

Activity 5 The importance of knowing medical terminology

Activity instructions for ambassadors

Background

Understanding medical terminology is vital to the role of a nurse and midwife. Medical terms are used daily to accurately describe the condition of a patient and the treatment that they need. Without knowing the correct terminology, communication between the care team may get confusing and the patient might not get the treatment they need.

The challenge

This activity has been designed to show students how to decipher and break down some of the scientific terms they might hear, to explain what they mean or which parts of the body they refer to.

Students will be shown eight words, each with three possible definitions. Using the word guide sheet, they need to identify the correct one.

What you will need

- A printout of the example sheet
- A printout of the activity sheet for each group
- A pen for each group
- Copy of the answer sheet and discussion areas

Instructions

- Split the class into groups of 2–3 students
- Use the example to explain the different parts of medical words
- Give each group an activity sheet (eight challenge words and word guide table)
- Ask students to circle the correct meaning of the eight challenge words using the word guide table to help them identify the answer (guide time of 10 minutes)
- Once all the groups are finished, go through the answers and move on to discussion

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Medical words explained

Medical terms typically have 2–3 parts:

- **Prefixes** go at the start of the word
- **Roots** may appear in the middle or start of the word and often refer to the part of the body
- **Suffixes** go at the end of the word

Words may have...

- A prefix, a root and a suffix
- A prefix and a root
- A root and a suffix

Example

Tendonitis (Tendon-itis)

Root = tendon

Suffix = itis, which means inflammation

Meaning = inflammation of the tendon

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Answers

Haematoma (Haemat-oma)

- a) Swelling of blood
- b) Condition of blood
- c) Condition of clotting

Correct answer

- a) Swelling of blood...or a bruise!

Erythropenia (Erythro-penia)

- a) Reduced number of red blood cells
- b) Reduced number of white blood cells
- c) Condition of clotting

Correct answer

- a) Reduced number of red blood cells

Necrosis (Necr-osis)

- a) Disease of blood
- b) Condition of death
- c) Infection of blood cells

Correct answer

- b) Condition of death (the death of most or all of the cells in an organ or tissue due to disease, injury, or failure of the blood supply)

Leukaemia (Leuka-emia)

- a) Reduced number of red blood cells
- b) A condition of white blood cells
- c) A condition of red blood cells

Correct answer

- b) A condition of white blood cells

Thrombosis (Thromb-osis)

- a) Condition of clotting
- b) Infection of blood
- c) Disease of blood

Correct answer

- a) Condition of clotting which applies to blood (blood clot)

Retinopathy (Retino-pathy)

- a) Disease of heart
- b) Swelling of retina
- c) Disease of the retina

Correct answer

- c) Disease of the retina

Septicaemia (Septica-emia)

- a) Inflammation of heart
- b) Condition of swelling
- c) Infection of blood

Correct answer

- c) Infection of blood

Anaphylaxis (Ana-phylaxis)

- a) Without protection
- b) Condition of blood
- c) Without disease

Correct answer

- a) Without protection (allergic reaction)

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Discussion points

After the students have finished, talk about the activity and how it relates to nursing and midwifery. Areas of discussion could include:

- What have the students learnt from this activity? What does it tell them about a nurse or midwife's job?
- How important is it to know the medical terms and communicate them correctly?
- What other fields have their own specialist terms? (That the students know, e.g. sports, music.)
