

MEDICAL ENGLISH FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS – ADVANCED LANGUAGE REVIEW

VOCABULARY

Common words

(Word stress in bold.)

patient
science
theory
tissue
discuss
disease
prevent
result
biopsy
injury
interview
overview
physician
researcher

Parts of the body

artery
bladder
bone
cartilage
colon
heart
intestine
joint
kidney
ligament
liver
lung
lymph gland
marrow
muscle
nerve
pore
red blood cell
skin
stomach
tendon
vein
white blood cell

Common names for bones

breastbone
cheekbone
collarbone
jawbone
kneecap

shoulder blade
skull
tailbone
thighbone
upper jawbone

Common illnesses

arthritis
asthma
athlete's foot
chickenpox
cold sore
conjunctivitis
croup
eczema
German measles
hay fever
laryngitis
measles
melanoma
mumps
pinkeye

Injuries and body reactions

a blister
a bruise
a rash
a scar
a sore throat
a sprain
a swollen arm
diarrhoea
inflammation
swelling

Diagnostic tests

a biopsy
blood analysis
a colonoscopy
an electrocardiogram
a CAT or CT scan
a MRI scan
a Pap smear or cervical smear
a stool test
an ultrasound
vital signs
an X-ray

Common abbreviations

A&E - accident and emergency
ADL - activities of daily living
BMI - body mass index
BP - blood pressure
NKA - no known allergies
SOB - shortness of breath
Sx - symptoms
Tx - treatment
CC - chief complaint
ENT - ear, nose and throat
FH - family history
Fx - fracture
LN - lymph node
NKFA - no known food allergies
P - pulse
PMH - past medical history
HPI - history of present illness

Adjectives and opposites

better – worse
steady pain – throbbing pain
sharp pain – dull pain
numb – sensitive
smooth – rough
soft – hard
severe – mild
stiff – flexible
unwell – healthy

Synonyms

acute – severe
rapid – quick
recurrent – repeating
persistent – long-lasting
required – necessary
uncertain – unclear
appropriate – suitable
uncertain – indecisive
mild – light
indicated – signalled

GRAMMAR**Just**

Now I'll **just** take your temperature and blood pressure. (to soften a statement)

They've **just** sent through your biopsy results. (very recently)

Linking ideas and information

... febrile illness; dengue fever. **However**, subsets of patients may develop ...

... with complications **such as** gastrointestinal bleeding and ...

Interestingly, infection with one serotype confers ...

... an endemic region for DENV, **thus** is susceptible to an unprecedented flow of ...

Comparing the data, Singh et al. [10] reported that ...

... reported that, **in fact**, there were two different strains ...

Can and may

We use *can* to talk about things that are **generally true**.

The presentation of dengue virus infection **can** be asymptomatic or manifest as a febrile illness.

If subsequent infection occurs with a different serotype, it **can** predispose the host to a grave clinical outcome.

We use *may* to talk about **possibilities**.

Subsets of patients **may** develop dengue haemorrhagic fever.

The complications **may** result in the potentially lethal form of the disease.

Verb forms in a report

We often use **passive forms** in reports, when the important thing is the action – what is done to the person or thing – not who or what is doing the action.

The passive form is made up of: auxiliary *be* + past participle.

The patient **was admitted** to the hospital at 10 a.m.

Daptomycin 6 mg/kg IV **is being administered** every 24 hours.

If it is important who or what does the action, we use the **active form** of the verb.

Dr Brown **signed** the death certificate.

Not all types of mosquitoes **transmit** malaria.

The -ing form and infinitives

Stress reducing seems **to help** prevent second heart attacks. (infinitive after certain verbs)

There is plenty of evidence **to suggest** this is true. (infinitive after a noun)

It's difficult **to demonstrate**. (infinitive after adjectives)

This has the effect of **increasing** the incidence of heart disease. (-ing form after a preposition)

Concession and contrast

When we present an opinion we often link ideas with expressions of **contrast** or **concession**. With some linkers it is possible to change the word order to change the focus of the sentence:

Despite it being difficult to prove scientifically, there is a lot of circumstantial evidence to suggest a connection between stress and heart disease.

There is a lot of circumstantial evidence to suggest a connection between stress and heart disease, **despite** it being difficult to prove scientifically.

With other linkers this is not possible:
Garlic does not seem to have any effect on cholesterol levels. **On the other hand**, it may prevent cardiovascular disease in other ways.

