



Writing letters to patients

Rod Kersh

Consultant Physician & Geriatrician, Rotherham NHS FT

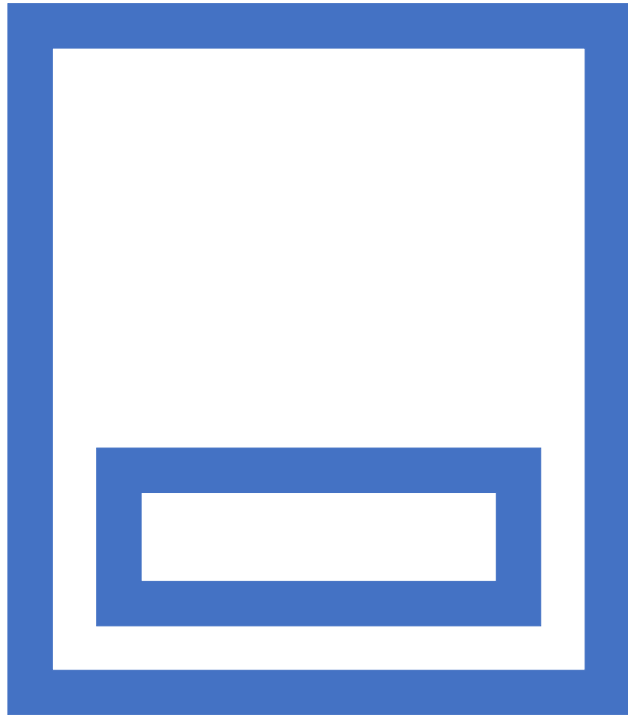
Clinical Lead, South Yorkshire, SCN PEoLC

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Welcome!

Person-centred care

Placing the person (not
necessarily the patient)
at the centre of care



General Medical Council

You must give patients the
information they want or need to
know in a way they can
understand

NHS Constitution

Patients have the right to be given information about the tests and treatment options available to them, what they involve and the risks and benefits

and

The right of access to their own health records and to have any factual inaccuracies corrected

and

Staff should involve patients, their families, carers and representatives fully in decisions about prevention, diagnosis, and their individual care and treatment



Take a moment
to reflect on
your own
practice, how
compliant are
you with these
aspirations?



Why
should we
write to
patients?

Why would
we not
write to
patients?

Expediency – cut-out the patient

Speed, comfort and convenience – shortcuts and medical jargon

Allows you to hold false beliefs

Top tip 1

Remove redundant words such as 'actually' 'obviously' and 'really'

Use shorter sentences

Stick to one topic per paragraph

Find out what the patient would like to be called during the assessment, 'Is it OK if I call you Al?'

It helps if you introduce yourself by name rather than title.

'Mr K obviously has a borderline personality disorder your can't believe anything he says.'



Top tip 2

Avoid medical jargon e.g.
Kidney rather than renal,
heart rather than cardiac

Or use jargon but explain
it –

You have an irregular
pulse; this is called atrial
fibrillation'

AICD, DNACPR, TDS, PO...

Rx Midodrine 10mg tds

**Avoid
acronyms!**

nycin 250mg one three times a week

nide 2mg a day

ysteine 375mg two, three times a day

ciferol/Calcium carbonate one twice a day (**not**

adine 120mg once a day

razole 30mg once a day (**Increase to twice a d**

dazole gel three times a day

one 2.5mg as required

olone 15mg once a day – planning to wean

mol nebuliser

chloride nebuliser

ylline 200mg twice a day

v inhaler two puffs twice a day

mol inhaler as required

If
including
test
results

Explain what they mean...

Hb is 89

Your blood count is a little low, this could be caused by a variety of factors...



By teaching you will learn...

This practice can help you question your own understanding of the facts.

History and investigations Maureen is suffering from Alzheimer's Dementia (ICD-10 Code: G30.1 + F00.1).

Consider the use of
stigmatising language
and objectification

You have asthma = you are
asthmatic


You have diabetes = you are
diabetic

You have asthma and diabetes of
asthmatic diabetic



Flesch Reading Ease Score


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This letter is copied to health care professionals and the person who is receiving medical care. If anyone does not understand any of the terminology or information and requires clarification, please contact me. The person whom this letter is about might find it useful to show this and other letters they receive to other health care professionals when receiving care for other illnesses or conditions.



Ultimately we have to decide
how we want to engage with
patients.





Are patients our
partners?



What would you
want?



Discussion...