

BÀI GIẢNG 33 — IELTS 8.5

Tophus, Painkillers and Difficult News

Advanced Clinical Communication in Chronic Tophaceous Gout

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Nguồn hội thoại: ca bệnh giao tiếp lâm sàng về **chronic tophaceous gout**, hạt tophi vỡ/loét, rỉ dịch, nguy cơ nhiễm trùng, thận trọng với NSAID do tiền sử xuất huyết tiêu hóa.

1. Learning Objectives — IELTS 8.5 Level

Sau bài học, học viên có thể:

1. **Explain a complex diagnosis:** chronic tophaceous gout complicated by an ulcerated/open tophus.
 2. **Elicit relevant history** using precise but empathetic clinical questions.
 3. **Discuss medication risk:** NSAID use in a patient with gastric ulcerative lesions and acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding.
 4. **Deliver concerning findings professionally** using softening language.
 5. **Propose a management plan** involving infection assessment, safe analgesia, antibiotics if indicated, and possible surgical debridement.
 6. **Transform clinical information into patient-friendly English** without sounding alarming or vague.
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2. Key Clinical Message

Diagnosis to communicate

You have chronic gout with a tophus that has opened up. There are signs suggesting infection, and we are concerned about septic arthritis.

Dịch tinh tế:

Ông bị gout mạn với hạt tophi đã bị vỡ/loét. Hiện có dấu hiệu gợi ý nhiễm trùng, và chúng tôi lo ngại nguy cơ viêm khớp nhiễm khuẩn.

3. Advanced Core Dialogue — IELTS 8.5 Version

Doctor–Patient Communication

Doctor:

Good morning, Mr. Chen. I understand your right foot has been troubling you recently. Could you tell me what has changed over the last few days?

Patient:

Good morning, Doctor. The swelling on the side of my foot has become more painful, and I've noticed some fluid leaking from it. That really worries me.

Doctor:

I can understand why that would be concerning. Have you had similar joint pain before, or has this been happening repeatedly?

Patient:

Yes, I've had recurrent joint pain for several months. I've also been taking painkillers by myself whenever the pain gets worse.

Doctor:

Thank you for telling me. Based on your history, examination, test results, and imaging, the swelling appears to be a **tophus**, which is a deposit of uric acid crystals related to chronic gout. In your case, it has opened up and is now draining fluid.

Patient:

Is that dangerous, Doctor?

Doctor:

It can be serious if it becomes infected. Looking at your foot, **it appears that the**

tophus may be infected, and I am concerned about septic arthritis, which means infection involving the joint.

Patient:

What should we do now?

Doctor:

First, we need to assess the infection carefully, check your blood tests, consider cultures, and choose pain relief safely. Although NSAIDs can reduce gout pain, we must be **extremely cautious** in your case because of your gastric ulcerative lesions and recent upper gastrointestinal bleeding.

Patient:

Will I need surgery?

Doctor:

At this stage, surgery is something we need to consider rather than decide immediately. If the infected tissue does not heal properly or if the joint is involved, **surgical debridement** may be necessary to remove infected or dead tissue and help the wound recover.

Patient:

I see. That sounds worrying.

Doctor:

I understand this is a lot to take in. We will explain each step clearly, control your pain safely, treat any infection promptly, and involve the surgical team if needed.

4. IELTS 8.5 Vocabulary Upgrade

Basic word	IELTS 8.5 clinical expression	Vietnamese
pain	persistent / recurrent joint pain	đau khớp dai dẳng / tái diễn
swelling	localized swelling	sung khu trú

Basic word	IELTS 8.5 clinical expression	Vietnamese
fluid leaking	fluid discharge / draining fluid	rỉ dịch / chảy dịch
bump	tophaceous deposit / tophus	hạt tophi
opened	ulcerated / ruptured / opened up	vỡ / loét
infection	suspected soft-tissue infection	ngghi nhiễm trùng mô mềm
joint infection	septic arthritis	viêm khớp nhiễm khuẩn
painkillers	self-administered analgesics	thuốc giảm đau tự dùng
stomach bleeding	upper gastrointestinal bleeding	xuất huyết tiêu hóa trên
surgery	surgical debridement	phẫu thuật cắt lọc

5. High-level Clinical Phrases

A. Exploring symptoms

Could you tell me what has changed over the last few days?

Ông có thể cho tôi biết vài ngày gần đây có gì thay đổi không?

When did you first notice the fluid discharge?

Ông bắt đầu thấy rỉ dịch từ khi nào?

Has the pain become more intense, more frequent, or more persistent?

Con đau có nặng hơn, thường xuyên hơn hoặc kéo dài hơn không?

B. Explaining diagnosis

The swelling appears to be a tophus, which is a deposit of uric acid crystals.

Chỗ sưng này có vẻ là hạt tophi, tức là sự lắng đọng tinh thể acid uric.

In your case, the tophus has opened up and is now draining fluid.

Trong trường hợp của ông, hạt tophi đã vỡ/loét và đang rỉ dịch.

C. Discussing medication risk

NSAIDs can be effective for gout pain, but they may increase the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding.

NSAID có thể hiệu quả trong giảm đau do gout, nhưng có thể làm tăng nguy cơ xuất huyết tiêu hóa.

Given your history of gastric ulcerative lesions and upper GI bleeding, we need to choose pain relief very carefully.

Với tiền sử loét dạ dày và xuất huyết tiêu hóa trên, chúng ta cần lựa chọn thuốc giảm đau rất thận trọng.

D. Delivering difficult news

It appears that the tophus may be infected.

