

Example 1: Nurse/Doctor interaction

S

Situation:

This is Nurse Jones on the Haematology Day Ward. I'm calling about Mr John Smith, a day case patient, because he is breathless and his heart rate is 120. I am concerned that might be having a transfusion reaction.

B

Background:

Mr Smith came in this morning for a transfusion of 2 units of red cells. His haemoglobin dropped to 80g/L following his last round of chemotherapy and he was symptomatic during light activity. His first unit of blood was given over 90 minutes and the second one started half an hour ago and is over half way through. He developed dyspnoea within the last 15 minutes, his heart rate has increased from the baseline observations of 90 and his blood pressure is also elevated.

A

Assessment:

His current observations are:

Temp: 37.1°C, Pulse: 120, BP: 150/96, Resps: 28, SPO₂: 92%

He also looks a little flushed.

I think he is showing signs of circulatory overload so I have stopped the transfusion for now and administered oxygen.

I note that he wasn't prescribed a diuretic on this admission.

R

Recommendation:

I would like you to come and see the patient immediately.

Is there anything I should do in the meanwhile, or anything you will need as part of your assessment?

Example 2: Doctor/Patient interaction

S

Situation:

My name is Dr Jenny Smith and I am the doctor looking after you. I'd like to discuss some possible treatment options with you following on from your recent blood tests and the examination I did earlier today.

B

Background:

When I examined you I noticed that you are more breathless today than yesterday, your heart rate is quite fast, and you've been having some palpitations and mild chest pain.

I know that you suffer with angina and had a heart attack 3 years ago.

Your blood results came back and show that your blood count is lower than it should be. I would normally expect it to be above 90, but it is only 78 now.

A

Assessment:

I believe that your breathlessness, palpitations and chest pain are due to your low blood count and your underlying heart condition. Your heart has to work harder than usual because of your low blood count. In other words you are anaemic and your blood cannot carry the oxygen around your body as well as it should.

There is a risk that this will get worse if it is left untreated.

R

Recommendation:

There are different options for treatment that I can suggest.

You could have treatment with iron that is given through a drip into your arm, or with iron tablets.

In your case though, I would recommend a blood transfusion of one unit today and then I can see how you are tomorrow. If you have stopped having palpitations and your breathlessness improves I can then prescribe some iron to bring your blood count back up, or I can give you another bag of blood.