Useful Background Information

When a veterinarian, or a physician for that matter, first sees a patient, the first item of information is about “what’s wrong.” The doctor needs to know what caused the patient to seek medical help. Next, the doctor needs to know some background information, which typically includes any information that might indicate a genetic predisposition. Then, a careful exploration of symptoms is needed. In the case of animals, careful observation and physical examination may be needed to find out all the symptoms. An animal cannot tell anybody “where it hurts” other than through body language and through careful palpation.

Vocabulary
Palpation: usually a process of hand manipulation to assess the texture of a patient’s tissue (such as swelling or muscle tone), assess range and quality of joint motion, and assess tenderness through tissue deformation (e.g. provoking pain with pressure or stretching). Manual tests may be used to provoke or relieve pain.

The Veterinary Black Bag Program
Project Goals:
• Develop Veterinarian’s Black Bags (VBBs) of instructional items and pamphlets for middle school teachers to support classroom visits by local veterinarians.
• Provide professional development for veterinarians and teachers on how to use items in the VBBs
• Promote inquiry-based thinking about health-related subjects while emphasizing the value of biomedical research and promoting careers in science.

Peer
Partnership for Environmental Education and Rural Health

Dr. Larry Johnson
Principal Investigator, PEER
979-845-9279
ljohnson@cvm.tamu.edu

Dr. William Klemm
Director, Peer
979-845-4201
wklemm@cvm.tamu.edu

Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences
College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences
Texas A&M University, College Station, Tx 77845
MS#4458

http://peer.tamu.edu/VBB/Summary.asp

Signalment

Follow Up Lesson

The instruction in this module includes:
Presentation on Physical Exam
Follow-up lessons on:
Signalment
Body Temperature
Body Sounds
Summary of Lesson Content

**Activity**
Students will report a case study of a sickness (human or animal), and provide the signalment, explaining which of the signs provide clues for the identification and treatment of the sickness.

**Objectives**
1. Identify what signalment refers to
2. Understand why signalment is important in physical examination, medical diagnosis, and treatment

**Signalment**
is defined as a combination of:
- Pre Existing Conditions (History)
- Current Symptoms
- Genetic Characteristics

**History**
Records of your animal's past vaccinations, worming, and treatment for illness are very useful to have, and should be kept on file in your regular veterinarian's office. However, if you are using a different veterinarian that has not seen your animal before, it is imperative that you provide a full history in order to give the veterinarian the best chance at diagnosing your animal correctly.

**Symptoms**
Symptoms can be very useful information for your veterinarian to consider when performing a Physical Exam because it will help when it comes to diagnosing your animal’s illness.

**Genetic Characteristics**
Some genetic characteristics that should be considered when diagnosing an animal are, species, breed, sex and family/genetic history of illnesses.