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# Unusual Signs and Symptoms in Internal Medicine



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## Preface

The core of the diagnostic ability of a good clinician consists in attributing, based on the knowledge acquired during university education and in daily clinical practice, the right meaning to the physical and psychological symptoms presented by patients. A great many pathologies share the same aspecific signs and symptoms, such as fever, headache, chest or abdominal pain, and asthenia (to cite only the most common). Their nature, the contemporaneous presence of other symptoms, and the results of the physical examination narrow the field of the differential diagnosis and determine the following investigation course.

In fact, despite the ever growing set of sophisticated technical tools at the physician's disposal, a careful collection of the anamnestic data remains the foundation of clinical reasoning. This is generally true, but is in force above all when the symptoms are rare or scarcely known, and thus not investigated by the physician.

The purpose of this book is to present a series of unusual symptoms which the physician may meet in daily practice, with the aim of seeking them out in patients, who rarely would talk about them of their own accord. The widening of knowledge of the less common symptoms can in itself be a contribution to the improvement of the attendance quality in general medicine, allowing the attainment of a difficult diagnosis more quickly and safely.

This text does not claim to be a complete compendium of diagnostics in internal medicine, nor to present a mere collection of clinical curiosities and amenities. The main aspect of the volume here presented is showing, above all to the youngest and most

inexpert clinicians, who are frequently full of enthusiasm and confidence in the new technologies, how to build a solid differential diagnosis through the fusion of theoretical knowledge with the data collected during medical examination.

The book is written in a concise way, so that it can be read and referenced rapidly, because the main aim is not to provide an academic review of all the less common symptoms, but rather to stimulate the diagnostic insight of the physician through the increase of his or her fund of knowledge, and, above all, to insist on the importance of a cornerstone of internal medicine: developing a comprehensive differential diagnosis on the grounds of clinical experience and identification of the symptoms.