EXAMINATION OF UNCOOPERATIVE PATIENTS

When patients are uncooperative for examination we need to record the observations till the patients become cooperative, without leaving any gap in clinical observation. Kirby’s method for examination of uncooperative patient is used in such situations, usual situations are when the patient is in stupor or in catatonia. The examination is recorded under the following headings:

General reaction and posture

- Spontaneous acts:
  - Any occasional show of activities or assaultiveness.
  - Is the patient tidy or untidy?
  - Does the patient eat voluntarily or should be fed.
  - Does the patient dress himself or require assistance.
  - Does the actions show initial slowness or consistent slowness throughout?
- Behavior towards the examiners:
  - Resistive or evasive, irritable or apathetic or complaint.
- Voluntary postures:
  - Comfortable, natural or awkward or constrained.
  - What does the patient do when placed in an awkward position?
- Is the behavior constant or changing with time?

Facial movement and expression

- Is the expression being alert, aware, smiling, mask like, placid, sulky, anxious, perplexed, distressed, tearful
- Is the facial expression constant or changing with time?

Eyes and pupils

- Are the eyes open or closed: Is there resistance to open the patients eyes by examiner
- Does he gives attention to examiner and move his eyes with that of object or light source
- Does he have fixed gaze or evasive gaze
- Is there blinking of eyes or flickering of eye lids
- Response to sudden movement of hand towards the patients eyes
- Response of pupils to painful sensory stimulus and corneal reflex

Reaction to examiners questions and tests

- What is the response to simple commands: asking to show tongue, lift the hands
- Presence of negativism – either active or passive uncooperativeness
- Check for presence of automatic obedience, echolalia and echopraxia
- Are the movements of limbs being slow or fast or interrupted
**Muscular reactions**

- Check for tone of muscles: look for rigidity - lead pipe or cog wheel type, waxy flexibility, gagenhalten, mitgehen and mitmachen
- Is there urinary or fecal incontinence

**Emotional responsiveness:**

- Emotional Response when family members speak or when personal facts are told
- Response to unexpected stimulus like clapping sound or by switching on lights

**Speech:**

- Is there any spontaneous speech
- Is the patient mute, if so whether it is consistent present or not
- Is there any effort to speak or make sounds or whisper

**Writing:**

- Offer the patient a pencil and paper to write his wishes

**Vitals:**

- Patients Pulse rate, blood pressure, temperature and respirator rate needs to be measured at regular intervals

**TIPS:** Kirby’s method for examination of uncooperative patient

- **Observe for** - Spontaneous movements, speech and emotional response
- **Examine for** – degree of Un-cooperativeness of patients like Negativism, gegenhalten, rigidity, automatic obedience, mitgehen and mitmachen
- **Record for** - Mutism, echo phenomenon, vital parameters including pulse, BP, temperature and respiratory rate

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**TIPPS** – Training Initiative for Psychiatry Postgraduates