Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Medians for the Importance of Physical Assessment Skills (n=402).

| **Category** | **Skill** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Median** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Integument | Inspect overall skin color/tone | 4.59 | 0.67 | 5 |
|  | Inspect skin lesions | 4.39 | 0.75 | 5 |
|  | Inspect wounds | 4.73 | 0.52 | 5 |
| Nutrition | Estimate body fat by measuring triceps skin fold | 2.23 | 1.00 | 2 |
|  | Estimate muscle mass by measuring mid-arm muscle circumference | 2.25 | 1.01 | 2 |
|  | Calculate waist – to – hip ratio | 2.47 | 1.06 | 2 |
| Head | Inspect hair for color, texture | 3.55 | 1.16 | 4 |
|  | Inspect facial structures | 3.87 | 1.06 | 4 |
|  | Evaluate olfactory nerve (CN I) with smell test | 3.27 | 1.20 | 3 |
|  | Inspect internal nasal cavity with nasal speculum and light, or otoscope | 3.13 | 1.28 | 3 |
|  | Palpate maxillary sinuses | 3.13 | 1.27 | 3 |
|  | Transilluminate sinuses | 2.46 | 1.25 | 2 |
|  | Palpate temporomandibular joint | 3.04 | 1.32 | 3 |
|  | Palpate teeth | 2.45 | 1.22 | 2 |
|  | Inspect oral cavity (lips, tongue, tonsils, mucous membranes, teeth) | 4.29 | 0.86 | 4 |
|  | Palpate lips, tongue, mucous membranes of mouth | 3.01 | 1.36 | 3 |
| Ears | Inspect/palpate external ear | 3.80 | 1.12 | 4 |
|  | Inspect the internal ear with an otoscope | 2.93 | 1.40 | 3 |
|  | Assess hearing based on conversation | 4.21 | 0.91 | 4 |
|  | Assess hearing using whisper voice test | 3.37 | 1.27 | 3 |
|  | Assess hearing using finger rubbing test | 2.89 | 1.29 | 3 |
|  | Assess hearing using Weber’s test | 2.66 | 1.25 | 3 |
|  | Assess hearing using Rinne test | 2.64 | 1.24 | 3 |
|  | Assess hearing using an audiometer | 2.19 | 1.16 | 2 |
| Eyes | Inspect external eyes | 4.43 | 0.80 | 5 |
|  | Assess visual acuity | 3.85 | 1.14 | 4 |
|  | Assess peripheral vision | 3.84 | 1.15 | 4 |
|  | Assess extraocular muscles (CN III) | 3.76 | 1.20 | 4 |
|  | Inspect corneal light reflex | 3.60 | 1.37 | 4 |
|  | Inspect anterior chamber of the eye with ophthalmoscope or penlight | 2.73 | 1.40 | 3 |
|  | Check PERRLA | 4.77 | 0.50 | 5 |
|  | Observe red reflex | 2.95 | 1.38 | 3 |
|  | Perform internal eye exam with ophthalmoscope | 2.16 | 1.26 | 2 |
| Neck | Palpate thyroid gland | 3.43 | 1.34 | 4 |
|  | Palpate the trachea | 3.69 | 1.23 | 4 |
|  | Palpate lymph nodes in neck | 3.76 | 1.22 | 4 |
| Thorax | Inspect chest shape | 4.52 | 0.75 | 5 |
|  | Evaluate breathing effort (rate, patterns, chest expansion) | 4.91 | 0.33 | 5 |
|  | Palpate chest wall for thoracic expansion | 3.92 | 1.14 | 4 |
|  | Palpate chest wall for vocal fremitus | 3.40 | 1.28 | 4 |
|  | Percuss the lungs | 3.22 | 1.42 | 3 |
|  | Percuss for diaphragmatic excursion | 2.92 | 1.36 | 3 |
|  | Auscultate lung sounds | 4.96 | 0.20 | 5 |
|  | Auscultate the chest for vocal resonance | 3.28 | 1.32 | 3 |
| Breasts | Inspect breasts | 3.91 | 1.11 | 4 |
|  | Perform clinical breast examination | 3.26 | 1.35 | 3 |
| Back/Spine | Inspect spine | 4.19 | 1.07 | 5 |
|  | Palpate spine | 3.74 | 1.31 | 4 |
|  | Assess range of motion of back/spine | 4.11 | 1.09 | 4 |
|  | Assess nerve root compression | 2.41 | 1.26 | 2 |
| Cardiovascular | Palpate distal pulses for circulation | 4.96 | 0.20 | 5 |
|  | Palpate and inspect capillary refill | 4.94 | 0.26 | 5 |
|  | Inspect/palpate extremities for edema | 4.96 | 0.21 | 5 |
|  | Palpate extremities for temperature | 4.90 | 0.38 | 5 |
|  | Inspect extremities for skin color/hair growth | 4.60 | 0.69 | 5 |
|  | Inspect thorax for lifts/heaves of the heart | 3.63 | 1.37 | 4 |
|  | Palpate pericardium (heart) | 3.06 | 1.41 | 3 |
|  | Percuss the chest over the heart for heart borders | 2.65 | 1.40 | 3 |
|  | Auscultate the heart for heart sounds | 4.91 | 0.38 | 5 |
|  | Auscultate carotid artery | 4.16 | 1.13 | 5 |
|  | Inspect for jugular pulsation | 4.29 | 1.02 | 5 |
|  | Estimate (measure) jugular venous distention | 3.40 | 1.34 | 3 |