NOT: ~~**On the other hand** it may prevent cardiovascular disease in other ways. Garlic does not seem to have any effect on cholesterol levels.~~

Cause → Effect

Cause	Linker	Effect
A decrease in physical activity ...	results in	... an increase in weight problems of young people.
Stress ...	has an effect on has a negative/positive effect on has an impact on	... quality of life
Exposing groups of animals to different stressors ...	has the effect of	... significantly increasing the incidence of cardiovascular problems.
In humans, it is difficult to isolate stressors in a person's life, and ...	as a result for this reason that's why	... it is difficult to prove a link scientifically.
Stress seems to ...	increase the possibility of	... cardiovascular disease.

Effect ← Cause

Effect	Linker	Cause
The increase in weight problems of young people is ...	because of due to a result of	... the decrease in their physical activity.
A link may not be established ...	because since	... no such link exists.

Relationships

	Linker	
I'm here today to talk about the ...	relationship between link between connection between	... stress and cardiovascular disease.
Stress ...	is related to is linked to	... cardiovascular disease.

USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

Asking appropriate questions

I've been asked to have a chat with you to check up on how things are going with ...
If it's all right with you, I'll make some notes as we go along.
Tell me a bit about how you are feeling at the moment.
It might be a bit much for you to remember, so I might just ask Mum if you don't mind.
Have you been unwell at all recently?
How often do you usually go to the toilet?

Prompting a patient

How may I address you?
Is that OK with you, to talk now?

I'd like to start today by asking you a bit about your chief complaint.
 Before we talk more about that, is there anything else that you would like to talk about with me.
 And tell me, when did it first start?
 Do you recall what you were doing at the time when you first felt this pain?
 I'd like you to tell me more about the severity of the pain.
 Have you tried anything else at all to ease the pain?
 What I'd like to do now is to go through everything that you have told me and summarise it for you.
 Please correct me if I've missed out anything or got anything wrong.

Phrasal verbs (with definitions in brackets)

I'd just like to **go through** everything that you have told me. (review)
 Let me know if I **miss out** anything. (omit)
 We did **come across** something relevant in your tests. (find unexpectedly)
 My knee **plays up** when I'm doing sport. (does not function as it should)
 I'll just **fill in** Doctor Chandler with the details. (give important information to)
 You can **hand in** the sample in reception on the ground floor. (give or deliver)
 Tell me a bit about what was **going on** at the same time. (happening)
 Have you **put on** weight recently? (increased amount)
 Now I'll **check out** your blood pressure and temperature. (examine)
 The scan didn't **pick up** anything unusual. (reveal)

Giving bad news

So, could you just tell me ...
 I just want to get up to speed with ...
 Do you have any thoughts about why ...
 First, I want to make sure I have all the information.
 As I said, ...
 I'm afraid there is something that is potentially worrying.
 What we need to do now is ...
 I'm very sorry to have to tell you this, but ...
 Do you have any questions at this stage?
 In answer to your question, ...
 I understand that I have just given you a lot of information, ...
 It's important to say at this stage that...
 I wonder if you might want to read this before...

Ways of expressing opinions

It is **arguably/possibly/perhaps/undoubtedly/surely** becoming one of our most serious concerns.
 It is **a commonly held belief** that ...
 It **is believed** that ...
 It **is said** that ...
 It **is thought** that ...
 It **is suggested** that ...
 Scientists believe that ...
 Scientists say that ...

Glossary:

cheek (n):	the soft part of the face between the mouth and ear
puffy (adj):	full, slightly swollen
itchy (adj):	when you feel that you need to scratch part of the body
blister (n):	a painful swelling on the skin that contains fluid
runny (adj):	when the nose produces more mucus than usual
rash (n):	an area of small red spots on the skin
mild (adj):	not extreme or severe
windpipe (n):	tube that carries air from the throat to the lungs (trachea)
seal (n):	a marine mammal that comes out of the water to sleep on the ice or land
pollen (n):	a powder produced by the male part of a flower
lip (n):	the soft red edge of the mouth, we have two lips
scaling (n):	small flat hard pieces of skin, like the skin of a fish
redness (n):	the quality of being the colour red
swab (n):	small piece of soft material for cleaning or taking a small sample of substance from part of the body
prick (v):	to make a very small hole in the skin using a sharp instrument
forearm (n):	part of the arm between the wrist and elbow
clench (v):	to close your hand tightly
unclench (v):	to open your hand after clenching it
shift (n):	work hours during the day or night
bedside (n):	area at the side of a bed
gallstone (n):	small piece of hard material that forms in the gall bladder
gall bladder (n):	a small organ connected to the liver that stores bile, a liquid to help digestion