Sherry,

Like Jessica, I was also surprised to hear that cough is one of the most frequent complaints that patients have when seeking medical care from their primary care provider. I agree with your plan to provide your patient with symptomatic treatment only, rather than pacifying him with a prescription for antibiotics. Patients should be educated on the fact that antibiotics are not recommended based on the presence of purulent sputum or a change in its color. Rather, they are only indicated in cases where pneumonia is suspected, in which patients would display symptoms of tachycardia, tachypnea, fever, and an abnormal chest exam (rales and egophony). Over 23,000 patients die a year from antibiotic resistant infections (Harris, Hicks, & Qaseem, 2016). I would explain to my patient that I do not want him or her to be added to that number. Your plan will ensure that your patient receives proper evidence-based care.

Elizabeth

References

Harris, A., Hicks, L., & Qaseem, A. (2016). Appropriate antibiotic use for acute respiratory tract infection in adults: Advice for high-value care from the American College of Physicians and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Annals of Internal Medicine, 164*(6), 425-434. doi:10.7326/M15-1840