# Priority Topic: MULTIPLE MEDICAL PROBLEMS

## Key Features:

This Priority Topic shares many features with **Priority Topic Chronic Disease**. Study them together! “Multimorbidity” refers to multiple chronic conditions in the same patient.

1. In all patients presenting with multiple medical concerns (e.g., complaints, problems, diagnoses), take an appropriate history to determine the primary reason for the consultation.
   - **Multiple Comorbidities AAFP 2014**

2. In all patients presenting with multiple medical concerns, prioritize problems appropriately to develop an agenda that both you and the patient can agree upon (i.e., determine common ground).
   - **What you should study:**
     - Agenda-setting algorithm AAFP 2014
     - Patient-Provider Agenda toolkit

3. In a patient with multiple medical complaints (and/or visits), consider underlying depression, anxiety, or abuse (e.g., physical, medication, or drug abuse) as the cause of the symptoms, while continuing to search for other organic pathology.
   - **What you should study:** see also **Priority Topic Somatization** BUT remember that mental health diagnoses are not the same as somatization. Rule out mental health diagnoses using screening tools like PHQ-9, GAD-7, etc.
     - **Somatic Complaints and Psychosocial Stressors BMC 2010**
4. Given a patient with multiple defined medical conditions, periodically assess for secondary depression, as they are particularly at risk for it.

**What you should study:**

✓ Multimorbidity and Depression SGIM 2015

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<th>5. Periodically re-address and re-evaluate the management of patients with multiple medical problems in order to:</th>
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<td>- simplify their management (pharmacologic and other).</td>
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<td>- limit polypharmacy</td>
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<td>- minimize possible drug interactions</td>
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<td>- update therapeutic choices (e.g., because of changing guidelines or the patient’s situation).</td>
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**What you should study:**

✓ Collaborative Care Plans AAFP 2013  Does’t quite hit all these points, but important and relevant!

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<th>6. In patients with multiple medical problems and recurrent visits for unchanging symptoms, set limits for consultations when appropriate (e.g., limit the duration and frequency of visits).</th>
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**What you should study:**

✓ Setting Limits on Demanding Patients AAFP 2010
✓ Fresh Perspectives AAFP Blog 2017 On self-care and boundary-setting