



Presence of a third party

The Practice shall ensure that when a third party is present during a consultation that permission is obtained. A 'third party' is a person(s) who observes or is involved in a consultation other than the Doctor and the patient.

A 'third party' is someone who observes or is involved in the consultation other than the Doctor and the patient. This might be a family member, undergraduate student, registrar, health professional or general practice nurse.

RACGP Standards

2.1.3 *The presence of a third party observing or being involved in the clinical care during a consultation occurs only with the permission of the patient prior to the consultation.*

Assessment methods

- Interview with practitioners and staff

Practice staff shall be able to describe how and when patients are informed of the presence of a third party.

- Patient feedback system

Patient feedback shall indicate that patients of the Practice who have had a third party present during a consultation were asked prior to the consultation.

- Document review of written policy

Meeting the standards

A sign should be placed in the reception area to notify patients when the Practice has medical students or other health professionals observing the consultations. The Practice shall ensure that when a third party is present during a consultation that permission is obtained, either verbally or via a signed form from the patient prior to the consultation. A patient should never feel pressured into having a third party involved in their clinical care. It is therefore inappropriate to ask permission in the consulting room. Obtaining patients consent via a signed form is also a valuable risk management strategy.

Best practice:

- Patients are asked, whenever possible, at the time of making an appointment if they agree to having a third party present.
- A sign is placed in the reception area to notify patients when the Practice has medical students or other health professionals observing the consultations.
- Consent is obtained by reception staff via a signed form, also a valuable risk management strategy.
- Verbal confirmation of consent is obtained by the Doctor on entering the consulting room
- Annotation of consent in the patient's health record