

Station Number

AFFIX CANDIDATE
LABEL HERE

CANDIDATE No:.....

Instructions for Candidates

Scenario

Jane Anderson is a 35-year-old married woman who has been admitted with recurrent depressive disorder. She has failed to respond to maximal doses of a tricyclic antidepressant.

Your consultant has asked that she be worked up for lithium augmentation of her antidepressant medication. She knows nothing about lithium.

Instructions

Speak to Mrs Anderson about lithium therapy, paying attention to the relevant facts for someone who is considering a change of treatment.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO HAND YOUR IDENTITY LABEL TO THE
EXAMINER**

Station Number

AFFIX CANDIDATE
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Communication Skills: Lithium Therapy

CANDIDATE No:.....

Instructions for Patients

Answer questions based on the following scenario.

Do not volunteer information unless asked.

This station tests the candidate's ability to explain crucial aspects of a particular pharmacological treatment for depression.

You are Jane Anderson, a 35-year-old woman.

Key Attributes

You are a young woman who has recurrent depressive disorder. You are a little indecisive, but are keen to get better and are fairly open to any other treatments.

Key Dialogue

You have been on Paroxetine, Fluoxetine, and Lofepramine. You are currently taking Imipramine 150mg b.d. and have shown some improvement. However, you have not achieved remission. You have had some side effects from antidepressants, and with the imipramine, you get:

- Dry mouth
- Blurred vision
- Constipation
- Postural hypotension

If the candidate does not cover the following, you should ask the following questions:

1. *“Depression – I thought lithium was for manic depression?”*
2. *Is it safe?*
3. *How long does it take to work?*
4. *What are the side effects?*
5. *How long do I have to take it for?*
6. *I want a family next year – do I just stay on the lithium during pregnancy?*

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Communication Skills: Lithium Therapy

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Instructions for Examiners

***REMEMBER TO ASK THE STUDENT FOR THEIR IDENTITY LABEL AND
AFFIX IT TO THE TOP OF THE MARK SHEET.***

This station tests the following skills:

1. Ability to quickly develop rapport and trust with a depressed patient
2. Allowing the patient to express their concerns and guide discussion
3. Good knowledge of the indications, uses, benefits, and side effects of lithium
4. Ability to communicate this knowledge appropriately to a patient
5. Explains initiation, dose titration, and monitoring effectively to the patient

Station Number

Examiner's Name:

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Communication Skills: Lithium Therapy

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Marking Sheet

Please circle the appropriate mark for each criterion. The standard expected is that of a psychiatric Senior House Officer.

Criterion	Performed competently	Performed, but not fully competent	Not performed		
Approach to the patient – Rapport, empathy, and style	2	1	0		
Basic description of Lithium:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes place of lithium in psychiatric treatment – especially the rationale for tricyclic augmentation 	2	1	0		
Mechanism of action					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exact mechanism unknown, but likely effects on second messenger systems 	2	1	0		
How lithium is used					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely duration of treatment • Risk of relapse if medication stopped 	1 1	½ ½	0 0		
Side effects (certain SFX <i>*should*</i> be mentioned:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial side effects (mild tremor, dry mouth, a metallic taste in the mouth, tiredness, drinking and urinating more) • Later side effects (thirst, tremor, and increased urination can sometimes persist, weight gain) • Possibility of impaired renal function and thyroid dysfunction (more common in women) 	1 1 1	½ ½ ½	0 0 0		
Initiation on Lithium					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine ECG, renal function tests, and thyroid function tests • Regular blood monitoring 	1 1	½ ½	0 0		
How to take lithium					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually taken once a day, at night 	1	½	0		
Essential Facts					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure adequate contraception (risk of cardiac malformation) • Cannot be taken whilst breast-feeding 	1 1	½ ½	0 0		
Overall Approach to Task	4	3	2	1	0
Score (Max 20)					
Overall Grading of station	Clear Pass		Borderline		Clear Fail

