

Systems Based Practice Scenarios

1. Ludwig van Beethoven presents for his dialysis as usual 10 kg over his dry wt and half an hour late. Review of his monthly lab shows that his Ca is 8, phos 9, intact PTH 2000. You try to talk to him about this problem but it's like he just can't hear you. Who're you gonna call?
2. John Donne has been referred to your clinic because his primary care MD noted that he had hematuria. You find on ultrasound that he has polycystic kidney disease. He takes in this unwanted information philosophically but requests more information on the disease. Where do you direct him?
3. Blaise Pascal has been coming to your office for hypertension control for several months but despite accelerating regimens of antihypertensive medications, his BP is still way out of control. He finally pulls all of the prescriptions you have written out of his pocket and hands them to you, stating that he has calculated the combined costs of all of them and they definitely exceed his income, which in fact is nothing. Now what?
4. Your clinic is entirely overbooked. You have just spent the last 15 min explaining to Forrest Gump that the reason his mentation is so slow is that his est GFR is 16 ml/min and that he is going to have to think about renal replacement therapy. Forrest looks at you blankly then asks you "What? Can you repeat that?" You look at your clinic list and you have 10 more patients, 7 of whom are approaching dialysis. How can you make this clinic more efficient?
5. You have been wracking your brain trying to figure out why Frederick Bartter has hypokalemic metabolic alkalosis. Just as you start explaining to him that he will have to collect 15 24 hour urine specimens, all fasting, he tells you that his mother, first cousin, brother, niece, and uncle all have the same problem. Who can help you with genetic testing?
6. Scarlett O'Hara has been the most demanding patient on 6S, special food, special soap, special sheets. Finally, you can happily walk in the room and inform her that she can go home. "Fiddle dee dee," she exclaims, "I can't even sit up. How do you expect me to go home?" It is Friday afternoon at 4:36. What could you have done to prevent this unexpected turn of events?
7. Lazarus has returned from the dead. You had heard that he was in the hospital but now he has re-appeared in his dialysis chair, looking much thinner. When you ask what happened, he cannot recall a single detail except that his doctors told him his recovery was nothing short of miraculous. How can you ensure that this "failure to communicate" will not be repeated?