

Chief Concern and History of Present Illness

Jane Crone, NP The second part of the medical interview is the chief concern or major reason why the patient came for the visit. Additionally into taking the chief concern you take what is called the history of present illness. I'm going to demonstrate how that is done. Miss Smith tell me what brings you to the clinic today.

Miss Smith I was having ear pain.

Jane Crone I hear you're having ear pain. Is there anything else you'd like to talk to the doctor about today?

Miss Smith No.

Jane Crone No? Tell me a little bit more about this ear pain.

Miss Smith Erm it started about two weeks ago and it's kind of like constantly there.

Jane Crone Ok. I'm going to take some notes while we talk if that's ok with you 'cos (because) it helps me organize my thoughts if that's alright. So, with the ear pain, you've had it two weeks. Correct?

Miss Smith Yes.

Jane Crone Tell me which ear it's in.

Miss Smith It's in my right ear.

Jane Crone Right ear. Alright. Can you describe the pain for me?

Miss Smith Erm sometimes it's kind of like a dull pressure and that's probably the most often.

Jane Crone OK.

Miss Smith And then sometimes it's like a sharp stabbing pain.

Jane Crone OK. And, just so I understand a little better when it's a dull pressure, I'd like you to rate this pain. On a 1 to 10 scale with zero or 1 being no pain and 10 being the worst pain you've ever had. When it's the dull pain, how would you rate that in terms of severity with a number?

Miss Smith Maybe about a 2 or 3.

Jane Crone OK. And tell me when it's at it's worst - when it's at that stabbing pain what is it?

Miss Smith Erm. Maybe about an 8.

Jane Crone OK. Alright. And tell me a little bit more about the timing. You said it started two weeks ago. Since then, how often have you had it?

Miss Smith Oh well it's kind of every day.

Jane Crone It never goes away?

Miss Smith It never goes away.

Jane Crone It's constantly there? Alright. Erm. Have, have you ever experienced this before? Has this ever happened to you before?

Miss Smith No.

Jane Crone OK. So is there any pattern to the sharp and dull sensation that happens?

Miss Smith No not really.

Jane Crone OK. Is.....does anything else go on or do you notice that it happens more at one time of the day or when you're doing something? Do you notice anything different about it?

Miss Smith Erm. No. Not that I can think of. Erm. It's kind of just always there.

Jane Crone Always there. OK. Er are there any other, what we call, associated signs or symptoms, things that go on at the same time?

Miss Smith Erm. It initially started when I had a cold.

Jane Crone OK.

Miss Smith And I figured, you know that it would kind of get better as the cold got better.

Jane Crone OK.

Miss Smith But erm, the cold seems to have gotten better but the ear pain is still there.

Jane Crone And how long did the cold last?

Miss Smith Erm maybe about a week. I still have kind of a runny nose...

Jane Crone OK.

Miss Smith ...but other than that I'm ok.

Jane Crone Alright. And anything else other than the runny nose with the cold symptoms when you had that?

Miss Smith No.

Jane Crone No? OK. Er does anything make this ear pain better?

Miss Smith Erm I have tried an over the counter decongestant and I've also tried Tylenol and that seems to make it a little better but not much.

Jane Crone Not much? OK. What makes it worse?

Miss Smith Erm last week I had to travel and so, you know, taking off and landing was really bad. And I actually have to travel next week so I'm a little concerned about that.

Jane Crone OK. Alright. Erm....the... you've talked about trying Tylenol and over the counter decongestants. Any other therapies you've tried for this at all?

Miss Smith No.

Jane Crone Have you seen any other practitioner for it?

Miss Smith No.

Jane Crone OK. Taking any herbal supplements or anything like that?

Miss Smith No.

Jane Crone OK. Alright. Erm. Er...what do you think this is?

Miss Smith Erm I'm not exactly sure but I'm a little worried that maybe I've ruptured my eardrum or something.

Jane Crone OK. Alright. And tell me - you know it sounds like it's bothering you every single day. Tell me how else it has affected your life.

Miss Smith Erm sometimes it'll keep me up at night and I think I have a little hearing loss.

Jane Crone Hmm. OK. Alright. You noticed that? What I'd like to do now is tell you back or summarize for you what I've heard you say about this concern that brings you to the clinic. What I'd like you to do is correct me if I've gotten some piece of information wrong or if there's something I've forgotten. OK? So what I understand is you're coming to the Doctor today for concern of a right ear pain. There's really nothing else you want to speak about today which worries you the most is this ear pain and you're seeking treatment for it. You have had this ear pain for 2 weeks. It started out with a cold. When you had the cold you had running nose with it but that seemed to go away after about a week but the ear pain has continued. The pain goes from a 2 to an 8 in terms of severity of pain. The pain is always there. It can be dull or it can be sharp or in between. Erm. Doesn't really happen at any particular time of the day. There's no pattern to it, but what you did notice, what did have an effect on you was when you were travelling, with the change in altitude with either descending or taking off that you noticed that that pain got worse for you and was more bothersome. Erm. Nothing really makes it better other than the Tylenol or the decongestant and you haven't seen anybody else for it. You're worried that your ear drum is possibly punctured and what I'm also hearing that you're worried about is that you have to travel again so you're concerned about that this pain is present. Erm. I cannot think of anything else that that you told me. Is there anything that I've missed?

Miss Smith Erm I think you've covered it all.

Jane Crone OK. Again I'm going to go tell the Doctor about this and then we'll come back and we'll talk again.

Miss Smith OK.

Jane Crone Thank you. This concludes the chief concern history of present illness.

Jane Crone You know I forgot to ask you about caffeine in the other one.

Miss Smith That's OK. You can ask me in this one.

Jane Crone OK. OK. Erm.

Another part of the medic.....I really wanted to do this once my braces were off and we're running out of time because my braces don't come off for another two weeks. OK.