

Essentials of the Newborn Physical Examination

Objectives

- Recognize the significance of the routine newborn physical examination as a means of establishing gestational age, documenting growth and development related to gestational age and identifying any signs of birth-related trauma or congenital anomalies
- Outline the general techniques recommended for assessing the overall health status of the newborn including the order of examination to optimize findings and the impact of gestational maturation on physical findings
- Describe the physical findings indicating the presence of birth trauma or congenital anomalies and relate to the monitoring or follow-up steps recommended for the conditions presented
- Summarize the clinical findings and recommended management for common problems with potential impact on the process of successful newborn transition

Content Outline

1. General Techniques of the Newborn Physical Examination
 - 1.1 Initial physical assessment
 - 1.2 Assessment of gestational age
 - 1.2.1 Physical and neuromuscular maturity
 - 1.2.2 Primitive reflexes
 - 1.3 Abnormalities of growth
 - 1.4 Clinical findings related to birth trauma
 - 1.4.1 Caput succedaneum, subgaleal hematoma and cephalohematoma
 - 1.4.2 Clavicle fracture, bruises, petechiae and fat necrosis
 - 1.4.3 Nerve damage
 - 1.5 Clinical findings related to common congenital anomalies
 - 1.5.1 Hands and feet
 - 1.5.2 External ear
 - 1.5.3 Midline clefts
 - 1.5.4 Skin and umbilicus
 - 1.5.5 Congenital hip dislocation
 - 1.6 Common conditions potentially impacting successful neonatal transition
 - 1.6.1 Respiratory distress
 - 1.6.2 Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS)
 - 1.6.3 Hypothermia and hypoglycemia
 - 1.6.4 Abdominal distention and stooling patterns

Reading Material Resources

Module WB2440: Essentials of the Newborn Physical Examination is based on the resource listed below. A copy of the resource is included with the module.

Chapter 2 Neonatology, Balest AL et al., in Zitelli and Davis' *Atlas of Pediatric Physical Diagnosis, Eighth Edition*, (2023), Elsevier, 43-62 (pages applicable to posttest items)