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Anaemia in the Elderly

INTRODUCTION

Anaemia in elderly patients is a common clinical finding, and set to increase with our ageing population. It is important because of its association with an increase in morbidity and mortality and because it can adversely affect patients' mental and physical functioning.

Anaemia in the elderly is a complex subject and poses at least two important challenges to general practice clinicians. The first challenge is to identify the cause or causes (if possible) by selecting and interpreting the most appropriate investigations. The second challenge is to agree a suitable management plan for each patient, which may include ongoing monitoring, prescribing treatment and/or specialist referral.

Module Objectives

- To define what level of anaemia is significant in the elderly.
- To list and discuss the most common causes.
- To describe a practical approach to the initial evaluation and management of elderly patients diagnosed with anaemia.

[This module has been carefully checked by a Consultant Geriatrician, and his comments are denoted throughout by square brackets].