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Demonstration of a General Neurological Examination

Experiment 5 - Practical Notes

Name: _____ Roll no.: _____ Date: _____

Aim

To observe an instructor-led neurological examination and organise findings by functional domain.

Principle

A neurological examination evaluates mental status, cranial nerve function, motor function, sensation, coordination, reflexes and gait. Symmetry, the pattern of findings and the history guide interpretation; a classroom demonstration does not establish a diagnosis.

Requirements

- Consenting volunteer or teaching video; instructor; examination chart.
- Penlight, reflex hammer, safe sensory materials and suitable walking space.

Procedure

1. Prepare

Explain the demonstration, obtain consent and provide privacy. Check whether pain, injury or mobility limitations require a modified activity.

2. Mental status and cranial nerves

Observe alertness, orientation and communication. The instructor demonstrates pupil responses, eye movements, facial movements, hearing and other appropriate cranial functions.

3. Motor and sensation

Observe posture, bulk and voluntary movement. Compare sides with the instructor's selected strength and gentle sensory checks; record stimulus and body site.

4. Coordination and gait

Observe finger-to-target movement and ordinary gait as appropriate. Use support and omit balance challenges when unsafe.

5. Reflexes

Observe the instructor eliciting a tendon reflex with the limb relaxed. Record the tendon and bilateral response; do not use painful techniques.

6. Document

Group actual findings by domain and note any limitations. Escalate an unexpected symptom to the instructor rather than assigning a disease label.

Observations and Record

Domain	Observed task	Finding / side / limitation
Mental status / cranial nerves	_____	_____
Motor / sensory	_____	_____
Coordination / gait	_____	_____
Reflexes	_____	_____

Worked Example

The numbers below are illustrative; enter your own observations in the record.

- A record saying “right and left finger-to-target tasks completed smoothly” is an observation. “All neurological disease excluded” is an unsupported conclusion.

Result

Record the observed outcome and calculated value, with units. State whether the stated laboratory specification was met; do not copy the worked example as your result.

Precautions

- Do not perform painful stimulation, invasive testing or forceful neck movement.
- Respect refusal or discomfort and record an omitted task instead of inventing a result.

Viva Questions and Answers

1. Why compare sides?

Asymmetry may help localise a functional disturbance.

2. Why record the task used?

The finding is meaningful only with its method and conditions.

3. Does a normal demonstration exclude all neurological disease?

No. Clinical interpretation requires a complete assessment.

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