

Patient Name: Anton Moore

Diagnosis: hip fracture, swallowing difficulty

Character Brief

Background information about the patient

Anton is a 76 year old retired builder who moved to Australia 40 years ago from Scotland. Anton lives alone in a house in Faraday Street in Carlton. Anton recently became widowed after the death of his wife Lindsay from breast cancer. Anton and Lindsay did not have any children, while parenthood is something that they would have liked it was not the focus of their lives. Lindsay and Anton led a very active life travelling extensively, both overseas and domestically. They belonged to several seniors' committees/ clubs and were quite social in the community. Anton was quite physically well and was able to drive and manage errands independently.

Since Lindsay's passing, Anton has felt very alone and sad. He has avoided his friends and has not attended any of his usual social activities. He suffered a "blackout" shortly before Lindsay's death which reduced his confidence. The doctors told him it was a TIA (transient stroke that only lasts minutes) and he recovered well. However, with the death of his wife and now the fall he is feeling quite overwhelmed. The only thing that has kept him happy is his trusty old friend Archie, the dog.

In recent months Anton has not felt hungry and rarely cooks meals, preferring snacks like toast, tea and baked beans. He has noticed that he has lost weight. Anton's only social contact is his neighbor Serena Rashidi. Anton visits Serena's house most mornings for tea and toast. Serena was good friends with Lindsay and her company is comforting to him. Serena is currently looking after Archie.

Physical characteristics

Anton is a previously well looking 76 year old who has recently lost weight and had difficulty looking after himself.

Anton is a little tired since his operation and has some pain in his hip.

Anton has not had any medication for pain relief for a few hours and has pain of around 5 out of 10 when asked. The pain becomes worse with movement. The pain is around the hip and also at the incision site. Taking medication for the pain helped this morning. The pain causes Anton to have difficulty moving his leg (bending at the hip, lifting his leg and moving it around the bed).

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Anton has also noticed that he is having difficulty swallowing. This is a new symptom that he has only noticed since the fall. He notices this mainly when taking large mouthfuls of liquids, such as when swallowing tablets. Large mouthfuls cause him to cough and splutter and feel quite uncomfortable. It takes him a few goes to be able to swallow a tablet. He is able to swallow small mouthfuls on a spoon without difficulty. He is also able to swallow pureed / thick foods without difficulty and solids if they are in small mouthfuls.

Patient's affects/ behaviours

Anton is feeling sad and alone. He wants to get back home to his dog and wishes his wife was still alive.

He has lost confidence in himself since the falls. He has always been independent, so does not want to ask for help. He is also a proud man and does not want to appear weak and incapable. He initially resists help, but after speaking to staff who appear nice and helpful does come to the realization that he cannot manage on his own anymore.

Patient's current concerns

Anton is concerned about his dog Archie – he misses him terribly and wants to return home to him.

Deep down, Anton is also concerned about himself. While he does not want to admit it, he has not been looking after himself and has lost motivation for life. He does want to access help with managing at home, but he doesn't know what help is available and where to go to get help. Once he learns more about what help he can receive he is accepting of any supports to make his life easier and keep him at home longer. However, due to his pride he does not want to involve any of his friends in helping him. The only person he trusts and feels comfortable around is Serena.

Anton is eager to get out of bed and start moving so that he can return home. However, he will be unable to do this without any pain medication as the pain gets too great when he moves. A few minutes after being given pain medication he will be able to move comfortably (pain will be 2 or 3 out of 10 and while he will move his left leg slowly and may need some help, the pain will be manageable).

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Patient's history of the problem

Anton got up yesterday morning to go to the toilet. He can't remember what happened, but thinks he may have lost his footing and fell on the ground. He is vague about the events surrounding the fall and wonders if it was another blackout like he suffered 7 months ago. Initially he told the medical staff he did not lose consciousness, but now he is not so sure.

He found himself on the floor of his bedroom, with severe pain in his hip. He called out for help. After a while, his neighbor Serena let herself into the house and found him on the floor. Serena had noticed that he was late for their usual gathering for toast and tea in the mornings so she came to check on him. He is relieved that he gave her a spare key.

He was brought to hospital in an ambulance. He saw Mr Jones, an orthopaedic surgeon in the emergency department. Mr Jones took him to theatre and put a screw in his hip. He was awake during the operation, but it was all so overwhelming that he cannot remember the details well. Anton has had an unsettled night; he misses his dog Archie and his wife Lindsay and feels quite alone.

This morning Mr Jones visited and told Anton that he can start walking with the help of the physios. He also mentioned that Anton will need to go to radiology to have an xray. Anton had some blood taken this morning. He was also visited by the pain service who took away his patient controlled analgesia (a button that patients use to deliver morphine to themselves when they need it). Anton didn't use the morphine much as he felt comfortable at the time. Other than a wash in bed, Anton has not moved much since the operation.

For Part B (day 3 after the operation), Anton is doing well. He is getting better at his walking and his pain is a lot better. However he is now concerned that he is having difficulty swallowing big mouthfuls of liquid. He has only been eating small amounts and the nurses have had to crush up some of his medications for him. He is unsure why this is happening. Anton is also concerned about going back home. He has been told that he will be ready to go home in a few days, and he is keen to go, but is unsure how he will look after himself. He doesn't think that he will be able to drive. He will need to keep using the walking frame and he wonders if he will be able to cook meals for himself. Before the fall, he was doing very little cooking, cleaning or home maintenance as he was feeling unmotivated and missed his wife too much to focus on this.

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Patient's past medical history

Anton has high blood pressure for which he takes two medications – Ramipril and Metoprolol. He takes these tablets once a day. He has also been told that he has osteoporosis and he takes 2 calcium tablets every morning.

He had a mini stroke 7 months ago, but recovered from this ok and did not have to stay in hospital.

Anton does not have any allergies.

Anton does not smoke or drink.

Scenario prompts

The nursing students need to be made aware of your need for pain medication. Let them know you have pain in your hip and would like some medication to help reduce it. Your pain without medication is around 5, but gets worse when you move.

If you do not get any pain medication, you will have great difficulty moving (sitting up, moving your leg). Let the students know that you are in a lot of pain.

You are eager to see the physio and start moving, but you are concerned about your current level of pain and don't think that you can manage without medication.

When given medication to swallow show that you have difficulty swallowing it. Cough and splutter and take a few goes to get it down. If you think that the students have not noticed this, wait a while and ask for a drink of water. Exhibit the same behavior when drinking water and show some concern that this is not normal for you.

The physio students will need to show you how to use a walking aid. You have not used one before so appear vague and unsure what to do.

The speech pathology students will ask you to swallow a variety of textures. You will have difficulty with large mouthfuls of water / solid food, but you can manage other textures as normal.

The social worker will ask you about your home situation. You may improvise this, but the main aim is to demonstrate that you are not managing at home and will need some help. Do not be very receptive to help at first – you are a proud, independent man and may need a small amount of convincing to accept support. As you build rapport with the students, be more accepting of their assistance.

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