| Musculoskeletal | Inspect muscles and extremities for size/symmetry | 4.33 | 0.89 | 5 |
|  | Palpate extremities for tenderness | 4.45 | 0.80 | 5 |
|  | Palpate joints for tenderness | 4.27 | 0.94 | 5 |
|  | Observe range of motion of joints | 4.68 | 0.61 | 5 |
|  | Measure range of motion of joints with goniometer | 2.29 | 1.33 | 2 |
|  | Assess muscle strength | 4.56 | 0.76 | 5 |
|  | Assess for carpal tunnel using Phalen’s sign or Tinel’s sign | 2.39 | 1.31 | 2 |
|  | Assess for rotator cuff damage | 2.25 | 1.25 | 2 |
|  | Assess for knee effusion | 2.34 | 1.29 | 2 |
|  | Assess for knee stability (McMurray’s test, Apley test, Thomas Test) | 2.15 | 1.25 | 2 |
| Abdomen | Inspect abdomen | 4.87 | 0.40 | 5 |
|  | Auscultate abdomen for bowel sounds | 4.95 | 0.24 | 5 |
|  | Auscultate abdomen for arterial and venous vascular sounds | 3.53 | 1.39 | 4 |
|  | Percuss the abdomen for abdominal tones | 3.41 | 1.47 | 4 |
|  | Percuss the abdomen to determine liver span | 2.73 | 1.40 | 3 |
|  | Percuss the abdomen to determine spleen size | 2.62 | 1.37 | 3 |
|  | Palpate the abdomen for generalized tenderness, distention | 4.74 | 0.58 | 5 |
|  | Palpate the abdomen to assess for a mass | 3.83 | 1.37 | 4 |
|  | Palpate the liver | 2.88 | 1.43 | 3 |
|  | Palpate the spleen | 2.74 | 1.40 | 3 |
|  | Palpate the kidneys | 2.70 | 1.39 | 3 |
|  | Percuss costovertebral angle for kidney tenderness | 3.13 | 1.48 | 3 |
|  | Assess abdominal reflexes by stroking abdomen | 2.44 | 1.34 | 2 |
|  | Assess abdomen for fluid (shifting dullness/fluid wave) | 3.10 | 1.41 | 3 |
|  | Assess abdomen for a floating mass | 2.52 | 1.34 | 2 |
| Reproductive-Female | Inspection of female genitalia (hair distribution, vulva) | 3.45 | 1.25 | 3 |
|  | Palpation of female genitalia | 2.38 | 1.27 | 2 |
|  | Internal genitalia (vaginal examination) with speculum | 1.78 | 1.09 | 1 |
|  | Palpate uterus to measure fundal height (in pregnancy) | 3.42 | 1.47 | 4 |
|  | Palpate fetal position (in pregnancy) | 3.21 | 1.45 | 3 |
|  | External palpation of a uterus | 3.04 | 1.50 | 3 |
|  | Bimanual palpation of uterus | 2.07 | 1.29 | 1 |
|  | Palpation of cervix | 1.98 | 1.24 | 1 |
| Reproductive-Male | Inspection of male genitalia (pubic hair, penis, scrotum) | 3.54 | 1.31 | 4 |
|  | Palpation of male genitalia (penis, scrotum) | 2.59 | 1.37 | 3 |
|  | Transillumination of scrotum | 1.97 | 1.14 | 1 |
|  | Inspection of groin area | 3.51 | 1.33 | 4 |
|  | Palpation for hernia | 2.83 | 1.41 | 3 |
| Anus/Rectum/Prostate | Inspection of anus | 3.56 | 1.30 | 4 |
|  | Palpation of anus for rectal tone | 2.19 | 1.27 | 2 |
|  | Palpate anal canal and rectum for surface characteristics | 1.96 | 1.19 | 1 |
|  | Palpate prostate | 1.84 | 1.12 | 1 |
|  | Inspect/examine stool | 4.13 | 1.18 | 5 |
| Central Nervous System | Mental status / level of consciousness | 4.94 | 0.28 | 5 |
|  | Glascow coma scale | 4.69 | 0.70 | 5 |
|  | Evaluate speech | 4.71 | 0.60 | 5 |
|  | Evaluate face for movement and sensation | 4.59 | 0.74 | 5 |
|  | Evaluate CN VII (raise eyebrows, wrinkle forehead, show teeth, puff out cheeks) | 4.19 | 1.14 | 5 |
|  | Test tongue for taste | 3.13 | 1.36 | 3 |
|  | Test for gag reflex | 4.07 | 1.18 | 5 |
|  | Test shoulders for muscle strength | 4.00 | 1.19 | 4 |
| Cerebellar Function | Assess gait | 4.78 | 0.56 | 5 |
|  | Perform Romberg test | 3.42 | 1.37 | 4 |
|  | Assess patient ability to hop on one foot | 3.18 | 1.37 | 3 |
|  | Assess patient ability to walk on heels then toes | 3.22 | 1.39 | 3 |
|  | Finger coordination (each finger touches thumb rapidly) | 3.58 | 1.31 | 4 |
|  | Touch finger to nose | 3.72 | 1.29 | 4 |
| Sensory Function | Sensation to light touch | 4.16 | 1.09 | 5 |
|  | Sharp/dull sensation | 3.99 | 1.19 | 4 |
|  | Vibratory sensation | 3.41 | 1.37 | 4 |
|  | Position sense | 3.50 | 1.36 | 4 |
|  | Two-point discrimination | 3.15 | 1.39 | 3 |
|  | Graphesthesia | 2.89 | 1.39 | 3 |
|  | Evaluate deep tendon reflexes | 3.59 | 1.38 | 4 |

\* Skills are ordered as they appear in the survey