

Differences in medical consultations between country of origin & Australia as noted by IMGs

IMGs need to adapt to a variety of differences in the style, setting or infrastructure of consultations in Australia. This can initially reduce the confidence of IMGs. By working on strategies to become aware of these differences and adapt their consultation style can improve effectiveness of consultations and improve IMG confidence.

RACGP Domain	Difference in Australia	Adapting the consultation
1. Communication	Less paternalism	Shared roles in agenda & decision making
	More dialogue and negotiation. Less doctor driven	Listen to the story, negotiate the agenda, agree on the diagnosis and plan
	Less respect (eg for elderly- use more slang)	Adapt consultation style to age groups
	More patient awareness (?) , patients have more idea what they think is wrong with them and treatment....greater access to medical information	Be open to patients opinion Patient Centred Medicine
	More emphasis on emotion	Use the metaphor of the tree, detect the emotion, express empathy
2. Knowledge & Skills	Different pattern of disease , hence differential diagnosis different	Be aware of Australian pattern of disease (BEACH, AFP)
	Australians present to doctor earlier with less differentiated problems, less serious...harder to diagnose	Avoid premature closure of diagnosis
	Older population- more chronic disease management, more geriatrics, more interventions for the elderly	Learn more about these conditions
	More mental health	
	Dermatology in white people	
3. Population Health & Health promotion	Different pattern of disease , hence differential diagnosis different	As above. Awareness of common conditions in your community
	More health promotion	Incorporate health promotion in each consultation
	Greater social services and pensions for society- better safety net. Greater access to health care through Medicare	
4. Professional & ethical	Less paternalism	As above
	Australian patients, nurses don't necessarily respect/trust IMGs skills	
	More multidisciplinary team work	Learn to work in teams- share responsibility and share ideas
	Better support for people with intellectual disabilities	Less rationing of resources. Respect for the vulnerable

RACGP Domain	Difference in Australia	Adapting the consultation
5. Organisational & medico-legal	More litigation- more defensive medicine, more investigations	Practice defensive medicine. Greater patient centred medicine
	More time for consultations	
	More specialisation	
	Patients in GP present with multiple problems each visit	Agenda setting and prioritisation
	More documentation	Typing skills and use of computers
	Patients less responsible for following up their results	Systems to follow up results
	Most GP practices have appointments	