Focus on Quality and Safety

The Approach to Quality and Safety as Pertains to ABR Certification in Diagnostic Radiology

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During the past 15 years, a great deal of attention in American medicine has focused on quality and safety (Q&S) and how we can ensure the reliable delivery of safe, effective, efficient, and patient-centered care. Within the radiology community, great progress has been made regarding these aspects of care, although we continue to have room for improvement.

From a certification standpoint, over the past decade the emphasis on leveraging the board certification process to foster a culture of Q&S among the member boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), including the ABR, has increased. There is evidence that board certification is in itself associated with improved quality [1-3] and that members of the public see board certification as important to their confidence in their physicians [4, 5]. Although the process is still relatively new, there is also growing evidence that Maintenance of Certification (MOC) is associated with increased quality [6-10].

While most would not argue that the Q&S of clinical services that radiology provides is of utmost importance, the board has heard concerns from ABR candidates and diplomates about the Q&S and Noninterpretive Skills (NIS) content on ABR initial certification and MOC examinations. Some feel such questions are not relevant to an individual’s radiology practice and that they are overrepresented on the examinations.

It is very important to the ABR that Q&S topics be perceived as valuable and not viewed as esoteric aspects of board certification. As an initial step, the ABR has converted a trustee position to be focused exclusively on issues related to Q&S. This position began in October 2015.

An NIS Workgroup also has been formed, and a process has commenced to review and improve the current methods by which the Q&S and NIS examination questions are created. Issues being considered include the quantity of questions related to Q&S/NIS on examinations, the
relevance of Q&S/NIS questions to radiology practice, and the structure and length of preparatory content (Q&S/NIS syllabi). Further information will be communicated after the ABR Boards of Governors and Trustees have made decisions regarding Q&S and NIS exam content.

References


