

Box 1. The eight steps of the ACA (availability, current issues, anticipation) training programme

Step 1 *Videotaped GP-patient interview* with a trained actor simulating a patient in an advanced stage of lung (role A) or colon (role B) cancer, according to detailed scripts; immediately after the interview the participant receives general feedback on communication style from the actor.

Step 2 *Instructions on the ACA checklist*, using oral presentations and written information (ACA booklet).

Step 3 *Feedback according to the ACA checklist* on GP performance during the videotaped GP-patient interview in step 1.

Step 4 *Studying* the ACA checklist, *discussing* this material with peers in small groups, and *trying out* newly acquired skills in their own general practice to identify problem areas from their own experience.

Step 5 *Formulating learning goals* based on the previous steps.

Step 6 *Role-play exercises* tailored to the GP's individual learning goals.

Step 7 *A second videotaped interview* with an actor simulating a patient.

Step 8 Using the second videotaped interview and the ACA checklist as tools for *self-assessment* of their communication skills.