Preparing for the Situational Judgement Test (SJT)

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Objectives

- What is the SJT
- Why does it matter
- Advice on how to prepare for the SJT
- Common themes
- Practice questions
- 10 tips
What is the SJT

• Designed to assess the professional attributes expected of foundation doctors according to the person specification for the Foundation Programme:
  • Commitment to professionalism
  • Coping with pressure
  • Effective communication
  • Learning & professional development
  • Organisation & planning
  • Patient focus
  • Problem solving & decision-making
  • Self-awareness & insight
  • Working effectively as part of a team

• Tests the professional values, attitudes and behaviours expected for new doctors as set out in the GMC’s “Good Medical Practice”

• Requires consideration of the most appropriate responses to a professional dilemma
Why does the SJT matter?

- Worth 50 points of foundation programme application
  - Medical school decile = 34 - 43 points
  - Additional degrees = up to 5 points.
  - Publications = up to 2 points

- Rank for Foundation deanery, and rank for your jobs choices within the deanery

- SJTs are incorporated to all speciality applications
Why does the SJT matter?

- The research literature indicates SJTs are able to predict job performance [SJT Monograph]. It selects applicants according to the attributes required of the role.

- According to a paper by Prof. Fiona Patterson et al in Feb 2015:
  - “F1 doctors who achieved high SJT scores generally achieved significantly higher performance ratings”
  - F1 doctors who were in the low scoring SJT category were almost five times more likely to receive remedial action than those who were in the high scoring SJT category.
Structure of the SJT

- SJT is made up of 70 questions in 2 hours 20 minutes.

- It contains two question formats:
  - Rank five possible responses in order (two-thirds of the exam)
  - Select the three most appropriate responses (one-third of the exam)

- There is no negative marking

- 20 points available for each “ranking five” question (4 points for each answer in the correct rank position)
- 12 points available for each “select three” question
Advice on Preparing

- Read:
  - “Good Medical Practice”
  - “Tomorrow’s doctors” (GMC’s “Outcomes and standards for undergraduate medical education”)
  - The SJT Monograph

- Consider recurring themes

- Do practice questions & discuss various situations/questions with colleagues

- Practice papers under timed conditions
Good Medical Practice

It says that as a good doctor you will:

- Make the care of your patient your first concern
- Be competent and keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date
- Take prompt action if you think patient safety is being compromised
- Establish and maintain good partnerships with your patients and colleagues
- Maintain trust in you and the profession by being open, honest and acting with integrity.
4 Domains of GMP

1) Knowledge, skills and performance
   - Make the care of your patient your first concern
   - Provide a good standard of practice and care

2) Safety and quality
   - Take prompt action if you think that patient safety, dignity or comfort is being compromised
   - Protect and promote the health of patients and the public
4 Domains of GMP

3) Communication, partnership and teamwork
   - Treat patients as individuals and respect their dignity.
   - Work in partnership with patients
   - Work with colleagues in the ways that best serve patients' interests

4) Maintaining trust
   - Be honest and open and act with integrity
   - Never discriminate unfairly against patients or colleagues
   - Never abuse your patients' trust in you or the public's trust in the profession
Documents on the GMC website

- 0-18 Years: Guidance for All Doctors
- Accountability in Multi-Disciplinary and Multi-Agency Mental Health Teams
- Confidentiality
- Consent: Patients and Doctors Making Decisions Together
- Good Practice in Prescribing Medicines
- Good Practice in Research and Consent to Research
- Leadership and Management for All Doctors
- Maintaining Boundaries
- Personal Beliefs and Medical Practice
- Raising and Acting on Concerns About Patient Safety
- Reporting Convictions: Reporting Criminal and Regulatory Proceedings Within and Outside the UK
- The Trainee Doctor
- Treatment and Care Towards the End of Life

You may find it helpful to use the online version which has hyperlinks to all the references and explanatory guidance.
Consider Recurring Themes

- Patient safety
- Accepting gifts
- Confidentiality
- Confidentiality and children
- Confidentiality and the DVLA
- Work ethics and performance of colleagues
- Candour
- Arranging cover / Work-life balance
Consider Recurring Themes

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- Arranging cover

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**Patient Safety**

- If there is a risk or potential risk to patient safety, then action must be taken as a matter of urgency.
- This applies if you are worried about a colleague’s performance due to conduct of health.
- Generally escalate locally first.
- Patient safety can be an issue at handover meetings and if inappropriate cover.
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Accepting gifts from patients

- Must not encourage gifts or put pressure on patients to give gifts
- Is the gift appropriate?
- If you decline an inappropriate gift, explain to the patient your reasons and be sensitive
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Confidentiality

