

ASCP Administers 10th Certification Exam

ASCP Examination Committee

Prior to the 2006 American Psychiatric Association (APA) Annual Meeting in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, ASCP administered the 10th Examination for Certification in Advanced Psychopharmacology. The exam, designed by expert clinical psychopharmacologists and educators, is an effort by ASCP to improve the quality of psychopharmacology prescribing. It complements other ASCP efforts, including the ASCP model residency training curriculum, the annual psychopharmacology update, and cosponsorship with the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) of the New Clinical Drug Evaluation Unit (NCDEU).

Although most candidates for the exam are psychiatrists, the exam is open to any physician who is board certified by the recognized national board in the United States, Canada, or the United Kingdom. All psychiatrists receive basic training in psychopharmacology, but we recognize the tremendous variety of interests and specializations that exists within the field. The exam is an attempt to allow those who have a special interest in psychopharmacology, who have labored to continue their education, and who have developed substantial expertise to obtain recognition.

The exam itself is given each year on the Saturday prior to the APA Annual Meeting. This meeting is the best attended meeting in psychiatry, making this venue convenient for many psychiatrists. The exam takes place on Saturday because of the APA schedule.

Much care is given to assuring the accuracy of the scoring. The exam is machine graded by an outside firm, which does not have access to candidate information. Questions that are missed by a significant number of candidates are reviewed by the Examination Committee for accuracy, ambiguity, or the possibility of a second correct choice, then the exam is rescored. The exam is completely reviewed each year by the ASCP Examination Committee and updated.

In offering the Exam for Certification in Advanced Psychopharmacology, ASCP is also very aware that physicians must now recertify in their basic boards in the U.S. Although there is no direct connection between the ASCP exam and board recertification, the study process for the ASCP exam can be quite valuable in preparing for board recertification.

In addition to becoming a more informed psychopharmacologist, the ben-

efits of passing the exam are several. A certificate of successful completion is awarded, which is valid for 5 years. Successful candidates' names are placed on the ASCP Web site (which is presently being updated), as well as in *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*.

For those who do not pass the exam, ASCP provides information on the areas in which they did poorly. This information is intended to be a guide for future study. A reading list for study is available from the ASCP office to those registering for the exam.

The next exam will be given in San Diego, Calif., on Saturday, May 19, 2007. Board certified physicians can learn more about the exam, or apply for the next sitting of the exam, by contacting the ASCP central office: P.O. Box 40395, Glen Oaks, NY, 11004; phone: 718-470-4007; fax: 718-343-7739; e-mail: jrusso@lij.edu.

ASCP Corner offerings are not peer reviewed, and the information contained herein represents the opinion of the author.

Visit the Society Web site at www.ascpp.org

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