

# Neurosurgery Feedback Cases

## Vignette 1

### TEACHER

You have had a very busy night, and you have had a clinical clerk working with you, which has been helpful in getting some of the admissions done. He has just come to review one of them with you—a 41 year-old woman presenting with a brain tumour, who is going to the OR tomorrow. He has presented an extremely detailed history with an extensive functional inquiry, however despite the fact that the patient is drowsy and confused, he didn't assess the patient's vital signs nor formally document her level of consciousness and orientation.

### LEARNER

You are a clinical clerk and have just started a neurosurgery elective, and it is very exciting, but you are not feeling very confident in dealing with such sick patients. You have just admitted a 41 year-old woman, with a brain tumour, who will be going to the OR tomorrow. You took a long time taking the history because she didn't seem to understand your questions very well, and she seemed quite sleepy. However, eventually you got answers to most of your questions, but the functional enquiry took a long time! You weren't sure what to do for a physical exam, because she wasn't very cooperative. In the end, you tried to look in her fundi and check her cranial nerves and DTR's. It was hard to get her to cooperate in the testing, so you have come to report back to the senior resident. Hopefully you can get some tips on how to do a good neurological examination.

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## Vignette 2

### TEACHER

You are working in the outpatient clinic with a Unit 4 medical student (i.e. pre-clerkship). The student seems nice enough, but he really doesn't have any experience with the neurological exam. He has just seen a 58 year-old man who has come with a documented L4-5 disc, confirmed by MRI. The medical student tells you that the patient has not been improving on conservative treatment and is extremely eager to have surgery to fix the problem. The student seems to have taken a reasonably good history, except that you note that he didn't ask the patient anything about bowel and bladder function.

### STUDENT

You are a Unit 4 medical student, and because you have had some problems with neurological problems you have signed up to do a weekly half-day elective in a neurosurgery outpatient clinic. You are quite intimidated by the whole experience so far – there is just so much to learn. The resident with whom you are working today seems a bit demanding – frankly, you a bit frightened of him! You have just seen a 58 year-old man, referred in because of L4-5 disc, confirmed by MRI, which has not improved despite several months of conservative treatment. The patient is upset and angry that it has taken so long to see a specialist. The last thing you need right now is someone else taking it out on you! You tried to take the best history you could, focusing on where the pain is and what makes it worse. You are not sure what else you should be asking, so you go to the resident to report back to him.