

# Sample case study

## Stan Mortensen



### CANDIDATE INSTRUCTIONS:

Stan Mortensen, 51 years old, presents to your family practice clinic as a new patient. He had blood work done 6 months ago. Today, the clinic nurse measured the patient's random blood glucose level, and it was 12 mmol/L.

The laboratory results are posted here and will also be available inside the room.

### IN THE NEXT 11 MINUTES:

- OBTAIN A FOCUSED AND RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE PRESENTING PROBLEM.
- COUNSEL THE PATIENT REGARDING MANAGEMENT OPTIONS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS. DO NOT PERFORM A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.

There are NO examiner oral questions in this station.

## Stan Mortensen

You're a 51-year-old man who owns a convenience store. You haven't had a regular family doctor and have been going to the local walk-in clinic for your medical needs. You had diabetes diagnosed 6 months ago, and metformin was prescribed to manage it. You took the medication for a while, but you haven't had a chance to see a doctor again because you're super busy. Your friend connected you with this new family doctor (the candidate), and you've finally found some time to come in and get a prescription refill. You'd also like to speak to the doctor about some of your concerns about diabetes.

### TIMELINE

6 months ago	3 months ago	Today
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Laboratory results showed your glucose level was high</li><li>– Metformin was prescribed to you</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Ran out of metformin</li><li>– Didn't go to the doctor to get a renewal</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Came to get a prescription renewal</li></ul>

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- You don't know much about diabetes.
- You have some concerns about your condition because your aunt has ended up needing dialysis.
  - You have an aunt who has diabetes and **"needed to give herself needles all the time, which made her gain so much weight. Her kidney failed, and she had to start dialysis because of diabetes."**
  - You don't have a close relationship with your family and don't know anything else about your aunt's health condition.

- You're worried that you might need dialysis someday.

## HISTORY OF PRESENTING PROBLEM

### Prescription refill

#### Six months ago

- You went to a walk-in clinic for a physical and were told everything was normal except that your blood sugar was high.
  - You don't remember the exact results (the candidate has the results available).
  - You were told that you have early diabetes and require medications. You weren't told anything else by the doctor at that time.
  - You received a prescription for metformin (one 500 mg tablet twice daily). You received a prescription for 3 months (200 tablets).
- You've never had a family doctor. You go to the local walk-in clinic for minor concerns.

#### Three months ago

- You took the pills as prescribed, but when they ran out about 3 months ago, you were too busy to book another appointment to get a refill. You didn't think it was a big deal because you were feeling fine.
  - If the candidate asks why you didn't refill your prescription right away, say ***"I'm busy and didn't have a regular doctor, so I just didn't get a chance to get it."***
- Through a friend, you were connected to this new family doctor, so you finally made an appointment for a prescription refill and follow-up.

## PERTINENT NEGATIVES

- You've had no change in how often you have to pee.
- You haven't noticed that you've been drinking more or feeling thirsty.
- There's been no recent change in your weight.
- You haven't felt any numbness or tingling in your legs, feet, or hands.
- You haven't had any changes to your vision that you've noticed.
- Everything else is normal, negative, or unchanged.

## MEDICAL HISTORY

- Your last eye examination was about 2 years ago. Everything was normal.
- Your last physical was around 6 months ago. Everything was normal.
- You've had no operations, hospitalizations, or serious illnesses.
- If the candidate asks for your weight or height, say something like ***"Oh, I don't know. I haven't weighed myself in a while."*** or ***"I don't know my exact height."***

## **FAMILY MEDICAL HISTORY**

- Your father and mother are in their early 80s and healthy, apart from high blood pressure for both of them. You don't know much about their condition.
  - They live far away and you rarely visit.
- You have a younger sister, who lives close to your parents. She's healthy as far as you know.
- Except for your aunt, you don't know of any family history of diabetes.

## **SOCIAL AND LIFESTYLE HISTORY**

- You've owned a small convenience store for the past 5 years.
  - You work 7 days a week and often long days.
  - Sometimes you have staff to take care of the store so you can take a break.
  - You don't know how often exactly you take break from the store but it's not often.
- You live in an apartment by yourself, close to the store.
- You've never been married and have no kids.
- You don't really have any hobbies
- You don't have time to exercise.
- You eat fast food most of the time, and your diet is mostly burgers, fish and chips, etc.
  - The hectic work schedule makes it hard to cook for yourself. You do whatever is easy.
  - If the candidate suggests eating a healthier diet, you're willing to try, but you acknowledge that this will be difficult for you.
- You drink a lot of coffee (maybe 4 or 5 large coffees daily), with lots of sugar and cream. That is the only way to keep your energy for the long days at the store.
- You drink occasionally (around 3 glasses of wine a week).
- You never smoke (tobacco or cannabis).

## **SP SAFETY AND MODESTY**

Everyone working at the exam site, including SPs, has a right to a safe and respectful work environment. If something happens that makes you feel uncomfortable, violates your personal boundaries, is very painful, or is unsafe, you may protect yourself

## Information for the standardized participant (SP)

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**Characteristics:** Male, 51 years old.

