

Resource upgrade to meet growing interest in EBU exam

Need for more examiners, updated exam questions

An upgrade and thorough review of resources are needed to meet the growing number of candidates annually taking the European Board of Urology (EBU) examinations according to Dr. Theo De Reijke, chairman of the EBU Examination Committee.

"We are now discussing to see if next year we can expand the number of participants for the oral exams. But you also need experienced examiners. This year we are going to train more examiners so that we can accommodate, perhaps next year, some 200 participants," says De Reijke. "Taking the EBU exams is getting more popular and, of course, that is what we want."

The annual EBU examinations, which consist of the written and oral examinations and are offered to residents and practising urologists in and outside Europe, have seen a steady increase in the number of participants particularly in the second part, the oral examinations.

De Reijke said that in recent years the number of candidates for the oral examinations has exceeded 150. "First we had 100, last year we had 155 applicants and this year we have over 220 applications for the oral segment. We have to set a limit because we can't accommodate more than 155 candidates," he says, adding that limiting the number of candidates is necessary at this time due to logistical constraints.

Candidates who passed the EBU exams receive a certificate by the EBU and may use the title Fellow of the European Board of Urology (FEBU). De Reijke says the FEBU title is a "mark of excellence," and does not accord any legal privileges or entitlements. The FEBU title, however, qualifies for 50 CME credit points in category 3.

Updated MCQs

According to De Reijke the quality of the multiple choice questions (MCQs) also needs to be updated. "Since there is an enormous change in the whole field of urology, with new developments, we need to adapt our questions. Fortunately, there is a good close



Dr. T. De Reijke.

collaboration with the EAU. The EAU have all these different sections on oncology, stone and infectious diseases, etc...We have requested the chairpersons of these sections to provide us with 15 up-to-date questions. These contributions can also be used in the exam. Hopefully we will have active participation from all the section chairpersons who are involved," he says.

Another pending proposal is to administer the written exam in English only for those countries where the EBU exam is not integrated in the exit exam, e.g. Poland and Hungary. De Reijke says that since the written exams are given in one of the 11 European languages, the process is becoming too tedious over the years. "After formulating the questions in English, they have to be translated and re-translated in one of these 11 languages. Then they have to be field-tested in an exam to see if it the question has a good discrimination power and only then can the questions be used. This complicated process may take two to three years," De Reijke explains.

For the oral examinations, the exam committee also sees the need to eliminate as much as possible potential subjective judgment from examiners. "We are working on ways on how to eliminate subjective scoring in the oral exams. We need to have equal assessment standards. In some countries, examiners for the oral exam may give scores of eight and nine, while in others it's only six. It can't be that candidates from one country are worse or better than the other. We are looking for ways to improve the system," says De Reijke.

Online assessment

This year the EBU exam committee has also tested an online version of its In-Service Assessment. The In-Service Assessment is offered to all trainees in urology with the aim to determine the trainees own level of knowledge and compare it with trainees at the same level of training in other residency training programmes in urology all over Europe and outside. The online version was tested early this year in the Netherlands, Germany and India and the positive results may yet lead to an extension or application of this online feature.

Through the local programme director all those interested in taking part in the on-line assessment are pre-registered by the EBU and receive a user name and password to access the assessment module. It is then possible to log into the system and for two hours partake in the assessment," Theo De Reijke explains.

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