13.2 Principles of physical examination

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 24 marks**

KEY WORDS inspection • auscultation

Objective

Order the four steps; map findings to the sciences.

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ The fixed sequence

Inspect → palpate → percuss → auscultate – least intrusive first; each step preserves the conditions the next needs ✓.

■ Worked example: mapping

Rate 24 with accessory use → MED05 ventilation; dull right base, absent sounds → MED10 fluid ✓. Record per region, findings listed.

2 Practice

2.1 State the four steps in order. [3]

2.2 Why does palpation precede percussion in the abdomen? [3]

2.3 What is wrong with a record that reads just: chest normal? [3]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A fictional respiratory examination (role-play description): respiratory rate 24; accessory muscle use; reduced right-side expansion; dull right base; absent breath sounds at the base.

Present each finding under its step (inspection, palpation, percussion, auscultation) and map it (MED05 ventilation arithmetic; MED10 dull-fluid rule) ✓. Explain why auscultating last preserves the sounds and why the left-right comparison is essential ✓. [8]

3.2 Two fictional students argue that reading the manual is enough before the wards.

State what knowledge transfers from reading (the sequence, the questions each step asks, the mapping to anatomy and physiology) and what it cannot (volumes, consistency, left-vs-right judgement – trained perception under supervision) ✓. Give one consequence for training (order taught first; skills practiced on the well before the ill) ✓. [7]

Solutions

2.1

- Inspect, palpate, percuss, auscultate ✓.

2.2

- Percussion (and palpation) alters bowel gas and guarding – the less intrusive look-and-feel data come first ✓.

2.3

- It names neither what was examined nor the findings – evidence, not conclusions ✓.

3.1

- Inspection: rate 24, accessory use → MED05 increased work of breathing ✓.
- Palpation: reduced right expansion → asymmetry of ventilation ✓.
- Percussion: dull right base → MED10 fluid replaces air ✓.
- Auscultation last: untouched sounds; comparison against the left separates local from general ✓.

3.2

- From reading: the sequence, the question each step asks, the anatomy-physiology mapping ✓.
- Not from reading: trained perception – volumes, texture, comparison ✓.
- Consequence: sequence first, then supervised practice on the well ✓.

exercises.lol exercises.com.cn