

Family Medicine Core Clerkship Adaptive Communication and Shared Decision-Making Case

Physician Role:

You are a family medicine physician and today you are seeing a patient that recently moved to your town. You have seen them once previously and they are returning today, three months later for a follow up visit. In preparing for clinic, you notice that your electronic medical record has flagged that this patient is “overdue” for a pap smear.

Patient Role:

You are the mother and legal guardian of a 28-year-old female who has a rare genetic condition, epilepsy, a history of aspiration pneumonia, and severe intellectual disability. The patient is non-verbal and has the developmental age of a 2-year-old.

Round 1:

Physician prompt: You welcome your patient back to clinic today and let them know that they are due for a pap smear. You do not yet know if your patient has had a pap smear in the past. Your main goal in this round is to discuss screening recommendations for the pap smear.

Patient prompt: The physician will tell you that your daughter is “due” for a pap smear.

- You may ask what the screening recommendations/guidelines are for a pap smear.
- You may also ask what the logistics are for doing a pap smear on your daughter and what that would practically look like.
- You can express that given her developmental age you don’t think it would be appropriate to do an in-office pap smear as she wouldn’t understand what is going on.

Round 2:

Physician prompt: During this round you will discuss what the pap smear is screening for and risk factors for cervical cancer. You can also express that rates of sexual abuse are much higher for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities than those without.

Patient prompt:

The physician will be telling you what the purpose of the pap smear screening is and discussing risk factors for cervical cancer.

- You may express that your daughter has never been sexually active.
- You may express that you have always worked to keep her safe and demonstrate insecurity/fear/ mild offense around the idea of sexual abuse.
- You know that she went to school for many years and then goes to a day program for 5 hours every day where she is away from your care.

Round 3:

Physician prompt: Your patient has decided that they are interested in exploring what a pap smear looks like but you have agreed that doing one in office would be scary and inappropriate for the patient. You now recommend that the patient has the pap smear and pelvic exam done under general anesthesia.

Patient prompt: You decided that they are interested in exploring what a pap smear looks like for your daughter but you have agreed that doing one in office would be scary and inappropriate for the patient. The physician now recommends that the patient has the pap smear and pelvic exam done under general anesthesia.

- You can ask the physician to explain what they mean by general anesthesia
- You can ask what the risks are of general anesthesia
- You tell the physician that your daughter has had multiple episodes of aspiration pneumonia and that she just recovered from a bad case of pneumonia last week.
- You are worried about undergoing general anesthesia so soon after recovering from pneumonia and ask about the urgency of this screening to be done this month.