

## Acromegaly Focussed Examination

Note: the instructions may be non-specific e.g. examine this patient's endocrine status (could be Cushing's, acromegaly or hypothyroidism). In this case, approach by asking a few focussed questions (if allowed) and doing a general inspection to determine which condition is present and then proceed with the relevant focussed examination to elicit all the signs of the condition.

Focussed questions (acromegaly is usually obvious so ask questions to elicit symptoms you cannot examine for)

What happened when you first presented with this condition?

Have you noticed a change in your appearance?

DETERMINING IF THERE IS ACTIVE ACROMEGALY:

Do you notice excessive sweating?

Do you have high blood pressure?

OTHER SYMPTOMS – WORK DOWN BODY:

Headaches

Visual problems

Pins and needles

Back ache

Muscle weakness

Change in shoe size

### Introduction

- **W**ash hands, **I**ntroduce self, ask **P**atient's name & DOB & what they like to be called, **E**xplain examination and get consent

### General Inspection

- Increased foot, hand and head size
- Mildly hirsute
- OA signs such as kyphosis

### Hands

- Inspection & palpation with hands on pillow
  - Top: large, spade-shaped, feel joints for OA evidence
  - Palms: sweaty, doughy/boggy texture to palms, capillary glucose stick marks on finger pulps (**diabetes**)
  - Signs of carpal tunnel syndrome (release scar or loss of thenar eminence and loss of sensation in median n. distribution)

### Face

- Inspection of face in general
  - Coarse facial features
  - Acne
  - Enlarged nose and ears
  - Macrognathia (large mandible)
  - Look for hypophysectomy scar under upper lip
- Eyes
  - Visual fields (**bitemporal hemianopia in pituitary adenoma**)
  - Prominent supra-orbital ridges
- Inside mouth
  - Prognathism
  - Wide spaces between teeth
  - Macroglossia and ridges from teeth on sides of tongue

### Neck

- Thyroid goitre
- JVP (**cardiomyopathy**)

### Chest

- Inspect: thick, multiple skin tags
- Acanthosis nigricans in axilla
- Cardiac failure signs (listen to lung bases)

### Limbs

- Proximal myopathy (patient stand up with arms crossed; shrug shoulders against resistance)
- Gait: tolling gait with bowed legs

### To complete

- Thank patient and cover them

- “I would complete my examination by measuring blood pressure, doing a thyroid exam, a cardiovascular exam and formally testing visual fields”
- Summarise and suggest further investigations you would do after a full history
  - GH response to oral glucose tolerance test
  - MRI pituitary
  - plasma IGF-1 (monitor response to Tx)



**Normal hand**

**Acromegalic hand**



**Mandibular prognathism: protrusion of the lower jaw**



**Facial features of acromegaly: coarse facial features, prominent supra-orbital ridges, large nose and ears, macrognathia**



**Wide spaces between teeth**