**Starting position:** You're sitting in a chair.

**Clothing:** You're wearing casual and worn clothing (you don't have a lot of time to go shopping or care about your clothes and appearance).

**Make-up:** N/A

### OPENING STATEMENT:

***"Thanks for seeing me. I've never had a family doctor but I need to speak to you about my diabetes medication."***

### SP BEHAVIOUR, AFFECT, AND MANNERISMS:

- If the candidate lectures you or is judgmental about you not taking your medication for the past 3 months, you appear annoyed (loud sigh, shaking your head a little bit, avoiding eye contact a bit).
- You're willing to do whatever the candidate suggests, including taking additional medications or changing your medications.
  - If the candidate asks you to modify your diet or exercise, you admit that this will be difficult because of your busy schedule, but you'll try.

### QUESTION(S) SP MUST ASK:

- Early in the interview (in the first 6 minutes), ask ***"Will I need dialysis or insulin some day?"***
  - This should prompt the candidate to begin educating and counselling you on complications (such as future problems with your eyes or kidneys).
  - If the candidate says you need insulin, say ***"Oh no, why do you think I need insulin?"***
  - If the candidate says you don't need insulin, say ***"Oh, that's great news. How do you know that I don't need insulin?"***
- If the candidate mentions they would have you come back for a follow-up visit or says they would do a physical examination, say ***"What for?"***  
(This is a conditional Must-Ask question.)
- If the candidate asks why you didn't refill your prescription right away, say ***"I'm busy and didn't have a regular doctor, so I just didn't get a chance to get it."*** (This is a conditional Must-Ask question.)

### QUESTION(S) SP MAY ASK:

- N/A

## Information for the SP trainer only

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### PERTINENT NEGATIVES

The absence or presence of certain symptoms allows the candidate to assess the patient, make a diagnosis, establish a management plan, etc. Only the symptoms **present** are mentioned in the script. Therefore, when a candidate takes a history and asks about certain symptoms not in the script, the SP's answers should be, "Normal," "No," "I'm not sure," etc.

#### Negative findings that are important in this case:

- No change in urinary frequency.
- No increase in fluid intake or feeling thirsty.
- No recent change in your weight.
- No numbness or tingling in your legs, feet, or hands.
- No changes to your vision.

SPs don't have to memorize this list.

### SP PERFORMANCE REMINDER

- SPs must listen carefully to the candidates' questions and must only answer the question that has been asked.
- SPs must portray [be in character] consistently all day (stay "fresh" and standardize the delivery of answers).
- The SP should practise slight resistance to suggestions about lifestyle changes. The SP should not be overly obstructive, but should respond as illustrated in the examples below:
  - Improve diet:  
**"How can I eat better? I don't have time to cook!"**
  - Get exercise:  
**"I don't have time for the gym! Someone needs to be at the store."**
  - If the candidate asks what he thinks he can do, he can say something like,  
**"Well, I don't know...I'll think about it."**

### KEY FEATURES

Given a 51-year-old patient who presents to the family practice clinic with concerns about diabetes, the candidate will do the following:

1. Obtain a focused and relevant history (scored with the History Taking rating scale only).
2. Provide reassurance to the patient:
  - a. Reassures patient that complications can be minimized with proper management (examples MAY include control of glucose level, blood glucose monitoring, taking medication as prescribed).
  - b. Explains to the patient why insulin is not currently indicated.
3. Provide diabetes management:

- a. Informs the patient that diabetes requires management of lipids **AND** blood pressure.

EXAMINER GUIDELINE: If the candidate mentions they would check blood pressure **AND** order lipids test, this is sufficient.

- b. Informs the patient that a healthy diet **AND** exercise are important to diabetes management **OR** refers to metabolic counselling or clinic nurse or dietician.
- c. Educates on the importance of taking oral hypoglycemic medication regularly.
- d. Discusses a follow-up appointment **OR** recommends repeat blood tests.

**Examiner oral prompts:**

If the candidate looks to the Examiner for oral questions at the 8-minute warning signal, state:  
***“There are no oral questions. Please continue with the patient.”***

**Rating scale(s)**

- History taking
- Management
- Communication skills

## Information for the physician examiner only

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### Assessment criteria:

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3. Provide diabetes management

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#### EXAMINER ORAL PROMPTS:

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Reassures patient that complications can be minimized with proper management (examples MAY include control of glucose level, blood glucose monitoring, taking medication as prescribed)

Explains to the patient why insulin is not currently indicated

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#### Provides diabetes management

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Informs the patient that a healthy diet **AND** exercise are important to diabetes management **OR** refers to metabolic counselling or clinic nurse or dietician

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Discusses a follow-up appointment **OR** recommends repeat blood tests

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#### RATING SCALE(S):

History Taking

Management

Communication Skills

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