

Introduction

Lifestyle medicine is an important part of primary healthcare: effective lifestyle advice can make a significant difference to the length and quality of people's lives. This advice needs to be effectively explained and incorporated into our patients' daily habits and routines. With busy modern life, convenience often wins the day, and we forget the simple yet transformational differences that the six pillars of lifestyle medicine can make. The six pillars are (reference 1): (1) healthy eating, (2) mental wellbeing, (3) healthy relationships, (4) physical activity, (5) minimising harmful substances and behaviours, and (6) restorative sleep.

The following cases and information section aims to help PBSGL groups explore some of these principles in the context of primary healthcare and consider how they can be applied to the increasing burden that long-term conditions place on patients and the NHS.

Module aims and learning outcomes

Following review and discussion of this module, primary care clinicians will have:

- a better understanding of lifestyle in relation to specific illnesses e.g. type 2 diabetes mellitus and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- an understanding of “quick fix” versus sustained and consistent lifestyle changes

- ideas for how to conduct meaningful, but impactful, very brief interventions within time-constrained consultations
- greater insight into how health inequalities (or the socio-economic determinants of health) impact on access and ability to make lifestyle changes, including lifestyle technology, healthy food, services available, exercise programmes etc.
- explored the six pillars of lifestyle medicine and how these can be incorporated into patient care

This module covers a wide range of lifestyle issues, and we have included numerous hyperlinks in the information section and in the resources pages to give further information for you to use. As with all our modules, the content was drawn from a focus group discussion that involved PBSGL members from the three main professions participating in our programme. If you would like to determine the content of future modules, please watch out for emails inviting you to attend an online focus group.

[Editor's note: This module is one of a suite of three which focus on lifestyle, health promotion and the impact of health inequalities. The other two are: Managing obesity in primary healthcare and Health Inequalities. This module focuses on what patients can do if enabled to make lifestyle changes. It does not focus on the injectable drugs for appetite suppression or of bariatric surgery: these are considered in the Managing obesity in primary healthcare module.]