

Dear students

Thank you for your comprehensive feedback to the exam! You call it “weird”. My impression after talking to several of you was less negative, but that may just have reflected general kindness. I am anyway impressed that you managed so rapidly to gather information from all students, which usually takes much longer time. Your note addresses several important topics that I will respond to sequentially.

Formal issues:

- As you remarked, there were 3 typographic errors among the 143 questions, and these questions were of course removed.
- The number of teachers present. Unfortunately, I became alone, but I guarantee you that the waiting time for assist was normal or even below that. Normally, the vigilators have to approach you, talk to you and walk all the way to the office to find the right teacher who then comes back to you. As you might have noticed, this may take a long, long time... I spent all the time among you and ran straight to the lifted arm in turn. Of all the hundreds of questions I received, just a handful were specific to the topic. To put it short; you were not disfavored by me being alone, and we might keep this organization which I found more effective than the usual one.

Assessment of the results:

- Some of the questions you mention (eg. pharmacology and breast feeding) were removed because of bad psychometry. These topics were obviously taught differently this semester. A lot of teachers are involved in the teaching, and we have overlooked some changes in the programs. The analysis helps us to identify such errors.
- It is impossible to construct a complex examination that perfectly matches the expected variation in characters. Instead, we assume that the students perform equally from year to year and make adjustments. We acknowledge your lack of time and took that into consideration in the final decisions. The results became adjusted/normalized to the results from previous examinations.

What should we test..?

You are obviously disappointed that we did not focus on basic knowledge and had answering options that were not clearly right or wrong. I tried hard to address this in the information beforehand, but may not have reached you... What you dislike is actually intended, even though it may affect your sense of mastering. Here are some arguments:

- Some of the basic knowledge is tested at OSCE, eg. preeclampsia as you mention as a lack in the written exam. The other topics vary. We use a lot of (the previously preferred) sequential case-based questions, which leaves less space for broad testing. We are however turning in the direction of single questions which cover more of the curriculum.
- We want to test your application of knowledge, not just its presence. Therefore, many questions have the form of assessments. And be sure; this will be part of your normal life as a doctor. You will

probably discover that most of your patients don't fit with the standards and guidelines! You will have to cook without recipes, as you partly did in this exam...

- The dichotomy of right and wrong is a disturbing illusion that fits badly with daily life, both privately and professionally. Just think of all the things you buy! You choose between alternatives with pros and cons, and they are rarely totally right or totally wrong. You make your decision based on the available information and an evaluation of the totality. This is particularly true for you as physicians at work. Your life will get a better if you avoid the burden of right/wrong-philosophy and instead intend to make the best decision at the given time and conditions. This thinking is integrated in the new forms of examination, and consequently most answering options could be defended in some way.
- We are obliged to give characters (except for this semester), and there are two main methods to disclose any differences among you:
 1. To test knowledge beside the core curriculum. The lectures are meant to guide your studies but do by no mean cover the the whole fields. Those who extend their studies will rewarded.
 2. To make the options less clearcut. The "best option" is defined and approved by teachers and previous students, and there may be differences between the answering options that only some of you discovered. You give a few examples yourself, but I will leave out the details.

Some of you may not be used to the type of exams that we perform, and that may be one reason for that you found it weird. Anyway, I hope you found my explanations helpful.

We take your considerations into account, and direct consequences for us will be to reduce the number of questions and to increase the number of single questions at the expense of sequential tasks.

After all, you did very well at the exam, and I wish you all a good summer!

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