

Skills practice scenario 6 – colon cancer

Remember the 'patient' and 'professional' scripts need to be presented on separate folded sheets for the trio group work. It doesn't matter if details are changed, e.g. gender or age of 'patient' or title of 'professional', if that works better for the group.

'Patient' - Alfred Legg

Farmworker, age 64. Things seemed to have happened pretty quickly since you went to see your GP. You were up to the clinic and in for the operation in three weeks. The surgeon seemed nice – pity you were sent to the community hospital soon after your operation and didn't see him again – but it's easier for the family to visit. The nurses were great and you think you've got the hang of this colostomy thing. Good to be home now – even had a wander down to the paddock yesterday to look at those lambs – may be one or two prize winners there. Still you're not really clear about the operation and someone said something about an appointment with the oncologist but you're not sure what that is about. Perhaps your GP will be able to make things a bit clearer.

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'Professional' – Dr Brown

Alfred said he'd only had symptoms for a couple of weeks when he came but you suspect it is longer – he's never one to make a fuss and was probably too busy with lambing to do anything. He looked as if he had lost a bit of weight and you thought his liver edge was just palpable. The fast track system worked but the surgeon's note says the transverse colon tumour was stuck down and there were multiple liver metastases so the defunctioning proximal colostomy was the best they could do for him. It seems there may be some benefit from palliative chemotherapy but it looks as if his days are limited. By the look of it he was shipped out to the community hospital before they had any discussion about that. You wonder how he's coping with the colostomy and what he makes of it all.

