

May frets about her weight

May is a retired secretary in her fifties. She gave up work two years ago, when her husband, Bill took early retirement from British Rail. They have a caravan that they keep by the sea at Frinton, but Bill wants to be a bit more adventurous and has persuaded May that it would be a good idea to take it to France. May comes to see you because she has trouble controlling her weight and is worried that she might not compare favourably with French ladies, who she knows are often very elegant. She has read about a new wonder drug called Rimonabant, which apparently lets you eat what you like and still lose weight, and as she loves her food she is hoping you will prescribe this for her.

On questioning about her general health, she tells you that these days she feels tired all the time (one of the reasons Bill thinks she needs a good holiday) which she puts down to her age, but otherwise she's fine. Well, apart from her eyesight – she's made an appointment to see the optician, because she's noticed the telly looks a bit blurry – not that it matters much, it's all rubbish anyway isn't it, but she does like to relax with a cup of tea and a biscuit and watch a nice film in the afternoon. Bill says she doesn't need an excuse to have a cup of tea, as she's always got the kettle on, but she only does it when she feels thirsty – it's not her fault she's thirsty a lot!

As part of your general examination you ask her height and weight. She tells you she is 5 foot 2 inches tall and weighs 11 stone.

What tests would you recommend for May and why? Assuming your suspicions are proven to be correct, what treatment(s) would you recommend for her? Would weight reduction be part of this treatment and if so, should she take weight reducing drugs or are there other ways she could lose weight?