STATION OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES
This station is designed to test student’s ability to:

- Take a focused history from a 2nd party about a geriatric patient presenting with acute confusional state
- Perform a problem-focused physical exam
- Establish differential diagnosis/es and initial workup

LOGISTICS
Personnel: Jane Smith, an 82-year-old woman suffering from Alzheimer’s disease

Station Materials:
- Student instructions
- SP evaluation forms
- SP instructions
- Faculty evaluation forms
- Hospital gown, blanket

Room Arrangement:
- Station signs
- Examination table
- Chair (2)
STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

PATIENT INFORMATION

Name: Jane Smith
Age: 82

REASON FOR VISIT

Mrs. Smith’s friend Francis brought her into the office because she appears confused

VITALS

To be obtained by the student

YOUR ROLE

Student in the clinic performing initial history and physical exam before reporting to preceptor. Take the history from Francis, Mrs. Smith’s friend, then after 10 minutes go and see Mrs. Smith.

YOUR TASKS

1) Take a focused history from Francis, Mrs. Smith’s friend
2) Perform a problem-focused examination of Mrs. Smith
3) After the patient encounter, please exit the room to complete the patient note

Do not perform a pelvic, breast, or rectal exam. Do not test the corneal reflex.
STANDARDIZED PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS

THE SCENARIO

You are Jane Smith, an 82-year-old retired secretary living in a single-bedroom apartment on the Lower West Side. You have been brought to the clinic by your best friend, Francis. Your daughter Deborah, who usually helps you out a lot, was hospitalized unexpectedly 2 days ago. Your friend Francis came to look in on you today and found you confused at home. You have not been to this clinic for about 2 years, since you were diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, instead going to a doctor down the road. Francis does not know the physician’s name but knows you used to come to this practice in the past.

You have lived alone in your apartment for the past 13 years. You are blessed with 2 daughters. Deborah, who lives very close to you, does your shopping, handles your finances, and calls you every morning to remind you to take your meds, which she puts out in a weekly pill box. You eat a lot of cold cuts and other food Deborah leaves for you. You don’t leave the apartment without someone with you, and you have a bracelet from the Alzheimer’s Association.

Francis came to check on you today, as she knew Deborah was in the hospital, and found you confused. Francis is normally able to have a good conversation with you, especially about things that happened in the past—you both love old movies and 50s songs. Today, however, you are not making sense. Francis knows little about your medical history except that you have Alzheimer’s disease and seemed fine a few days ago. You have not complained to her about fever, cough, or burning on urination. Francis did not see any alcohol in the apartment but found several medication bottles open on your dresser. She brought them in. (Francis: Acknowledge having med bottles only if asked whether you know what medication Mrs. Smith is on—you will be supplied with a bag of empty pill bottles.)

YOUR CURRENT LIFE SITUATION AND PAST HISTORY

You were happily married for 45 years, until your husband died 13 years ago. Your 2 daughters remain a great comfort to you. You retired as a secretary some 17 years ago.

Your daughter Deborah helps you with a lot of chores, including handling the finances, fixing food, putting your meds in a weekly box, and then calling you daily to remind you to take your medication.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COGNITION</strong></th>
<th>You are confused. You are able to answer simple questions such as your name, but any complex questions you answer incorrectly. You believe you are at the beauty parlor. If examined on the bed, lie down, lethargic, preferring not to engage in talk with the medical student.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DEPRESSION</strong></td>
<td>You may be asked to repeat 3 objects or a series of numbers. You are unable to do this task. If asked the date, you get it wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUNCTION</strong></td>
<td>You are not able to answer any questions regarding depression, function, nutrition, urinary output, osteoporosis, elder abuse, vision, hearing, gait, or sores.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NUTRITION</strong></td>
<td>You are not able to answer any questions regarding your past medical history. Below is some information about your past medical history; however, you cannot tell the medical student anything.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>URINARY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Medication:</strong> You take amlodipine (5 mg) for your hypertension, aspirin (81 mg), Tylenol for arthritis pain in your hips as necessary, Aricept for your memory, and glyburide for your diabetes, which was diagnosed last year. (Empty bottles with these labels will be supplied.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OSTEOPOROSIS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allergies:</strong> None.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ELDER ABUSE</strong></td>
<td><strong>Surgery:</strong> You have no history of surgery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VISION</strong></td>
<td><strong>SEXUAL HISTORY</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your husband died 13 years ago, leaving you and your 2 daughters behind. He suffered from severe dementia during the last years of his life and had to live out his last years in a home (Jewish Home Hospital on 106th Street). This was not a pleasant experience for you, to see your spouse deteriorate, and then to visit him in the home. You hope never to have to go there. Though he was well cared for, the quality of life seemed abysmal. The food, the smell, the lack of privacy, of independence. The thought of losing your independence and ending up in a place like that really makes you anxious about the future.

Your parents died in their 60s. You have no family history of dementia except your spouse, but he was not a relative.

**Illicit drug use:** No

**Alcohol use:** No

**THE MEDICAL ENCOUNTER**

You are lying on the examining table as the medical student asks you questions. You cannot answer the questions that he/she asks.

**PHYSICAL EXAM**

During the interview, the student may take your blood pressure, perform select neurological tests, and do cognitive testing as above.

**CHALLENGES FOR THE STUDENT**

- Gather sufficient data to list pertinent positives and pertinent negatives
- Formulate a differential diagnosis
- Propose an acceptable plan that addresses the patient’s problem

**CUES FOR THE STUDENT**

**Verbal:** You know your name and answer yes to all other questions.