- Build rapport by listening to the patient – letting them speak, not interrupting, staying calm.
- Summarise patient’s point of view.
- Understanding / empathising with the patient.
- Using reason and logic to persuade – evidence.
- Decide degree of urgency.
The trainee’s perspective: local trainees Top Tips

- Variety
- Know chronic disease management
- Practise
- Start early and work through Masterpass book
- Case cards
- Watch videos
- Practise cases where you don’t know but have to make a plan anyway
- See patients and try techniques with them
- Change bad habits early as you will resort to these under pressure of the exam
- Establish ICE
- Consider E Medica course
- Practise in a group you’re confident in
- Consider travelling to the venue the night before
- Learn the consultation sequence /Calgary-Cambridge
- Work to time
- Role play with peers
How can your trainer help? (trainee top tips)

- Joint surgeries with trainer/video (using CSA marking scheme)
- Session – guide to CSA, how to prepare
- Monthly CSA practise from ST2
- Discuss difficult scenarios
- Session to cover planning exam
- Honest feedback
- Share tips from successful candidates
- More emphasis on teaching consultation skills throughout the year
- Find examples of why people fail and share them
Summary

- Videoing consultations and joint surgeries with trainer helpful.
- The trainee should be curious and interested in the patient.
- The trainee has to combine good clinical skills with good interpersonal skills.
- Best preparation is seeing lots of patients.
Any Questions?