

Unit 14 – Physiological Disorders and their Care

Physiological Disorder

- An illness that interferes with the way the functions of the body are carried out.
- Physiological disorders of a body system can affect an individual in many ways.

Examples:

- **Endocrine system** → diabetes, hypo/hyperthyroidism.
- **Nervous system** → Parkinson's, Alzheimer's
- **Musculo-skeletal system** → Rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis
- **Respiratory system** → Asthma, COPD
- **Circulatory system** → CHD, Leukaemia
- **Cancer** → Breast, prostate, lung, etc..

Impact on an individual

- **Physical:** pain, discomfort, reduced mobility, reduced appetite, fatigue.
- **Intellectual:** memory issues, missed school/work, learning more about condition.
- **Emotional:** depressed, anxious, isolated, euphoria, feeling loved, frustrated.
- **Social:** isolated, closer with family and friends, new friends from support groups

Causes

- **Inherited:** can be due to genetics, certain individuals can be susceptible to some conditions as their family members had them
- **Diet:** dietary deficiencies can cause certain conditions, e.g. protein or iron. Being obese has been shown to increase an individual's likelihood of developing certain conditions, e.g. cancer and CHD.
- **Lifestyle:** e.g. smoking, drinking alcohol or taking drugs
- **Environment:** e.g. pollution, asbestos, housing

Investigative procedures

- General measurements a health professional would carry out to find out any abnormal readings.
- **Examples:** blood pressure, body temperature, medical history and blood tests.

Blood tests

- Can be investigative or diagnostic.
- Can be used to diagnose diabetes, cancer, heart problems, renal disorders and endocrine disorders.

Sign

- An objective indication of a disorder noticed by another person, e.g. a parent, spouse or healthcare worker.
- Are observable.
- **Examples:** rash, sweating, loss/gain of weight, change in body temperature/blood pressure/breathing rate/heart rate.

Diagnostic procedures

- Used to diagnose an illness.
- More specific than an investigative procedure.
- Examples: blood tests, urine tests, endoscopes, lumbar punctures, biopsies, CT/MRI scans.

Symptom

- A feature that an individual complains of.
- Can be a sign as well as a symptom.
- **Examples:** pain, disorientation, thirst, headache, 'pins and needles'.

Considerations

- Some procedures are more accurate than others.
- Some are more intrusive than others.
- Some can be painful.
- Some may be used to rule out conditions instead of actually diagnosing any.
- Some can be more expensive than others.
- Some require a trained professional to carry them out.

Treatment

- Will be specific to the illness.
- May require a combination of different treatments.
- Different treatments may have different durations.

Medication

- **Antibiotics** - used to treat bacteria infections.
- **Antihypertensives** – used to reduce blood pressure.
- **Diuretics** – increase urine flow, can help to lower blood pressure.
- **Anti-inflammatory drugs** – reduce inflammation.
- Easy to take.
- Can be fairly inexpensive.
- Can become addictive.

Surgery

- Can be used for removing tumours in cancer, inserting stents for heart disease, or to promote weight loss.
- Can be risky.
- Can be expensive.
- Can be painful.
- Can take a long time to recover.
- Can be effective.

Rehabilitation programmes

- To help individuals regain independence, e.g. after surgery or after a stroke.
- **Examples:** physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychotherapy, speech and language therapy.
- Helps individuals feel 'normal' again.
- Takes time.

Complimentary Therapies

- Not medically backed and their results are questionable.
- **Examples:** acupuncture, reflexology, reiki and aromatherapy.

Advice on lifestyle changes

- Used to promote healthy lifestyle choices.
- **Examples:** stop smoking, healthy diet, stop drinking alcohol.
- Information is easily accessible.
- Not a quick fix.
- Individuals can struggle to maintain lifestyle change.

Carers

- Those who provide care can be professional, informal or voluntary.
- They will provide care in a range of settings.

Professional carers

- GP
- Consultants
- Nurses
- Care assistants
- Occupational therapists, physiotherapists, dietitians.

Informal carers

- Can be friends, family or neighbours.
- They do not get paid for it, but there is a financial allowance for it.

Private and voluntary carers

- Private care agencies charge a fee and can be live-in, daily or hourly.
- Age UK and similar charities have volunteers who help care for certain individuals.

Care Settings

- An environment in which service users receive assistance.
- The level of care varies at each settings.
- Where an individual receives care can be where the individual prefers, but also needs to be safe.

Home

- Many prefer to stay at home where their family are.
- Helps to maintain independence.
- May need modifications, e.g. stairlift.
- May need services like 'Meals on Wheels'.

Residential Care

- For those requiring 24 hour care.
- Can be temporary to provide respite for their carers.

GP Surgery

- Primary health care centre where patients can book appointments themselves.
- GP, practice nurse, and visiting HCPs.

Alternative Settings

- Health centres, hospital care, rehabilitation settings.