

# Common Psychological Histories

| Presenting complaint | Exploding symptom  | Relevant system reviews  | Differential diagnoses |  | Clues to differential  |
|----------------------|--|--|------------------------|--|--|
|                      |  |  | Grouping               | Differentials  |  |
| <b>Anxiety</b>       | <u>Attack detail</u><br>• <i>Timing</i> : onset & duration, episodic/constant, triggers, effect on life, frequency, avoidance<br>• <i>Somatic symptoms</i> : palpitations, breathlessness & tight chest, sweating, dizziness<br><br><u>Background to attacks</u><br>e.g. had before, frequency, impact on life<br><br><u>Associated symptoms</u><br>• <i>Associated psychological symptoms</i> : depression screen, stress, worry, avoidance<br>• <i>Psychiatric differential questions</i> : obsessions, compulsions, PTSD Sx (psychological trauma, flashbacks, nightmares, hyperarousal)<br>• <i>Organic differential questions</i> : e.g. hyperthyroidism, ACS | <u>Psych</u><br>• <i>Depression screen</i> : core (mood, anhedonia), biological (sleep, energy), future (hopelessness, suicidal thoughts)<br>• <i>RISK!!!</i> : to self, to others | Psychiatric            | Generalised anxiety disorder                           | • Anxiety and worry on most days<br>• Generalised (about everything)<br>• Long term  |
|                      |  |  |                        | Panic disorder   | • Panic attacks (palpitations, sweating, SOB, chest pain etc)<br>• Unexpected but certain situations may predispose (e.g. busy places)   |
|                      |  |  |                        | Phobic disorder  | • Intense fear triggered by predictable stimulus<br>• Common examples: agoraphobia, isolated phobia (e.g. snakes, flying), social phobia   |
|                      |  |  |                        | PTSD   | • Caused by stressful life event<br>• Intense anxiety with flashbacks, insomnia, nightmares, avoidance, emotional detachment   |
|                      |  |  |                        | OCD  | • Obsessive thoughts e.g. dirty/violent, constant need to check everything<br>• Only relieved by compulsions e.g. cleaning hands, checking lights or locks a certain number of times |
|                      |  |  |                        | Depression   | • Core symptoms: low mood, anhedonia<br>• Biological symptoms: sleep, energy<br>• Future thoughts: hopelessness, suicidal  |
|                      |  |  | Other differentials    | <u>Organic</u><br>ACS<br>Arrhythmia<br>Hyperthyroidism |  |

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| <b>Psychosis</b>    | <u>Auditory hallucinations</u><br>• <i>Voice detail</i> : male/female, recognise, always same, when etc<br>• <i>Real/pseudo</i> : in/out of head<br>• <i>1st/2nd/3rd person</i> : to you/about you, comments<br>• What they say (inc. commands)<br><br><u>Delusions</u><br>• Explode<br>• Challenge the delusion<br>• Assess how they risk others/self | <u>Psych</u><br>• <i>Schizophrenia 1st rank symptoms</i> :<br>1. 3rd person auditory<br>2. Running commentary<br>3. Delusions of thought<br>4. Delusions of control<br>5. Delusional perception<br>• <i>Depression screen</i> : core (mood, anhedonia), biological (sleep, energy), future (hopelessness, suicidal thoughts)<br>• <i>Other</i> : insight<br>• <i>RISK!!!</i> : to self, to others | Psychiatric              | Schizophrenia  | • Schizophrenia 1 <sup>st</sup> rank symptoms (3 <sup>rd</sup> person auditory, running commentary, delusions of thought/control/perception)<br>• Other positive symptoms: bizarre delusions, odd behaviour, somatic hallucinations<br>• Negative symptoms: apathy, anhedonia, asociality, amotivation |
|                     |  |   |                          | Delusional disorders   | • Non-bizarre delusions<br>• Absence of other psychiatric symptoms   |
|                     |  |   |                          | Bipolar disorder   | • Normal mood interspersed with depression and manic episodes<br>• Mania: irritable, elevated mood, fast speech, flight of ideas, grandiosity, excessive spending/drinking, insomnia, auditory hallucinations, delusions of wealth/power/religion  |
|                     |  |   |                          | Schizoaffective disorder   | • Features of bipolar disorder and schizophrenia in same episode   |
|                     |  |   |                          | Psychotic depression   | • Depression associated with psychotic symptoms e.g. delusions or hallucinations   |
|                     |  |   |                          | Puerperal psychosis  | • Severe mental illness days/weeks after childbirth  |
|                     |  |   |                          | Delirium   | • Reduced level of consciousness<br>• Fluctuating<br>• Nocturnal/day activity change<br>• Infective symptoms   |
|                     |  |   | Dementia (esp Lewy body) | • Long history of progressive memory loss<br>• Related deficit in language, comprehension, orientation, thinking, inhibition |  |
| Other differentials | <u>Organic</u><br>Drugs!! (e.g. illicit drugs, steroids, levodopa, anti-malarials)<br>Alcohol/drug withdrawal<br>Extreme fatigue<br>Temporal lobe epilepsy<br>Space occupying lesion<br>Hypoxia<br>Huntington's<br>SLE<br>Neurosyphilis  |   |                          |  |  |