Có vẻ như hạt tophi có thể đã bị nhiễm trùng.

I am concerned about the possibility of septic arthritis.

Tôi lo ngại khả năng có viêm khớp nhiễm khuẩn.

We may need to involve the surgical team if the wound does not improve.

Chúng tôi có thể cần mời đội phẫu thuật nếu vết thương không cải thiện.

6. Communication Focus — IELTS 8.5

Thay câu thô bằng câu chuyên nghiệp

Too direct

Your foot is infected.

You may have a dangerous joint infection.

You need surgery.

IELTS 8.5 professional version

It appears that the tophus may be infected.

I am concerned about the possibility of septic arthritis.

We may need to consider surgical debridement if the infected tissue does not heal adequately.

Too direct

You should not take painkillers.

This is serious.

IELTS 8.5 professional version

Given your history of gastrointestinal bleeding, some painkillers may not be safe for you.

This is something we need to assess and manage carefully.

7. Grammar Focus — IELTS 8.5

1. Present Perfect Continuous

Your foot has been troubling you recently.

Dùng để mô tả triệu chứng kéo dài đến hiện tại.

I've been taking painkillers by myself.

Nhấn mạnh hành động tự dùng thuốc kéo dài hoặc lặp lại.

2. Hedging Language — Ngôn ngữ giảm chắc chắn

Trong giao tiếp y khoa, không nên khẳng định quá tuyệt đối khi chưa đủ bằng chứng.

Direct

Hedged

The tophus is infected. The tophus appears to be infected.

You have septic arthritis. I am concerned about the possibility of septic arthritis.

You need surgery. We may need to consider surgery.

Cấu trúc cần nhớ:

It appears that + clause

There is a possibility of + noun phrase

I am concerned about + noun phrase

We may need to consider + V-ing / noun

8. Pronunciation Drill

Word/Phrase	Pronunciation
chronic	/'krɒnɪk/
tophus	/'tɒʃəs/
tophi	/'tɒʃaɪ/
uric acid crystals	/'jʊrɪk 'æsɪd 'krɪstəlz/
recurrent	/rɪ'kɜːrənt/
gastrointestinal	/,gæstrəʊɪn'testɪnəl/
ulcerative lesions	/'ʌlsərətɪv 'liːʒənz/
septic arthritis	/'septɪk ɑːr'θraɪtɪs/
surgical debridement	/'sɜːrdʒɪkəl dɪ'briːdmənt/
analgesics	/,ænəl'dʒiːzɪks/

9. Role-play Task — IELTS 8.5

Scenario

A patient with chronic gout presents with a painful swollen right foot. A tophus has opened up and is draining fluid. The patient has been self-medicating with painkillers. He has a history of gastric ulcerative lesions and acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding.

Doctor's task

Explain:

1. What a tophus is.
2. Why the open tophus is concerning.
3. Why NSAIDs must be used cautiously.
4. Why septic arthritis needs to be considered.

5. Why surgical debridement may be necessary.
 6. Reassure the patient without minimizing the risk.
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10. Model Answer for Excellent Learners

Doctor:

Mr. Chen, based on what you've told me and what we can see on examination, the swelling on your foot appears to be a tophus. This is related to chronic gout and is caused by deposits of uric acid crystals.

At the moment, the tophus has opened up and is draining fluid. That matters because an open tophus can become infected, and infection may sometimes spread into the joint. That is why I am concerned about the possibility of septic arthritis. For pain control, we need to be careful. NSAIDs can help gout pain, but in your case they may not be the safest option because you have a history of gastric ulcerative lesions and upper gastrointestinal bleeding.

Our immediate plan is to assess the infection, choose safe pain relief, consider appropriate antibiotics if needed, and monitor the wound closely. If the infected tissue does not improve or if the joint is involved, we may need to consider surgical debridement to remove unhealthy tissue and support healing.

We will go step by step and keep you fully informed throughout the process.

11. KVH Challenge — Cấp IELTS 8.5

Học viên chọn 1 trong 3 nhiệm vụ:

Level 1 — Safe Speaker

Đọc đúng 3 câu:

1. **The swelling appears to be a tophus.**
2. **I am concerned about the possibility of septic arthritis.**
3. **We may need to consider surgical debridement.**

Level 2 — Clinical Communicator

Nói 5 câu giải thích cho bệnh nhân:

You have chronic gout. The swelling is called a tophus. It has opened up and is draining fluid. We are concerned about infection. Because of your stomach bleeding history, we must choose pain relief carefully.

Level 3 — IELTS 8.5 Performer

Trình bày trong 60 giây:

Explain the diagnosis, medication risk, and possible need for surgery using softening language and empathy.

12. Scoring Rubric

Tiêu chí	Điểm
Phát âm đúng từ khóa chuyên ngành	+1
Dùng được softening language	+1
Giải thích được tophus bằng tiếng Anh	+1
Nêu đúng nguy cơ NSAID và XHTH	+1
Nêu đúng lo ngại septic arthritis	+1
Trình bày kế hoạch xử trí rõ ràng	+1
Có câu trấn an bệnh nhân	+1
Nói mạch lạc, tự nhiên, không dịch word-by-word	+1

13. Take-home Message

English

Advanced clinical English is not about using difficult words.

It is about explaining complex disease clearly, safely, and compassionately.

Vietnamese

Tiếng Anh y khoa trình độ cao không phải là dùng từ thật khó.

Đó là khả năng giải thích bệnh phức tạp một cách **rõ ràng, an toàn và nhân văn.**