

Gastro-intestinal Short Cases

Introduction

Gastro-intestinal problems are common in primary care. Clinicians are usually concerned with the early detection of serious illnesses, such as colo-rectal carcinoma and inflammatory bowel disease, but are aware that early symptoms of serious disease may mimic more benign conditions. These conditions are important but are fortunately relatively infrequent. Much of the work for primary health care clinicians in this area relates to less serious but common and troublesome GI conditions. Following an online discussion group of primary care clinicians four common GI conditions were identified.

The clinical conditions presented in this module are:

- the diagnosis, immediate and long-term management of coeliac disease
- the management of diverticular disease
- the diagnosis and management of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- the diagnosis and management of anal fissure

After feedback from our piloting groups we have added additional information about the Q-FIT test and more diagnostic information relating to bowel and ovarian cancer. As in other short cases modules, each case is followed by the relevant information section and then its case commentary.

Case One: Ellie, a 22-year-old woman

Part One

Ellie attends you as she is concerned about her bowels. She has had frequent bouts of diarrhoea and abdominal discomfort, including bloating, over the last two or three years. She has noticed that it is worse after eating bread and wheat-containing products and she is wondering about the benefits of going on a gluten-free diet. Some of her friends have recommended this and she has found information about it on social media. Ellie has a normal BMI, is a non-smoker, and enjoys her job as a care assistant in a local nursing home.

What further history and investigations would you wish to obtain?