Key Features Exam

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on behalf of the American Board of Thoracic Surgery
ABTS Credentialing Process

Dimensions being Assessed

• Medical Knowledge (facts, basic knowledge etc.)
• Patient Care (Clinical Decision Making)
• Interpersonal Communication
• System Based Practice
• Professionalism
• Lifelong Learning
ABTS Credentialing Process

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Qualifying Examination (aka Written)

Credentialing Examination (aka Oral)
ABTS Credentialing Process

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  - Professionalism
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Qualifying Examination *(aka Written)*

Credentialing Examination *(aka Oral)*
Qualifying Exam (written)

- 250 Item Exam
  - Administered in two sections of 125 items each
  - Total time for exam is 7 hours

- Item Format is entirely MCQ
  - 1 correct response
  - 3 plausible distractors
Qualifying Exam (written)

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- Easy to construct when assessing Medical Knowledge
- Rapid Response Time
- Efficient broad sampling of the construct being assessed
- Plausible distractors can be difficult to create
- Plausible distractors can provide clues
- **Very difficult to construct when assessing Clinical Decision Making**
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There are better options for a written assessment of Clinical Decision Making!
Key Features Approach

• Validated psychometrically and implemented specifically to assess Clinical Decision Making
  • Medical licensure Exam in Canada
  • MOC for Colorectal Surgeons
  • Numerous final clerkship assessments in Medical Schools in North America

• Leverages items formats that allow multiple answers and minimizes clueing

• Focuses on the “Key Features” of specific clinical problems
  • A KF is
    • A critical decision for the successful resolution of a problem
    • Concurrently a step that is challenging for a borderline candidate
Key Features Approach

- Items are organized around a specific clinical problem or “case”

- 2 to 3 Key Features specific to that case are identified by Subject Matter Experts

- Each “case” will have from 1 to 3 questions assessing the candidates knowledge of those 2-3 Key Features

- Question format can include either:
  - Short Menu multiple choice (15 to 25 items)
  - Write in
Key Features Approach (example)

A 63 yo man developed a chronic cough 3 months ago after what he thought was a cold. A month ago he saw a trace of blood prompting a visit to his PCP. A CXR demonstrated a right lower lobe infiltrate, hilar fullness and blunting of the costophrenic angle. A two week course of abx diminished the cough. No further bleeding episodes. A repeat CXR still shows some hilar fullness and the blunting but a reduction in the infiltrate.

He has a 16 pack year smoking history, quit 12 years ago. Drinks 2-3 beers daily. Works on a farm in Arizona. No other medical problems.

#1. List your 2 most likely diagnoses.

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________

#2. What tests would you order or perform?
Select up to 3.

1. CBC 2. Lytes 3. Coags
7. CT chest 8. PET/CT 9. CT Brain
16. Consult Medical Oncology 17. Consult Radiation Oncology
18. Consult Infectious Disease
Upcoming Qualifying Exam (Dec 2023)

• Key Features cases to be implemented in the Dec 2023 Qualifying Examination (written)
  • Impacts all trainees graduating July 2023 and those who must retake the QE

• Total of 8 Key Feature cases will be added as a third section
  • Published mean response time of 3-4 min/case, we are allowing for up to 9 min/case
  • Will undergo the same psychometric item evaluation all MCQ items receive
  • Will be included in the final grading

• Efforts to minimize anxiety to candidates
  • This presentation
  • Future direct Communications with PD’s and PC’s
  • Communication with candidates during application for the QE
  • Examples of KF cases displayed on the ABTS website
Questions...