

## OVERVIEW OF A PATIENT CONSULTATION/CLINICAL ENCOUNTER

### **Introduction**

Time management is crucial in medicine, especially if you're a busy clinician who sees many patients, therefore it is important to establish a routine consultation that will flow easily and cover all the essentials. The following format is recommended, with an emphasis on 'patient-centred care'.

### **Opening the consultation**

1. Introduce yourself
2. Check the patient's full name, date of birth, how they wish to be addressed
3. Explain confidentiality
4. Obtain consent for the consultation and examination (if you're a student)

### **Listening to the patient's history**

1. Gather information relevant to the patient's presenting complaint
2. Seek to explore and understand what the patient thinks, feels and does in relation to the presenting complaint: health beliefs (including motivation); coping; social support; change in activities of daily living
3. Elicit the patient's ideas, concerns, expectations and feelings

### **During the examination**

1. Obtain consent to begin the examination, and ask the patient if they'd like a chaperone
2. Check that the patient is comfortable and not in any pain
3. Explain each stage of the examination to the patient, in non-technical language, seeking consent throughout
4. Inspect the patient
5. Observe the patient's hands and face
6. Check vital functions
7. Perform a routine examination

### **Closing the examination**

1. Summarise the discussion
2. Check if there's anything else
3. Provide information/advice/reassurance as appropriate
4. Signpost the closing
5. Thank the patient for their time and participation (if you're a student)

### **Throughout the consultation**

1. Build rapport and maintain the relationship with the patient
2. Provide structure and manage the flow (using summaries, signposts)
3. Involve the patient in the consultation and explain the process to them
4. Attend to the patient's dignity and comfort