

# The Audio-COT (Clinically Observed Tool) – a friend or foe?

## Assessment of GP trainers' interest in and use of this clinical assessment tool

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# The use of telephones in GP

- An ever increasing proportion of workload in GP:
  - 1995/96 : 3% telephone consultations
  - 2008/9 : 12% telephone consultations
- In 2008-9 GPs undertook 303.9 million consultations<sup>1</sup> including almost 36.5 million telephone consultations
- Recent study highlighted 80% of patients were satisfied with GP telephone management of same-day consultation requests<sup>2</sup>

# Telephone consultations

- Integral to contemporary medical practice
- Uses:
  - In hours GP work : telephone consultations & triage
  - Out of hours GP care relies on the telephone
  - Hospital outreach and follow up appointments
  - Primary/secondary care colleague interface
- MPS state 'it is absolutely imperative to make telephone consultations ...clinically safe and effective'<sup>3</sup>
- GP trainees need to develop face-to-face and telephone communication skills

# Current assessment of telephone consultation skills

- GP trainees **MAY** get one telephone consultation case in their GP Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA)
- No mandatory formative assessment of telephone consultation skills during training at present
- Limited clinical training for GP trainees on how to undertake telephone consultations
- Limited training for GP trainers on how to facilitate trainees learning on conducting safe telephone consultations

# Audio-COT

- A supervised learning event
- Assessed observed telephone consultation (either directly or via recording)
- Constitutes a constructive learning experience
- Ensures all trainees are assessed on their telephone consultations
- Prepares GP trainees for career post qualification

# Example of an Audio-COT

- Professional competency scoring – same as other supervised learning events

## Audio-COT



Doctor's Name:

Doctor's GMC number:

Assessor's name:

Assessor's registration number (e.g GMC number):

Assessor's position:

Date:

Clinical setting: General Practice / OOH

Title of procedure:

Health Education Wessex

Please tick referring to the descriptors in the detailed guide to the performance criteria for the audio-COT:

Group	Area	Professional competency scoring			
		Insufficient evidence	Needs further development	Competent	Excellent
Discover the reasons for the patient's attendance	Encourages the patient's contribution				
	Responds to cues				
	Places complaint in appropriate psychosocial contexts				
	Explores patient's health understanding				
Defines the clinical problem	Includes or excludes likely relevant significant condition				
	Appropriate physical or mental state examination				
	Makes an appropriate working diagnosis				
Explains the problem to the patient	Explains the problem in appropriate language				
Address the patient's problem	Seeks to confirm patient's understanding				
	Appropriate management plan				
	Patient is given the opportunity to be involved in significant management decisions				
Makes effective use of the consultation	Makes effective use of resources				
	Conditions and interval for follow up are specified				

Overall assessment : Insufficient evidence  Needs further development  Competent  Excellent

Feedback and recommendations for further development:

Agreed action:

Time taken for observation (in minutes):

Time taken for feedback (in minutes):

# Project so far...

- Concept introduced to Portsmouth GP Trainers
- Telephone consultation teaching experience shared
- Trainers given experience of completing an audio-COT using a recorded telephone consultation, to consolidate learning and facilitate assessment benchmarking
- Unanimous agreement of GP Trainers:
  - Important to teach telephone consultation skills
  - The usefulness of an audio-COT to facilitate learning and assessment in GP
  - The trainers would like to learn further about audio-COTs

# Summary

- Increasing use of telephone consultations in GP setting
- Currently GP trainees telephone consultation skills may not be formally assessed during training
- Audio-COT is a tool for facilitating learning and assessment of GP trainee telephone consultations



# Questions?



# References

<sup>1</sup> The NHS information Centre (2009) Trends in Consultation Rates in General Practice 1995/1996 to 2008/2009: Analysis of the QResearch® database <https://catalogue.ic.nhs.uk/publications/primary-care/general-practice/tren-cons-rate-gene-prac-95-09/tren-cons-rate-gene-prac-95-09-95-09-rep.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of telephone triage of patients requesting same day consultations in general practice: study protocol for a cluster randomised controlled trial comparing nurse-led and GP-led management systems (ESTEEM); Campbell et al. *Trials* 2013, 14:4

<sup>3</sup> MPS In the Dark: Risks of telephone consultations; (2012) Sessional GP; 4:2  
<http://www.medicalprotection.org/Default.aspx?DN=e636d167-4a53-4197-b63c-9222315e2c68>