



The Medical **Bulletin**

General

A Handshake Can Be the First Step in Diagnosis

Shaking hands with a patient is not only a welcoming social gesture.

It can also provide clues to several diagnoses:

Anxiety may cause a sweaty palm.

A very warm hand may indicate fever or even hyperthyroidism.

A weak grip may indicate depression, fatigue, or neurologic deficit.

A very cold hand may be a sign of Raynaud's phenomenon.

A gnarled hand may indicate rheumatoid arthritis.

A shaky hand, with an intention tremor, may indicate Parkinsonism.

A "weaving" handshake may be seen in chorea.

A contracture of the flexor tendons occurs with Dupuytren contracture, seen especially in persons of Celtic or Viking descent.

A wrist drop occurs with "Saturday night palsy" or even lead poisoning

This question, about what diseases can be suggested by a handshake, is one of my favorites is when teaching medical students.

Dr. Bhaktavatsalam, Salem

Best Practice Advice

Best practice advice are developed by the value of diagnostic tests and therapeutic interventions for various diseases. They are based on an evaluation of the benefits, harms, and costs of a test or treatment and how this can be translated into the value of an intervention. Establishing this balance ensures effective delivery of high value care. Value is not merely cost. Some expensive tests and treatments have high value because they provide high benefit and low harm. Conversely, some inexpensive tests or treatments have low value because they do not provide enough benefit to justify even their low costs and might even be harmful.

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