13.4 Communicating with patients

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 24 marks**

KEY WORDS teach-back • shared decision-making

Objective

Run SPIKES; close the loop with teach-back.

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ The sequence

Setting → Perception → Invitation → Knowledge (warning shot, plain words, pause) → Empathy → Strategy and Summary ✓ – structure replaces recall under stress.

■ Worked example: the loop and the numbers

Teach-back checks the explainer ✓. Shared decisions: evidence (NNT, harms) + values, numbers as natural frequencies – 13 of 100 ✓.

2 Practice

2.1 Name the six SPIKES letters in order. [3]

2.2 Give a teach-back phrasing. [3]

2.3 Why phrase it as 13 of 100 like you, rather than 13 %? [3]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A fictional role-play: a scan result is worse than expected; the patient believes it is nothing serious.

Script the first four SPIKES steps verbatim (setting; the perception question; the invitation; the warning shot and two plain sentences) ✓. Explain why perception-first matters here (the gap between the nothing-serious belief and reality must be corrected before content lands) ✓. State what empathy-before-strategy protects (the relationship while facts are delivered) ✓. [8]

3.2 A fictional choice: two options with different trade-offs; NNT 13 for benefit, 1 in 30 harm.

Frame both numbers as natural frequencies for the patient ✓. Explain the three talks of shared decision-making (option, decision, enrolment) and whose contribution each carries (clinician evidence; patient values) ✓. State how you would verify the loop (teach-back phrased as checking your explanation) ✓. [7]

Solutions

2.1

- Setting, Perception, Invitation, Knowledge, Empathy, Strategy ✓.

2.2

- So I know I explained it well – what will you tell your family? ✓

2.3

- Natural frequencies carry the base rate inside; patients reason in counts ✓.

3.1

- Setting: private, seated, no interruptions ✓.
- Perception: what is your understanding of why we did the scan? ✓.
- Invitation: do you want all the detail, or just the outline? ✓.
- Knowledge: warning shot, two plain sentences, pause ✓.
- Perception-first corrects the starting point; empathy protects the relationship while facts land ✓.

3.2

- Of 100 people like you, about 13 benefit; around 3 in 100 have the harm ✓.
- Option talk (what exists), decision talk (weighing), enrolment (agreeing the plan) ✓.
- Evidence is the clinician's; values are the patient's ✓.
- Loop check: teach-back phrased as checking your own explanation ✓.