**Table 1:** Abnormalities detected during the rectal examination.

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| **Exam** | **Pathology** | **Interpretation** |
| **Neurologic Assessment** | Decreased sensation  Decreased rectal tone | Spinal cord, Sacral nerve root, Peripheral nerve disease |
| **Inspection-** Perianal region | Ulcers | Viral infection, Pressure wound |
| Drainage | Fistula, Fissure, Pilonidal cyst |
| Mass or Nodule | External hemorrhoid, Skin tag, Abscess, Anal carcinoma, Rectal prolapse, Viral warts, Folliculitis |
| **Palpation-** Prostate | Large | BPH |
| Asymmetric lobes | Normal finding, BPH, Malignancy |
| Hard nodule | Malignancy, Calcification |
| Tenderness | Prostatitis, Prostatic abscess |
| **Palpation-** Rectum | Tenderness | Proctitis, Abscess |
| Mass | Stool, Malignancy, Thrombosed  hemorrhoid, Abscess, Rectal polyp, Foreign body |
| **Inspection-** Stool | Dark | GI bleed, Meds (Iron), Foods |
| Blood | GI bleed, DRE, Anal fissure, Hemorrhoid, IBD, Infection |
| Mucus | Infection, IBD, IBS, Malignancy |
| Malodorous, greasy | Malabsorption |

BPH: benign prostatic hyperplasia, GI: gastrointestinal, DRE: digital rectal exam, IBD: inflammatory bowel disease, IBS: irritable bowel syndrome