Focus on Diagnostic Radiology

Changes in the Diagnostic Radiology MOC Exam

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As technology has advanced and the field of diagnostic radiology has become increasingly subspecialized, it has also become nearly impossible for individual diagnostic radiologists to be masters of the entire domain. With this in mind, the ABR's practice-profiled MOC examination was designed to be modular, allowing each diplomate to self-select the clinical modules of his or her exam content.

To better evaluate each diplomate's knowledge, skill, understanding, and performance essential to the safe and competent practice within his or her specialized field of radiology, the ABR is making changes to the MOC exam modules. Previously, the exam consisted of five modules with approximately 45 questions per module, for an estimated total of 225 questions. The number of modules will decrease from five to four, with a slight increase in the number of questions to approximately 60 per module, for an estimated total of 240 questions.

The examination thus will consist of noninterpretive skills content (one module designated by the ABR) and three modules of clinical content selected by the diplomate based on his or her practice. In addition, for those with a more general practice domain, a general radiology clinical category is now available.

Noninterpretive skills content includes topics deemed important for every practicing radiologist to know, such as patient safety, life support, professionalism/ethics, and principles of image quality.

Clinical content is determined by each diplomate's self-selected practice profile, which is completed during the exam registration process. Each individual may specify the clinical areas in which he or she wishes to be examined. Diplomates may choose one to three different clinical content categories from the following:

- Breast
- Cardiac
- Gastrointestinal
- General Radiology (new in 2014)
- Genitourinary
- Musculoskeletal
- Neuroradiology
- Nuclear
- Pediatric
- Thoracic
- Ultrasound
- Vascular and Interventional

Source: The Beam, Winter 2013  www.theabr.org
Study guides for clinical content are available on the ABR website at www.theabr.org/moc-dr-study and serve as one option for exam preparation. However, because clinical exam content is image rich and practice relevant, the majority of currently practicing diagnostic radiologists will find that knowledge gained in daily practice and through customary means of keeping up-to-date (literature, courses, etc.) will serve as adequate preparation.

A new study syllabus, *Noninterpretive Skills Domain Specification and Resource Guide*, is also available. This syllabus differs from past ABR study guides because it provides detailed content that the examinees are expected to know to pass the Noninterpretive Skills Module. Because the noninterpretive skills content area is so new to most physicians, the Board decided to make a departure from its longstanding practice of not prescribing study materials for examinations.

Please note that since this is a new and evolving area, the content of the Noninterpretive Skills Module may change in the future. If changes are made to this exam module, the syllabus will be updated accordingly. A link to the entire syllabus is available on the ABR website at the bottom of this page: www.theabr.org/moc-dr-study.

The following are a few more details regarding the MOC exam format and content:

- Clinical exam modules will include “normals,” so not every image will contain a problem that must be diagnosed.

- If more than one clinical module is selected in any one of the clinical content areas, the first module will be at the fundamental level, and the remaining modules selected in that clinical content area will be delivered at the advanced level.

- If a diplomate selects three modules in different categories, all three will be delivered at the fundamental level.

- A fundamental module consists predominantly of content that a general radiologist should or must know to practice effectively.

- An advanced module consists predominantly of content that may ask more detailed questions with greater depth designed for individuals who are subspecialists in an area.

- Subspecialty (CAQ) certificate holders must take at least 2 clinical modules in the area of subspecialty certification.

These changes will be instituted with the next Diagnostic Radiology and Subspecialty MOC Exam, to be held on March 3, 2014, at the ABR’s Chicago and Tucson Exam Centers. The exam registration deadline is January 27, 2014. To register for the exam, complete the online Maintenance of Certification Practice-Profiled Exam Registration Form, which is available at www.theabr.org/exam-registration.

If you have any questions, please contact the MOC Help Desk at abrmocp@theabr.org, or call 520-519-2152.