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# Introduction

Jitka Mlíková Seidlerová

When compared with more specialised methods, using medical history and physical examination may seem primitive, inaccurate, non-specific, and even unnecessary today. Nevertheless, as simple, non-invasive and inexpensive methods, they instantly provide fundamental information about the state of health during the first contact with the patient and make it possible to select further procedures, and this is what makes them irreplaceable. In some situations, the information thus obtained is sufficient and there is no need for further complicated and costly examinations; at other times it at least directs any diagnostic activities and determines the choice of further investigations. However, the outputs of these two steps will be insufficient if they are carried out carelessly and superficially. It is necessary to know the pathophysiological mechanisms of possible pathological findings in order to allow their correct interpretation and diagnosis.

Only on the basis of the information obtained from the medical history and physical examination can we purposefully select suitable imaging techniques and laboratory examinations.

The following chapters discuss in great detail the procedures for taking a medical history and conducting physical examinations in particular fields of internal medicine. They also provide information about the most common imaging and laboratory methods used in these fields. Special chapters are devoted to the monitoring of the patient in intensive care, examination of the patient with suspected acute abdomen, basic neurological examination, which the internist should manage, and the basics of pharmacotherapy.

We hope that this book will become a useful tool for the study of internal medicine both for medical students and doctors starting specialist training.