

Practical A

Taking a history of ear and hearing problems

Introduction

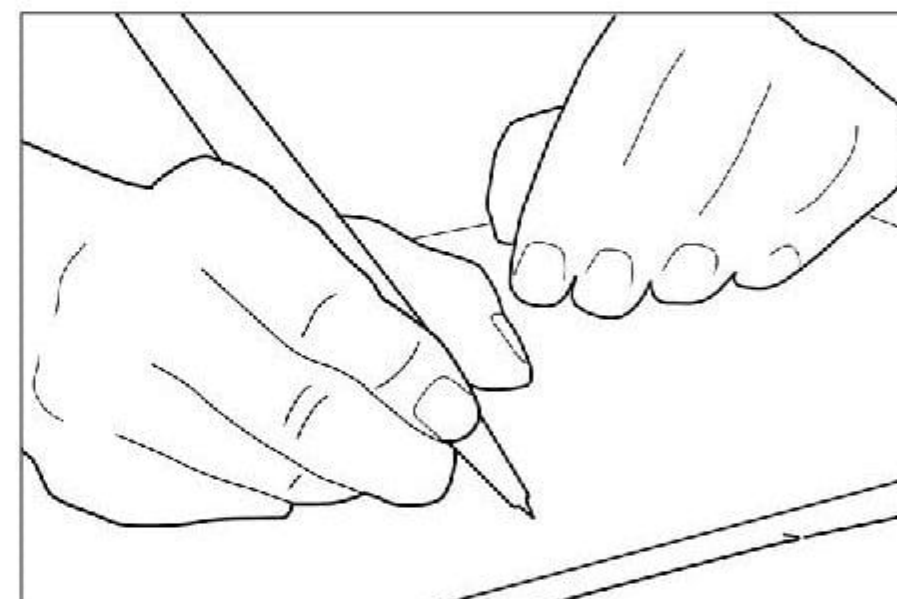
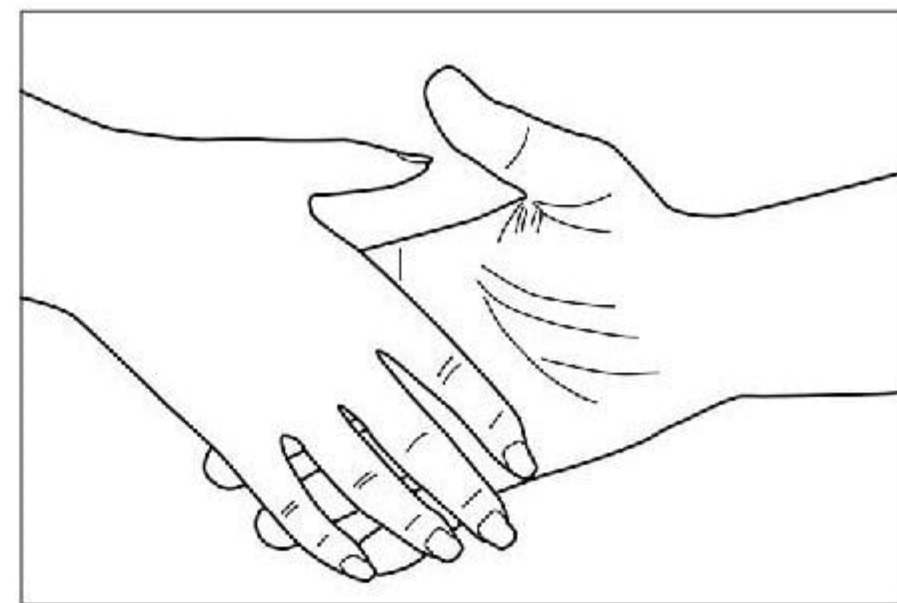
Taking a history is the first step in diagnosing ear and hearing problems.

Equipment

Pen and paper

PROCEDURE

1. Introduce yourself and ask the patient their name and age. Ask them if they are studying or working, and if so, what job they do.
2. Ask what the problem with the ear is. It could be hearing loss, discharge from the ear, pain in the ear, or something else.
3. You will need to record details of each symptom they mention, and whether one or both ears are affected
4. If there is hearing loss, how long it has been there? When was it first noticed? Is there any history of hearing loud noise for a long time (such as working in a factory)
5. If the person complains of hearing loss, further details should be sought. Does the person have any difficulty hearing:
 - conversational speech in quiet or noisy surroundings?
 - raised voices in quiet or noisy surroundings?
6. If there is discharge from the ear, what does it look like? Clear liquid? Yellow pus? Blood? Does the discharge have a bad smell? When did it start? How often does it come? Just the once, every few months, every few weeks, every day?
7. If there is pain in the ear how long has it been there? Is it there always or sometimes? How severe is it? Is the pain only in the ear or also in the jaw, neck, or mouth?
8. Ask about other symptom, such as dizziness, noises in the ear (tinnitus), or itching in the ear.
9. Record the history on a piece of paper. You may wish to use the sheet in Appendix II, to record both your history and examination. For examination, see practical B



IMPORTANT TIP



Make sure to ask if they have used any home remedies involving the ear, placed any hot oil in the ear, or any foreign objects in the ear.