

PRACTICE MMI QUESTIONS*

1. Dr. Smith recommends homeopathic medicines to his patients. There is no scientific evidence or widely accepted theory to suggest that homeopathic medicines work, and Dr. Smith doesn't believe them to. He recommends homeopathic medicine to people with mild and non-specific symptoms such as fatigue, headaches and muscle aches, because he believes that it will do no harm, but will give them reassurance.

Consider the ethical problems that Dr. Smith's behaviour might pose. Discuss these issues with the interviewer.

2. A message that recently appeared on the Web warned readers of the dangers of aspartame (artificial sweetener – NutraSweet, Equal) as a cause of an epidemic of multiple sclerosis (a progressive chronic disease of the nervous system) and systemic lupus (a multisystem auto-immune disease). The biological explanation provided was that, at body temperature, aspartame releases wood alcohol (methanol), which turns into formic acid, which 'is in the same class of drugs as cyanide and arsenic.' Formic acid, they argued, causes metabolic acidosis. Clinically, aspartame poisoning was argued to be a cause of joint pain, numbness, cramps, vertigo, headaches, depression, anxiety, slurred speech and blurred vision. The authors claimed that aspartame remains on the market because the food and drug industries have powerful lobbies in Congress. They quoted Dr. Rhonda Blaylock, who said, 'The ingredients stimulate the neurons of the brain to death, causing brain damage of varying degrees.'

Critique this message, in terms of the strength of the arguments presented and their logical consistency. Your critique might include an indication of the issues that you would like to delve into further before assessing the validity of these claims.

3. What does 'integrity' mean to you?

4. Discuss with the interviewer about a time when you had to deal with a conflict.

5. Recently, the Prime Minister of Canada raised the issue of deterrent fees (a small charge, say \$10, which everyone who initiates a visit to a health professional would have to pay at the first contact) as a way to control health care costs. The assumption is that this will deter people from visiting their doctor for unnecessary reasons.

Consider the broad implications of this policy for health and health care costs. For example, do you think the approach will save health care costs? At what expense? Discuss this issue with the interviewer.

6. You are a shift supervisor at a fast food restaurant. The owner of the franchise has called you over. He is very upset as he has received three complaints in the last 30 minutes about the meat in the hamburgers being poorly cooked. There are two people (one male, one female both 15 years old) who have been cooking the meat for the past two hours. The female is the owner's daughter. How would you handle the situation?

7. If the Prime Minister of Canada were to ask your advice on one change that could be applied to the healthcare system in Canada that would improve it enormously and have the greatest positive effect, what would it be?

8. You are working in a community clinic, where the office staff double-book aboriginal patients. You enquire about their reasoning and the receptionist replies that "These people never show up for their appointments." How would you deal with this situation?

9. Universities are commonly faced with the complicated task of balancing the educational needs of their students and the cost required to provide learning resources to a large number of individuals. As a result of this tension, there has been much debate regarding the optimal size of classes. One side argues that smaller classes provide a more educationally effective setting for students, while others argue that it makes no difference, so larger classes should be used to minimize the number of instructors required.

Discuss your opinion on this issue with the examiner.

10. Due to the shortage of physical therapists in rural communities, it has been suggested that physical therapy programs preferentially admit students who are willing to commit to a 2 or 3, year tenure in an under-serviced area upon graduation.

Consider the broad implications of this policy for health and health care costs. For example, do you think the approach will be effective? At what expense? Discuss this issue with the interviewer.

*Eva KW, Rosenfeld J, Reiter HI, Norman GR. (2004). An Admissions OSCE: The Multiple Mini-Interview. *Medical Education* 38: 314-326. Blackwell Publishing.