

# Priority Topic: **DISABILITY**

## Key Features:

[Disability Assessment AAFP 2015](#)

### **REMEMBER: this topic is not only about elderly patients**

- reversible and nonreversible disability
- disability from mental health problems
- disability from developmental/intellectual delays
- physical disability

1. Determine whether a specific [decline in functioning](#) (e.g., social, physical, emotional) [is a disability](#) for that specific patient.

### *What you should study:*

- ✓ [Disability Assessment AAFP 2015](#) **Focus on Definitions**  
**Functional Assessment Tools are also useful**
- ✓ [Functional Decline in Older Adults AAFP 2013](#)

2. Screen elderly patients for [disability risks](#) (e.g., falls, cognitive impairment, immobilization, decreased vision) on an ongoing basis.

### *What you should study:*

- ✓ [Clinical Frailty Scale](#)
- ✓ [ADLs and IADLs](#)
- ✓ [MoCA](#)
- ✓ [MMSE](#)
- ✓ [Vision Screening over 65 CMAJ 2018](#)

3. In patients with **chronic physical problems** (e.g., arthritis, multiple sclerosis) or **mental problems** (e.g., depression), assess for and diagnose disability when it is present.

***What you should study:***

- ✓ **Disability Assessment AAFP 2015**
- ✓ **Hearing Impairment in Young People RCP 2018**

4. In a disabled patient, **assess all spheres of function** (emotional, physical, and social, the last of which includes finances, employment, and family).

**The mnemonic FIFERS is useful: (Exam Tip: use this for SOOs!)**

- F family**
- I interests**
- F finances**
- E employment/education**
- R religious affiliation**
- S social support**

5. For disabled patients, offer a **multi-faceted approach** (e.g., orthotics, lifestyle modification, time off work, community support) to **minimize the impact** of the disability and **prevent further functional deterioration**.

***What you should study:***

- ✓ **Adults with Developmental Disability CFP Guideline 2018 ... but remember this applies to all patients with disability**

6. In patients at [risk for disability](#) (e.g., those who do manual labour, the elderly, those with mental illness), recommend [primary prevention](#) strategies (e.g., exercises, braces, counselling, work modification).

***What you should study:***

- ✓ [Predicting Disability in Old Age BMJ 2014](#)
- ✓ [WHO Disability Prevention 2003](#)

7. [Do not limit treatment](#) of disabling conditions to a short-term disability leave (i.e., [time off is only part of the plan](#)).

**See Key Feature 5**

**The point of this key feature is to make sure you have a treatment plan for patients with disability caused by MSK issues or mental health problems who are off work for a short period of time.**

**Articles on Specific Disabilities:**

- ✓ [Cognitive Impairment BC Guideline](#)
- ✓ [Hearing Loss NEJM 2017](#)
- ✓ [Down Syndrome Health Watch Checklist CFCP 2011](#)
- ✓ [Vision Loss in Older Adults AAFP 2016](#)