## A referral letter of a patient

This should be based on a patient whom you have seen either in the surgery or on a home visit who is to be referred to a hospital. The aim is for a concise letter, stating the question to be answered and providing background details. As with the patient project it should be anonymous.

The letter should include the following:

* Details of your GP teacher, name, address, telephone number (usually on headed paper)
* Patient details; initials, age, sex, ethnic background, NHS number, hospital number (  
  if has one)
* Reason for referral, what question is being asked of the specialist
* Degree of urgency
* Description of clinical problem
* Summary of presenting complaint and examination findings
* Relevant past, psychological, family and social history
* Relevant investigations (including negatives)
* Medication, drug sensitivities
* Accurate reflection of what took place
* What patient has been told and patient’s understanding of the problem
* Language and terms the patient can understand,
* Patient is quoted and where suitable, use 'you' to be specific and be sensitive to issues of confidentiality
* Whether an interpreter is required
* Reason for referral, what question is being asked of the specialist?

You should hand this to your GP Tutor for feedback.

**Reference**

Stephenson, A, *A Textbook of General Practice*, page 101, London: Arnold, 2004.

## Review a discharge summary

The aim of this review is to appreciate the importance of communication of information necessary for high-quality multi-disciplinary discharge management and medicines management.

* Compare the discharge summary of a patient on 4 or more medications with the guidelines set out in Section 3 of the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Document N° 65 [www.sign.ac.uk/pdf/sign65.pdf](http://www.sign.ac.uk/pdf/sign65.pdf) . Then carry out a medication review.
* Interview the patient, if possible, to ascertain their understanding of the medication.
* Compare the medication in the discharge summary, in the patient records and in the patient’s mind. Consider the reasons for any difference.
* If there has been a change in medication, discover what the patient has done with medication previously prescribed and no longer necessary. (This medication should normally be returned to the local pharmacy.)
* Write a brief summary (200 words) reflecting what you have learned from the exercise. Submit this with the rest of your coursework at the end of the attachment.

**Further reading**

Elwyn G, Forster A, Freeman G, Mind the gap: the risk of adverse events and errors during patient discharge, saferhealthcare, National Patient Safety Agency, 2005.

## <http://www.saferhealthcare.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/0FEA9B5F-0D4C-42EE-B5C4-5522473A0C15/0/shcdischargingpatients.pdf>