

Although there are many medical conditions, GPs often see a lot of repetition in their day-to-day role. It is useful for interpreters to understand some of the most common reasons that people may visit the doctor so that they know the most likely appointments that they will be interpreting for:

Diabetes: Rising levels of obesity and an increase in sugar in our diets means that pre-diabetes and type 2 diabetes are now one of the most common dangers to people in the UK. It is a chronic condition that needs to be managed with patient education as well as medicine.

COPD and Asthma: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease includes several chronic inflammatory lung conditions including emphysema (damage to the air sacs in the lungs) and chronic bronchitis (long-term inflammation of the airways). COPDs are common in middle aged or older adults who smoke. This has meant that spirometry is a common test administered by doctors to see how well a patient's lungs are functioning. Asthma is another common COPD that causes occasional breathing difficulties such as coughing, wheezing and breathlessness and is often treated with the use of inhalers. In both cases chronic disease management is an important part of the treatment.

Dermatology: Although often one of the lesser concerns in terms of a threat to health, each year nearly a quarter of the population go to the doctors about a skin complaint. Skin conditions can cover a range of issues including rashes, psoriasis, eczema, varicose veins and sunburn but they can also be a sign of skin cancer and therefore patients can be referred to a specialist for further investigation.

Musculoskeletal problems: Possibly partly due to the UK having an ageing population, another common complaint that Doctors deal with on a daily basis are musculoskeletal, with the most common issues including osteoarthritis, back and neck pain, fractures (associated with bone fragility), and systemic inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis. After the initial visit, it is common for a range of healthcare professionals to be involved, such as physiotherapists, orthopaedic surgeons and rheumatologists.

Hypertension: More commonly known as high blood pressure, hypertension is another common reason that people visit their GP and can lead to serious issues such as heart attacks or strokes. Often the patient will not have many noticeable symptoms as the only real way to detect

high blood pressure is through a specific blood pressure check, meaning patients over the age of 40 are recommended to have their blood pressure checked once every five years. Causes of high blood pressure can include being overweight, poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking and/or drinking too much and lack of sleep.

Cardiac problems: Often, people will go to the doctors after they experience chest pain, light-headedness, shortness of breath, nausea and coughing or wheezing. These and other symptoms may be a sign of cardiac problems relating to a number of conditions including coronary artery disease, angina, atrial fibrillation, heart block, and those at risk of cardiac arrest. The treatment can vary depending on the actual issue but could include having a pacemaker fitted, medicines and changes in lifestyle.

Stroke: A stroke is a serious and life-threatening condition that occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off. If a patient is having a stroke they would need to go to A&E immediately, but GPs often help patients recover from a stroke and help to manage the long-term impacts such as making sure the patient takes the right medication, monitoring their health and co-ordinating other services.

Chronic illness: GPs will often help patients with chronic illnesses both in terms of diagnosis and management. A chronic illness is one that is prolonged, does not resolve by itself and are rarely cured completely. The number of chronic diseases are huge but commonly include arthritis, asthma, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, hepatitis C and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. Often GPs are vital in identifying symptoms and recommending care and treatments.

Cancer: The earlier cancer symptoms are identified the more chance a patient has of recovery, which is why the GP is key in helping identify symptoms as early as possible. There are many possible symptoms of cancer, depending on where it is in the body, so it can be hard to spot but usually the first clues are that patients have identified something that is abnormal for them.

Flu: GPs are inundated by people who suspect that they have Flu. Flu will often get better on its own but can cause serious illness. Often people think they have flu when in actual fact they just have a bad cold. Common symptoms include high temperature, aching body, feeling exhausted, dry cough, sore throat and a headache. Patients often ask for antibiotics as a remedy but the best remedies can include rest, sleep, keeping warm, taking

paracetamol or ibuprofen and drinking plenty of water to avoid dehydration.