

Unit 47: The Role of the Genetic Counsellor

Level:	4
Unit type:	Optional (Genetics and Genomics)
Credit value:	5
Guided learning hours:	41

Unit summary

In this unit, you will gain an understanding of the role of the genetic counsellor within healthcare science. Learning will include the potential impact of inherited conditions and personalised medicine on the individual and their families, and the role of the genetic counsellor in supporting individuals and their families to understand and adjust to receiving genetic information. You will be expected to build your patient-centred professional practice and practise safely in the workplace, seeking advice and referring as appropriate to your scope of practice.

Unit assessment requirements

There are no specific assessment requirements for this unit. Please refer to the assessment strategy in *Annexe B*.

Additional information

AC1.1 includes – the key differences between the term genetic and genomic include:

- genetics scrutinises the functioning and composition of the single gene whereas genomics addresses all genes and their interrelationships, in order to identify their combined influence on the growth and development of the organism.

AC1.2 includes:

- prenatal
- paediatric onset
- adult onset.

AC1.4 should include **two** inherited conditions.

AC1.5 should include **one** inherited condition.

AC2.1 – the purpose of prenatal genetic counselling includes:

- to provide support, information, and advice about genetic and genomic conditions
- to use specialist knowledge to support individuals and their families
- assessment of the risk of passing an inherited condition on to a child
- gathering a medical history and drawing up a family tree
- requesting genetic and genomic tests to clarify health risks
- supporting individuals/families as they incorporate this information into their lives and make decisions about the pregnancy.

AC2.2 – the purpose of genetic counselling if a child is affected by an inherited condition includes:

- support and advice to families
- discussion about genetic tests, which can be arranged if appropriate, including the risks, benefits and limitations of genetic testing
- help understanding the results of genetic tests and what they mean
- information about relevant patient support groups
- support individuals/families as they incorporate this information into their lives, including how this may affect future reproductive choices.

AC2.3 – the counselling issues for an adult onset would include:

- understanding the implications for the individual's own health (e.g., whether they need specific treatment or surveillance)
- how the genetic condition may affect reproductive choices for the individual
- the implications for family members as predictive/pre-symptomatic testing may now be available.

the purpose of genetic counselling if an adult is affected by an inherited condition includes:

- support and advice to families
- discussion about genetic tests, which can be arranged if appropriate, including the risks, benefits and limitations of genetic testing
- help understanding the results of genetic tests and what they mean
- information about relevant patient support groups
- support individuals/families as they incorporate this information into their lives, including how this may affect future reproductive choices.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

To pass this unit, learners need to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria outline the requirements that the learner is expected to meet **in own area of work and in accordance with Standard**

Operating Procedures (SOPs) to achieve the learning outcomes and the unit.

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria		Evidence type	Portfolio reference	Date
1	Understand the genetic and genomic conditions affecting patients and their families within own area of practice	1.1	Explain the key differences between the term genetic and genomic			
		1.2	Explain how the diagnosis of a genetic/genomic condition may occur at any stage of life			
		1.3	Explain the role of genomics/genetics in the diagnosis and management of disease, including screening			
		1.4	Explain the patterns of inheritance of inherited conditions with different inheritance patterns in own area of practice			
		1.5	Explain how an inherited condition, where a diagnostic referral is made to own area of practice, may impact on the patient and their family			
		1.6	Explain how personalised medicine provides opportunities to tailor treatment to individual patients based on their predicted response or risk of disease			

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria		Evidence type	Portfolio reference	Date
2	Understand the role of genetic/genomic counselling in the diagnosis and management of genetic or genomic conditions	2.1	Explain the purpose of pre-natal genetic counselling			
		2.2	Explain the purpose of genetic counselling if a child is affected by an inherited condition			
		2.3	Explain the purpose of genetic counselling following the diagnosis of an adult-onset condition			
		2.4	Discuss the importance of the partnership between patient and counsellor and collaborative decision making			
		2.5	Discuss the role of the genetic counsellor within the multidisciplinary team			
		2.6	Discuss how the practice of genetic counselling may be used within own area of practice			
		2.7	Discuss the ethical and legal considerations of genetic counselling in own area of practice			

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria		Evidence type	Portfolio reference	Date
3	Be able to gather and draw a simple family history and interpret the findings	3.1	Explain how family trees can be used to identify inheritance patterns and other family members who may be at risk of inheriting the genetic condition			
		3.2	Gather a patient history from patient notes in the medical record and/or a family history questionnaire to identify a mode of inheritance			
		3.3	Prepare a short presentation summarising the family history			
		3.4	Explain the importance of using standardised symbols when drawing a family history			

Learner name: _____

Date: _____

Learner signature: _____

Date: _____

Assessor signature: _____

Date: _____

Internal verifier signature: _____

Date: _____

(if sampled)