

Problem Based Learning

Case History

7 years old Asian girl comes to the surgery with her father. Her father is worried because she is not gaining weight as she is not eating well. She does not enjoy her meals as other siblings and family do, He also notices that she does not have a very big appetite despite the fact that he brings so many things to eat. He and his wife believe she is not well and needs some help.

You notice that she is quite observant as she is interested in different things in your room and smiles whenever you have an eye contact.

What would you ask in the history?

You find out that this has been going on for a while. She can eat 3 meals a day but not very fond of any particular food though they usually eat as a family. No h/o diarrhoea, vomiting or abdominal pain. She does not have any behaviour problem at school/home. Doing very well in school and is in the top group in her class, also participates in school sports.

No major illness in the past and, up-to-date with immunisation.

She has an elder sister and younger brother both healthy. No FH of TB

You then do a physical examination

Weight-22kg

Height-118cms

About 50th centile

No anaemia

All other exam NAD

How would you proceed?

By now you know that there is no major medical problem and you try to convey this information to the father. Also asking him “what do you think is wrong with her?” and “how do you think we can help?” Father who is not looking very happy, again emphasize that she is not very healthy should be given some medicine to increase her appetite. You then try to explain to the father that medicine is not the answer and he should understand that it is part of the parental responsibility to try and develop eating habits in children, difficult but not impossible. Also try to reassure him that his daughter is healthy.....

He then takes out a photograph and shows it to you!

What do you think is in his mind?



Health belief is influenced by race, culture, religion and immediate society.

Do not forget that in some cultures obesity is still the sign of health and prosperity!!!!