

# OET Case Notes

Physiotherapy · Intermediate · Referral letter · to Orthopaedic Surgeon

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## Physiotherapy — Referral to Orthopaedics for a Non-Progressing Knee

### THE CASE NOTES

**Patient:** Mr David Lindqvist, 45 years old, recreational runner

**History:** Twisting injury to right knee 4 months ago; immediate swelling, felt a 'pop'

**Assessment:** Positive McMurray's test; joint-line tenderness (medial); recurrent effusion after activity

**Treatment to date:** 12 weeks of physiotherapy: progressive strengthening, proprioception, activity modification

**Response:** Pain and giving-way persist; unable to return to running; effusion recurs after loading

**Function:** Difficulty with stairs and pivoting; pain limits work as a warehouse supervisor

**Imaging:** X-ray — no fracture, no significant osteoarthritis; MRI not yet performed

**Medical history:** Otherwise fit; no previous knee problems

**Task:** Write a referral letter to Mr Patel, Orthopaedic Surgeon, requesting assessment for a suspected meniscal tear that has not responded to conservative management.

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### WHAT TO INCLUDE

**+ The mechanism of injury and the positive McMurray's / joint-line signs**

These point to a meniscal tear and justify the suspected diagnosis the referral is built around.

**+ The 12-week physiotherapy programme and the lack of response**

The whole reason for referral is failed conservative management; this is the physiotherapist's unique contribution to the decision.

**+ Recurrent effusion and persistent giving-way**

Objective signs that the problem is mechanical and unlikely to settle with more rehabilitation.

**+ That MRI has not yet been done**

Tells the surgeon the next investigative step and avoids duplication.

### WHAT TO LEAVE OUT

**– Session-by-session physiotherapy notes**

Summarise the programme and its outcome. A detailed treatment diary belongs in the record, not the referral, and costs Conciseness & Clarity.

**– Recreational running as a stand-alone lifestyle note**

Relevant only as the functional goal he cannot meet; mention it in that context, not as background colour.

### CRITERION IN FOCUS - CONTENT

Allied-health referrals are graded on whether the recipient gains decision-relevant information they could not get from the patient alone. The failed rehabilitation course and the clinical signs are that information — omit them and the letter has no purpose.

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