

# **Jugular Venous Pressure Examination**

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## **Wash your hands & Introduce the exam to your patient**

### **Position & Draping**

- place the patient at ~30° Head up tilt (HUT)
- expose their neck fully
- get the patient to turn their head slightly to the left
- relax the sternocleidomastoid muscle (SCM) by telling the patient to open their mouth slightly
- NB -proper tangential light is **critical**

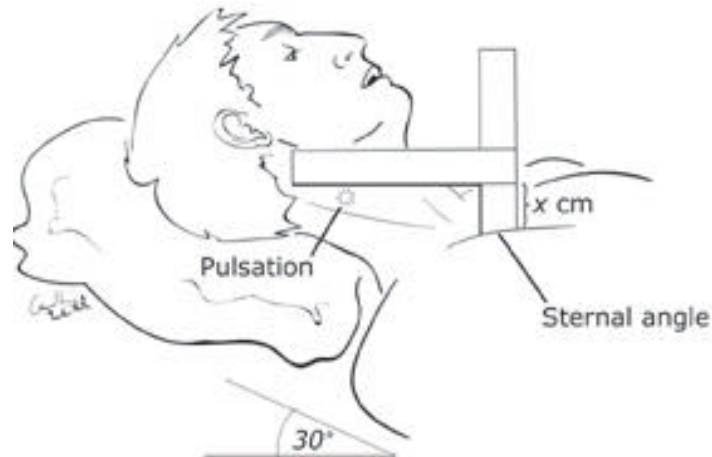
### **Inspection**

- from the right side of the patient, look between the 2 heads of the SCM for a pulsation
- the differences between the Jugular Venous Pressure (JVP) and the carotid pulse:
  - the JVP has multiple wave forms
  - the JVP is **not** palpable
  - the JVP is occluded by light pressure at the base of the neck
    - (ie) if you occlude the internal jugular vein, the pulsations will stop
  - the JVP varies with respiration
  - the JVP varies with changes in HUT
    - basically, if you raise or lower the head of the bed, the JVP should decrease or increase respectively

### **Measuring the JVP (see Figure 1)**

- use 2 rulers
  - one vertical at sternal angle of Louie
  - one horizontal to the pulsation
- use the **vertical** height at the intersection of the rulers to determine level of the JVP
- record/report your measurement as follows: “JVP was X cm at 30° HUT”

**Figure 1:**  
**Measurement of the Jugular Venous Pressure**



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### **Special Maneuvers**

- Abdominojugular reflex (AJR) test
  - place firm pressure on the abdomen for 10 seconds. This can be done by either:
    - using your hand directly
    - placing your hand over a pre-inflated blood pressure cuff and applying 20-35 mmHg of pressure (as measured by the pressure gauge on the cuff)
  - watch the JVP
    - normally it should remain unchanged or increase initially, then return to normal levels within 10 seconds
    - it is **abnormal** for the JVP to remain elevated. If the JVP remains elevated for the entire 10 seconds, the AJR test is positive
  - NB: it is very important that the patient is **breathing normally** during this procedure. If they Valsalva, this will give a false reading.