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| <b>Low mood</b> | <u>Depression symptom screen</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Core: mood, anhedonia</li> <li>•Biological: sleep, energy</li> <li>•Future (inc risk): hopelessness, suicidal thoughts</li> </ul><br><u>Background</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Hx of mania/hypomania</li> <li>•Previous episodes and triggers</li> </ul> | <u>Psych</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Psychosis symptoms: hallucinations, delusions</li> <li>•RISK!!!: to self, to others</li> </ul> | Psychiatric | Depression                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Core symptoms: low mood, anhedonia</li> <li>•Biological symptoms: sleep, energy</li> <li>•Future thoughts: hopelessness, suicidal</li> </ul>   |
|                 |   |  |             | Bipolar disorder           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Normal mood interspersed with depression and manic episodes</li> <li>•Mania episodes: irritable, elevated mood, fast speech, flight of ideas, grandiosity, excessive spending/drinking, insomnia, auditory hallucinations, delusions of wealth/power/religion</li> </ul> |
|                 |   |  |             | Adjustment disorder        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Triggered by stressful life event</li> <li>•Stress, upset, anxiety, hopelessness</li> <li>•Reaction greater than expected for the event</li> </ul>   |
|                 |   |  |             | Psychotic depression       | •Depression associated with psychotic symptoms e.g. delusions or hallucinations  |
|                 |   |  |             | Post-natal depression      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Depression days/weeks after childbirth</li> <li>•Often recurrent</li> </ul>  |
|                 |   |  |             | <b>Other differentials</b> | <u>Organic</u><br>Hypothyroidism<br>Drug side effects<br>Intracranial lesion   |

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| <b>Memory loss</b> | <u>Memory loss</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Onset</li> <li>•Short/long term</li> <li>•Insight and concerns</li> <li>•Functional levels (washing, dressing etc)</li> <li>•Forgotten things that may put people at risk (e.g. gas stove)</li> <li>•Perform a MMSE</li> </ul> | <u>General</u><br>Any infective symptoms e.g. fever, urinary symptoms<br><br><u>Psych</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychosis symptoms: hallucinations, delusions</li> <li>•Depression screen: core (mood, anhedonia), biological (sleep, energy), future (hopelessness, suicidal thoughts)</li> <li>•Other: insight</li> <li>•RISK!!!: to self, to others</li> </ul> | Dementia | Alzheimer's disease        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Relentlessly progressive decline</li> <li>•Disinhibition</li> <li>•Dysphasia and dyspraxia</li> </ul>  |  |
|                    |  |   |          | Vascular dementia          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Stepwise decline</li> <li>•Cardiovascular risk factors</li> <li>•Preserved insight</li> <li>•Patchy organic deficits</li> </ul>  |  |
|                    |  |   |          | Lewy body dementia         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fluctuating dementia</li> <li>•Visual hallucinations</li> <li>•Parkinsonism</li> <li>•Delirium like phases</li> </ul>  |  |
|                    |  |   |          | <b>Other rarer types</b>   | Fronto-temporal dementia (Pick's disease)<br>Prion disease (CJD)   |  |
|                    |  |   |          | Psychiatric                | Depression   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Core symptoms: low mood, anhedonia</li> <li>•Biological symptoms: sleep, energy</li> <li>•Future thoughts: hopelessness, suicidal</li> </ul> |
|                    |  |   |          |                            | Delirium   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reduced level of consciousness</li> <li>•Fluctuating</li> <li>•Nocturnal/day activity change</li> <li>•Infective symptoms</li> </ul>         |
|                    |  |   |          | <b>Other differentials</b> | Degenerative CNS (Huntington's, MS)<br>Drugs and alcohol<br>Vitamin deficiency (B12, thiamine, folate, nicotinic acid)<br>Electrolyte imbalances/uraemia<br>Organ failure<br>Endocrinopathies<br>Space occupying lesion<br>Neurosyphilis<br>Encephalitis |  |

|                        |  |  |             |                  |  |
|------------------------|--|--|-------------|------------------|--|
| <b>Eating disorder</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•BMI: Weight &amp; height</li> <li>•Symptoms: avoidance of weight gain/need to lose weight/look in mirror a lot, efforts to lose weight (vomiting, laxatives, exercise), binge eating/fasting</li> <li>•Food diary: what they eat each day</li> <li>•Consequences: menstrual cycle disturbance</li> <li>•Self harm &amp; depression Sx</li> </ul> | <u>Psych</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Depression screen: core (mood, anhedonia), biological (sleep, energy), future (hopelessness, suicidal thoughts)</li> <li>•RISK!!!: to self, to others</li> </ul> | Psychiatric | Anorexia nervosa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•BMI &lt;17.5</li> <li>•Fear of weight gain</li> <li>•Feel fat when thin</li> <li>•Efforts to lose weight: diuretics/laxatives, vomiting, excessive exercise</li> <li>•Consequential symptoms: amenorrhoea, developmental delay, myopathy, poor sleep, GI symptoms</li> </ul> |
|                        |  |  |             | Bulimia nervosa  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•BMI &gt;17.5</li> <li>•Regular binge eating</li> <li>•Preoccupation of body weight control</li> <li>•Mechanisms to overcome fattening e.g. starvation, vomiting, laxatives, exercise</li> </ul>  |