

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Junior doctor skill in the art of physical examination: A retrospective study of the medical admission note over four decades
AUTHORS	Hunter, Selena; Oliver, Charlotte; Ikeda, Takayoshi; Galletly, Duncan

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

REVIEWER	Sal Mangione, MD Associate Professor of Medicine Jefferson Medical College Philadelphia, PA 19107 USA No competing interests
REVIEW RETURNED	06-Dec-2012

GENERAL COMMENTS	This is an interesting paper that adds to the wealth of information suggesting that fundamental clinical skills are declining in our times of sophisticated diagnostic technology. Being this a retrospective review there are, of course, limitations, and these are adequately addressed by the authors. It could be argued that given the time constraints of modern medicine, physicians are now more likely to document only the bare necessities, and moreover that some of the losses in documentation (like detection of precordial beat or palpation of liver edge) may be ascribable to either a change in patients' body habitus (we are getting fat) or to evidence indicating that some of these findings might indeed be not that accurate (determination of liver span). Still, the paper makes a pretty solid argument for a decline in bedside exam. The question now becomes how to reintroduce it and rekindle it. And I agree with the authors that the only way to do so is to change our culture. Hence, my pessimism.
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REVIEWER	Srivastava, Sakti Stanford University
REVIEW RETURNED	15-Jan-2013

THE STUDY	No supplemental documents
GENERAL COMMENTS	Well written manuscript addressing an important topic. Just one minor point - at a number of places there is mention of "heart rate divisible by five". Authors might want to define or elaborate this, since it may not be clear to many readers.

VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

I have made the revisions as requested.

These have been highlighted in the revised version paper that I have uploaded.

Other minor revisions have been made, and highlighted in the text.

I have revised the spelling of speciality to specialty, and clarking to clerking (see text).

Please note - figure 3b has been altered, in light of revised analysis regarding positive cardiac murmurs. The associated text has been changed and highlighted in all areas. Figure 4 has been deleted, considered redundant. The number of references are now 26 (prev 32).