

Back pain case - TRANSCRIPT

The patient (P) is Maria Jones, a 42-year-old nurse who has been having back pain for a few years. The doctor (D) is taking a history and suggesting a management plan.

(Nurse offscreen) Just in here, the doctor will see you now

- 1 D Good evening Mrs Jones
- 2 P Hi
- 3 D Hi. How can I help you today?
- 4 P Yeah, it's my back. It's been driving me mad. Um, I'm just wondering if there might be an operation or something I could have
- 5 D Ah, we talk about options later on. Would you tell me a bit more about your back pain?
- 6 P Yeah, I um sort of, you know, hurt it at work a couple of years ago and it just hasn't got any better
- 7 D Hmm
- 8 P It just, you know, it feels pretty bad all the time
- 9 D Mm, how did it happen?
- 10 P Well I'm a nurse, so I was helping a patient and I twisted it. And then I've been on, you know, desk duties ever since so
- 11 D Oh, that would be hard
- 12 P Yeah
- 13 D You, you must be at pain most of the time
- 14 P Yep, all the time
- 15 D Hmm, and where is the pain exactly?
- 16 P Um, it's in the lower back, yep
- 17 D Does it go anywhere else?
- 18 P Um, no
- 19 D Any numbness? Or pins and needles anywhere?
- 20 P No
- 21 D Any problem with your bowels or bladder?

- 22 P No
- 23 D Um have you lost any weight?
- 24 P No, if anything I've probably put on a couple of kilos
- 25 D Um, any family history of cancer?
- 26 P No
- 27 D Have you had your pap smears done?
- 28 P Yep
- 29 D Regularly?
- 30 P Yeah, that's all fine
- 31 D Have you found anything um making the pain worse?
- 32 P Um, I know when I've been sitting at my desk all day, for a long time then it's worse. And when I'm at home doing stuff with the kids, cooking dinner and stuff, it feels worse then. But the pain's there all the time though
- 33 D Anything helping with the pain?
- 34 P Ah I take painkillers sometimes. Panadol seems to help, and sometimes I've taken Nurofen
- 35 D Yeah, mm, um, have you seen any doctors in the past? Any tests?
- 36 P Ah, yeah when I first um did it I had an MRI and some other tests and they said there was no disc problems and it was just a matter of doing exercises and physio. Um, yeah, but that doesn't seem to work. It seemed to hurt more if anything
- 37 D How long did you continue with physio?
- 38 P Oh, a little while but it just, just made the pain worse. And the doctors never mentioned 'how's physio going?' or anything, so it was never, I just stopped doing it
- 39 D Hmm, I'll make sure we monitor you regularly, ah, with your back pain
- 40 P Yep
- 41 D Um, I'll ask few more questions and then we discuss about the options
- 42 P Okay
- 43 D Any other medical condition in the past?
- 44 P Ah, no, I had my appendix out. That was a few years ago, that's all
- 45 D Do you take any other medication? Other than painkillers?
- 46 P No

- 47 D Do you smoke?
- 48 P No, not now, I stopped when I was pregnant
- 49 D Alcohol?
- 50 P Ah, little bit. Maybe a couple of glasses of wine a week
- 51 D Okay, and, how's the situation at home? How old are your kids?
- 52 P Um, my kids are six and nine, and um, yeah, look it's okay. It's hard cos I'm a working mum, and then, you know, busy after work, you know, looking after the kids and everything, and then they're a bit sick of me whingeing about my back and my husband's sick of me whingeing about it so. But, you know, we're coping okay.
- 53 D How's your relationship with your husband?
- 54 P Yeah. It's okay
- 55 D Has the pain- back pain affected your sexual activity?
- 56 P Um, yeah I guess we're not having sex as much as we used to cos it - I am in pain a lot of the time
- 57 D Ah, yeah look from what we discuss ah it seems to me operation is not, not a good option for your, for the type of back pain you've got
- 58 P Yep
- 59 D Um, because it's not ah nerve damage related. Um what's your feeling about that?
- 60 P Ah, well that's what I was told initially so, I guess, yeah
- 61 D That doesn't mean we can't do anything about your back pain. Ah, you mentioned about physio, did you try anything else?
- 62 P Um, look yeah I tried swimming and um you know that was, that was helpful um but it was a bit hard to get to the swimming pool and, you know, with the kids and everything, and with work, it was difficult
- 63 D Mm, is there any way we could make it a bit easier?
- 64 P Well, I guess they're a bit older now so I could take them to the pool with me. Um, I could ask a friend to look after them a couple of days a week
- 65 D Mm, yeah, that's a good idea
- 66 P Yeah
- 67 D Do you think your family would be supportive of that?
- 68 P Yeah, anything that'll stop me from whingeing, yeah, I think so. I um was gonna try Pilates but I um think that's a bit expensive

- 69 D Ah, yeah, um, Pilates can be helpful but ah good physio program which can help to strengthen the muscles around the spine, and also your abdominal muscles can be as effective as Pilates
- 70 P OK, yep
- 71 D Um, yes ah what, what do you think about what we discuss today?
- 72 P Um, huh, so there's no magic bullet or something? Like maybe?
- 73 D Yeah, unfortunately ah yeah, there's no such a thing. Ah, but I'm optimistic with ah physio and swimming, ah, we can improve your mobility and reduce the pain
- 74 P Yep
- 75 D And, yeah, so I'm going to make a referral to your, to a physio
- 76 P Yeah, there's a physio- there's a clinic at work where there's a physio so I could probably make an appointment to go there
- 77 D Yeah, that's a very good idea
- 78 P Yeah
- 79 D And I'll book you to see you here in two weeks time to see how has been your progress
- 80 P Yep
- 81 D Um, anything else I could help you today?
- 82 P No, thank you anyway, yeah. No, that's all good. That's good
- 83 D Yeah
- 84 P Alright, thank you
- 85 D No worries, see you
- 86 P See you later
- 87 D Bye