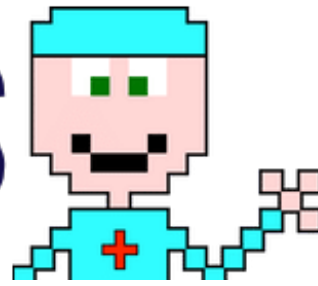



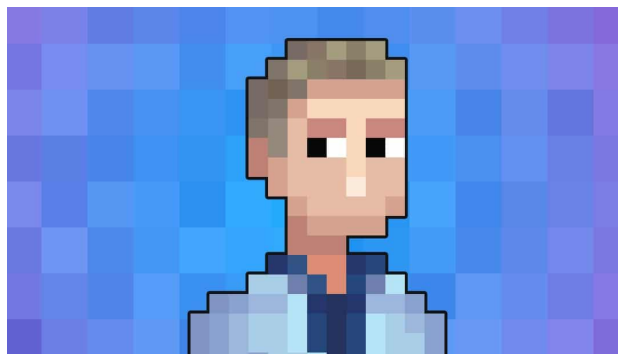
# GEEKY MEDICS



## Exploring first rank symptoms in a psychiatric history – OSCE guide

 [geekymedics.com/first-rank-symptoms-history-taking](https://geekymedics.com/first-rank-symptoms-history-taking)

February 17, 2017



*Kurt Schneider, a German psychiatrist pointed out certain symptoms as being characteristic of schizophrenia and therefore exhibiting a “first-rank” status in the hierarchy of potentially diagnostic symptoms.<sup>1</sup> However first rank symptoms can occur in other disorders such as mania or delirium which is why their isolated presence is not sufficient for a diagnosis of schizophrenia.*

*This guide provides examples of questions that can prove useful in exploring first rank symptoms when taking a history.*

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## Opening the consultation

### Introduce yourself

### Confirm patient details – name / DOB

*“I have to ask you some questions that may seem a little bizarre and may not make sense. These are questions we ask of everyone. Would that be ok?”*

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## **Auditory hallucinations**

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**Do you ever hear noises or voices when there is nobody else there?**

**Are the voices like you hear mine right now?**

**Can you hear them in your ears, or are they in your mind?**

**How many voices are there?**

**Do you recognise the voices?**

**What do they say?**

**Do they tell you to do things? (Do you obey?)**

**Do they tend to comment on what you are doing/thinking?**

**Are they present all the time?**

**Does anything make them better/worse?**

**Do you ever find yourself having a conversation with them?**

**Do you smell or see anything at the same time that you hear these voices?**

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## **Thought withdrawal, insertion and interruption**

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**Thought interruption**

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**Do you feel able to think clearly?**

**Do you ever experience your thoughts suddenly stopping as though there were no thoughts left?**

**What is it like? How do you explain it?**

**Thought withdrawal**

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**Is there anything like hypnosis or telepathy going on?**

**Is there anyone or anything taking thoughts out of your head?**

**Thought insertion**

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**Are your thoughts your own?**

**Is there anyone/anything putting thoughts into your head that you know are not your own?**

**How do you know they aren't yours? Where do they come from?**

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## Thought broadcasting

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**Can anyone hear your thoughts? For example, can I hear what you are thinking right now?**

**Do you ever hear your own thoughts echoed or repeated?**

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## Somatic hallucinations

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**Do you ever feel that someone or something is touching you when there is nobody there?**

**Do you ever think there are insects crawling about inside your body?**

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## Delusional perception

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**Do you ever feel that somebody or something is paying particular attention to you and what you are doing?**

**When you watch the television/listen to the radio/hear something, do you feel that the stories are referring to you or something that you have done?**

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## Passivity

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**Do you ever feel as though you are being controlled by someone or something?**

**Do you ever think that someone or somebody is controlling you?**

**Are your thoughts/mood/actions under your control or is someone forcing you to behave in this way?**

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## Closing the consultation

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**Thank the patient**

**Summarise your history to the examiner** (using the mental state examination as the underlying structure).

**State to the examiner that if you had more time you would take a thorough psychiatric history.**

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## References

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1. Nordgaard J, Arnfred SM, Handest P, Parnas J. The Diagnostic Status of First-Rank Symptoms. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*. 2008;34(1):137-154. doi:10.1093/schbul/sbm044.

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