



INTRODUCTION TO THE  
SURGICAL PATIENT  
ELLY NYAIM OPOT



- Surgical patient in this context refers to an individual who has a condition that requires surgical intervention
- It is important to evaluate the patient properly to ensure the most optimum outcomes from the intervention
- The approach involves:
  1. Clinical assessment
  2. Investigations
  3. Interventions



# Clinical evaluation

## History


A complete history must be taken and includes:

1. Presenting complaints
2. History of presenting complaints
3. Family and social history
4. Past medical history
5. Systemic enquiry



# Physical Examination

- A comprehensive physical examination which includes:
  1. General examination
  2. Systemic examination
- Examination must be carried out in a logical sequence and involves:
  1. Inspection
  2. Palpation
  3. Percussion
  4. Auscultation

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- At the end of the clinical assessment one should have a working diagnosis and differential diagnoses
  - It is on the basis of these that the clinician plans for the investigations.
  - INVESTIGATION SHOULD NOT BE LISTED JUST BECAUSE THEY ARE AVAILABLE. They should be justified and cost effective.

# Investigations

- General Investigations
- Specific Investigations

General investigations will be done for all the patients. Are usually aimed at assessing the physiological fitness of the patient. These include:

1. Full haemogram/ Total blood count(TBC)



This is useful in assessing:

- > Hb
  - > Platelet count
  - > RBCs
  - > WBC count
2. Urea, electrolytes and creatinine (UECs) sometimes also called renal function tests

3. Other tests that can be considered include:

- ✓ Liver function tests especially for patients with jaundice or history suggestive of liver disease


- ✓ Chest X rays especially for the elderly and those with history suggestive of respiratory diseases

- ✓ Assessment of the heart function for the elderly and patients with history suggestive of cardiac disease





- Culture and sensitivity where there are wounds or features of UTI, GIT infections
- Tissue diagnosis( cytology, histology) where there are masses/tumours, discharges
- Various specialised tests e.g. Thyroid function tests, Blood sugar etc. depending on the history and physical examination findings
- Various specialized imaging studies depending on the history and physical examination findings

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- At the end of the clinical assessment the clinician will have a definite diagnosis.
  - What follows next is the decision and planning for the intervention

# Intervention

• Intervention can involve:

– Surgery alone

– Combination

– Follow-up

Whatever the planned intervention the following must be considered



- Diagnosis
- Available options
- Educating the patient and the relatives
- Obtaining consent for the planned procedures
- Carrying out the procedure as planned
- Immediate post procedure management e.g. postoperative management
- post discharge Follow up which may include rehabilitation where appropriate