

Preface

Clinical medicine is an art and a science. It is all about taking a history, doing a physical examination, followed by targeted investigations to reach a diagnosis and finally, to chart appropriate management. Unfortunately, the teaching of these skills has taken a back seat in our curricula in the past few decades.

Textbooks and journals cannot replace good patient-oriented teaching. As Osler said “he who studies medicine without books sails an uncharted sea, but he who studies medicine without patients does not go to sea at all”. The practice of medicine is all about patient care. In the words of Francis Peabody, “the secret of patient care is caring for the patient”. We are here to care for our patients. We should be teaching and learning this everyday with, and from, our patients.

This book is an attempt to revisit good old-fashioned history taking and physical examination. This is more relevant in this century, because of, or in spite of, all the modern technologies. With history and good clinical examination, a working diagnosis can be made in most clinical cases. This book is written by practicing clinicians, all of whom share that philosophy.

We have taken a different approach to a system based examination. Each chapter begins with a patient problem. Some new chapters such as vascular examination and rheumatology have been introduced.

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I hope the book meets the learners' unmet needs.

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