

ELECTIVE (SSC5c) REPORT (1200 words)

A report that addresses the above four objectives should be written below. Your Elective supervisor will assess this.

Due to the large number of elderly patients at Cranham Village surgery (CVS), there are many patients with chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, heart failure, dementia and cancer. The proportion of patients with cancer is significantly higher compared to the national average. With the growing number of elderly patients, there are also a number of carers namely relatives of the elderly patients; some of these carers find it difficult and thus many experience a period of depression for which they take medication for. Furthermore, many elderly patients have multiple problems for which they come to see the GP for - this obviously makes it hard for GPs to address all of their needs in a single consultation.

More than 97% of the patients registered at the practice are of Caucasian ethnicity which means some diseases which are more prevalent in ethnic minority populations are rarely seen at CVS. There were a number of patients who had mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression. Other mental health conditions such as schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders are not as prevalent as found in inner city GPs. It was interesting to see the positive effect of certain drugs on the mental state of a patient. An example is that of Sertraline, from seeing a patient who was recently started on and slowly noticing a difference to another patient who after many months of taking it expressed the positive effects he found after taking the drug and how he was now able to get back to work with a more positive outlook on life.

As the prevalence of conditions seen in Upminster varies with those in inner city GPs, there is also a variation of health provision. A high proportion of patients at CVS seem very satisfied with the services they receive from all the health care professionals. Cranham Village Surgery holds regular special clinics for a number of chronic conditions such as Asthma, COPD, Diabetes, Stroke and Heart disease. Home visits made by GPs are frequent due to the large elderly population who are unable to visit the surgery and they are also requested by those with terminal illnesses or who are housebound; such patients benefit from this service immensely. Nurse practitioners and practice nurses play an important role at CVS and with their expertise they offer a noble service that many patients benefit from. However, Cranham Village Surgery does not offer minor surgical procedures which are quite commonly seen in a number of inner city GPs where larger practices can accommodate for such services. There are other services seen in inner city GPs which are not offered at Cranham Village Surgery; some of which include counselling sessions run by psychologists and phlebotomy clinics.

Most patients I saw seem to take their health seriously and thus were more likely to follow the advice of the doctors. A slightly elevated cholesterol level of one patient lead to her feeling extremely worried about the consequences of such a result and even requesting the doctor to give her "anything" to bring her levels down but after being reassured by the doctor that it was only a case of

bettering her lifestyle to that of a more healthier one, she was less worried. A patient who I saw was taking antidepressants and after already noticing the benefits of the drug, the likelihood of her continuing the medication was much greater than someone for example who probably didn't believe the medication could work. Age definitely plays a factor in an individual's health belief as I have noticed that the elderly are much more likely to take the advice of the doctor than a younger patient. Family can also affect an individual's health be it for the better or worse; I have seen both sides where a good family support lead to a patient being more confident in her health improvement. On the other hand, a patient with mental health problems who admitted to having a poor family support unit lead to a deterioration in his mental health.

Overall, I saw a variety of patients with various medical conditions ranging from the very mild to the extreme. I also had the opportunity to sit in on an SSC teaching session. As many GPs take on the role of a tutor in medical education, it was interesting to see how they balance their role as a general practitioner as well as fulfil their interests in teaching.