PHYSICAL DIAGNOSIS

WALKER



物理診斷學 PHYSICAL DIAGNOSIS, 1952

原 著: Harry Walker

影 印: 大 席 書 局

發 行: 上海(O)等淡路八十六號 電話一六六九三

印 刷: 大 陸 美 術 印 刷 所

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WITH 126 ILLUSTRATIONS



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PREFACE

The recent advances in pathology and the frequent employment of the more exact diagnostic aids in clinical medicine have caused some to think that the physical examination is of less value now than formerly. It is true that many signs which in the past were thought to be of value have now been shown to be worthless. It is also true that by the physical examination minor physical changes cannot be detected, and, furthermore, that changes which are found are often not specific for any disease. In spite of these shortcomings, physical diagnosis is on a more sound basis now than ever before for the simple reason that exact diagnostic measures have helped to place the subject on a firmer foundation. Then, too, the more one correlates the physical signs discovered upon examination, with findings shown by instruments of precision, the more independent one should become of the refined diagnostic measures. In fact, regardless of the advances in diagnosis in other fields, the examination of the patient will always be important in clinical medicine, for when the physical examination is well done, the next step in determining the diagnosis can be taken with more logic and the diagnosis can be arrived at in a more direct manner. The more one knows about physical diagnosis, the better diagnostician he is certain to be.

In this text an attempt is made to describe the signs which are generally considered to be most valuable. However, some generally known useless ones were also included. This was deemed best because in examining patients the irrelevant, as well as the relevant, is always encountered, and the examiner must be familiar with both before the information assembled can be properly evaluated.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the following members of the faculty of the Medical College of Virginia: Dr. Herbert C. Lee, Associate Professor of Clinical Surgery, who contributed the chapter on examination of the abdomen; Dr. Randolph H. Hoge, Professor of Gynecology, who contributed the chapter on the gynecologic examination; Dr. Raymond A. Adams, of the Department of Neurology, who contributed the chapter on neurological examination; Dr. Patrick H. Drewry, Jr., Associate Professor of Psychiatry, who contributed the chapter on the psychiatric examination; Dr. Edward S. Ray, Assistant Professor of Medicine, who contributed the chapter on diseases of the lungs; Dr. Reno R. Porter, Associate Professor of Medicine, who contributed the section on diseases of the heart. Last, I wish to thank Mrs. William M. Atkins for her most helpful aid in the preparation of this volume.

HARRY WALKER

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