- GMC has guidance on when it is acceptable to break confidentiality:
  - Patient consents to disclosure
  - Required by law (e.g. notifiable disease) – should still inform patient
  - If disclosure in in the public interest (i.e. risk to self or others)
  - Children also have a right to confidentiality but need to assess capacity
  - Can break confidentiality if concerns about children safety
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Confidentiality and children

- Children have the same right to confidentiality but it is not absolute.
- Need to assess if a child has capacity – *The GMC document 0-18 years: Guidance for All Doctors* – same as assessing an adult’s capacity.
  - Understand, retain, use & weigh information, & communicate their decision
  - Gillick competence: a child’s capacity to consent
  - Fraser guidelines: speciality to consent to contraceptive or sexual health advice and treatment
- If lack capacity, should still talk to them before breaking confidentiality.
- If 12 and under: cannot consent
- If 13 – 15 and have capacity: can consent to treatment but cannot refuse treatment if a parent has consented to it
- 16: young adult. Can be assumed to have capacity. If lack capacity and 16 – 18 then can get parents’ consent
- Capacity also depends on maturity. It is decision dependent.
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Confidentiality and the DVLA

• “It is the duty of the licence holder or licence applicant to notify DVLA of any medical condition, which may affect safe driving. On occasions however, there are circumstances in which the licence holder cannot, or will not do so.”

• DVLA will decide if a person is medically unfit to drive
• You must make sure the patient understands their condition may impair their ability to drive and they have a legal duty to inform the DVLA

  • Incapable of understanding - you should inform the DVLA
  • Refuse diagnosis - suggest second opinion and no driving until then
  • Make every reasonable effort to persuade them to stop driving (suggest bring Next of Kin to appointment)
  • Last resort - Disclose relevant medical information to the medical adviser at the DVLA – but should inform your patient before and confirm in writing after the disclosure
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Work ethics & performance of colleagues

- Is there an issue that needs addressing?
- Does it need dealing with immediately or should it be postponed?
- Patient safety must always come first
- Be sensitive
- Do you feel comfortable dealing with the situation yourself or do you need senior advice/involvement?
- If appropriate, try sensitively speaking directly to the colleague, before involving seniors
- Whistle blower = a person within an organisation who exposes misconduct or malpractice to a person capable of taking corrective action
- Escalate locally first.
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Candour – show respect for patients

- Good Medical Practice:
  - You must be open and honest with patients if things go wrong. If a patient under your care has suffered harm or distress, you should:
    - put matters right (if that is possible)
    - offer an apology
    - explain fully and promptly what has happened and the likely short-term and long-term effects

- The power of an apology:
  - An important ritual, showing respect and empathy
  - Has the ability to disarm others of their anger and allow emotional healing
  - Cannot undo harmful past actions, but if done sincerely, it can undo some of the negative effects of those actions
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Arranging cover / Work-life balance

- **Good Medical Practice:**
  - You must be satisfied that, when you are off duty, suitable arrangements have been made for your patient’s medical care. These arrangements should include effective hand-over procedures, involving clear communication with healthcare colleagues. If you are concerned that the arrangements are not suitable, you should take steps to safeguard patient care.

- Must always handover to an appropriate person before leaving your shift (e.g. fellow doctor).

- May need to stay late to ensure patient safety, but if it is not appropriate must raise the cover issue with someone.

- Must achieve a work-life balance - Need to avoid burnout.

- Understand which tasks can be delegated or postponed and which need immediate action.
Discuss with colleagues

- Thinking through some situations is more important than burning through loads of practice questions.
- Immerse yourself in the hospital on your rotations. Discuss situations with F1s. Discuss their experiences
- Work together. Hear different reasoning
- Write practice questions for each other
- Cannot memorise correct answers
- Can familiarise yourself with concepts
Practice Papers

- The UKPO and MSC Assessment have produced two 70 item practice SJT test papers (including answers)


- Do the practice papers under timed conditions and even print off the answer sheet to practice using the grid system

SJT answer sheet

This is an example of a correctly completed answer sheet
Ten Final Tips

1) Do not spend too long on any one question – need to complete ALL the questions in the given time (no negative marking)
2) Read the question carefully - underline key words in the question
3) Read all the answer options before answering
4) Only act on information given in the question. Don’t make assumptions
5) Double-check you have marked the answer you intended
6) Transfer your answers to the answer paper as you go
7) Your priority must always be patient safety
8) “Should” not “Would”
9) Read the Good Medical Practice guidance - Understand basic concepts of medical law, e.g. Capacity, Consent, When confidentiality can be broken and the Mental Health Act, Personal beliefs in medical practice
10) Get a good night’s sleep and eat well before the test as it is a long exam requiring you to be focused and rested
Good Luck