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Speech & Higher Centers

General inspection:

- neck stiffness? febrile?
- Handedness? orientation (name? place?, time of day?)

SPEECH

- Free speech: Get patient to talk freely if no obvious sign of difficulty evident (i.e.: tell me what you are interested in)?
- Comprehension: “touch your chin, then your nose, then your ear”, yes/no questions such as: “do you put shoes on before socks?”, repetition: “no ifs, &s, or buts”, name two objects pointed at?, repeat: “British Constitution” (dysarthria – pseudobulbar palsy, bulbar palsy, slurred speech, cerebellar disease, mouth ulceration mimics dysarthria)
- Reading: ask patient to read a paragraph

If no abnormality in speech is detected, then proceed to higher centers exam – if there is an abnormality anywhere above – then proceed below.

‘DYSPHASIA’ EXAMINATION

- If someone has either: receptive, conductive, nominal aphasia then they may have problems with the following:
 - Naming of objects (all 3), repetition (conductive, receptive), comprehension (receptive), reading (receptive, conductive), writing (receptive – abnormal content, conductive - dysgraphia)
- If someone has expressive aphasia then they may have problems with the following:
 - Naming of objects, phrase repetition is poor, reading (dyslexia), writing (dysgraphia may be present), hemiparesis?

HIGHER CENTER EXAMINATION

This cannot be performed in a patient with receptive aphasia

- Parietal Lobe (reception + analysis of sensory information):
 - Dominant lobe signs (Gerstmann’s syndrome):
 - Arithmetic calculations (i.e.: 5+5, 10-8, 9*2, 18/6) → acalculia
 - Ability to write → agraphia
 - “show your right hand, now left hand!”, “touch left ear with right hand, vice versa”.
 - “name your fingers” → finger agnosia
 - Non-dominant lobe signs:
 - Sensory inattention: “can you feel my hands (placed on arm+legs)”
 - Visual inattention – Cranial Nerve II, III, IV, VI
 - Astereogenesis (opposite side lesion): place object on hand → “can you feel it”
 - Dressing (turn top inside out, ask them to put it on) + constructional apraxia (copy object you have drawn).
 - Spatial neglect (fill in empty spaces on clock face)

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- Temporal Lobe (short + long term memory):
 - STM: name, address, flowers? → Repeat immediately, repeat after 5 minutes.
 - LTM: “when did world war II end?”
 - Amnesic dementia: “have you met me before” → confabulations.

- Frontal lobe function (emotion, memory, judgement, habits etc)
 - Primitive reflexes:
 - Grasp reflex (lesion contralateral to grasping side): run fingers on patients hand
 - Stroke thenar eminence (ipsilateral contraction of orbicularis oris muscle)
 - Gait apraxia: unsteady walk?
 - Fundoscopy: optic atrophy due to compression/papilledema