



The Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract

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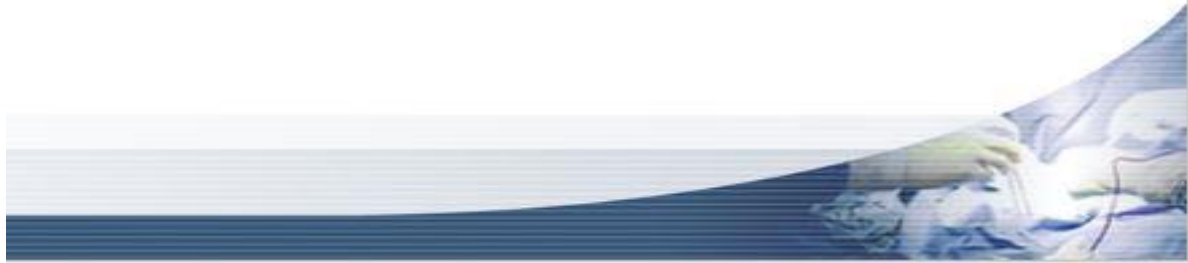


How to Prepare for the Certifying Exam?

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Disclosures



- Boston Scientific Consultant
- Co-Editor: Clinical Algorithms in General Surgery



Background



American Board of Surgery

- Certification process
 - Qualifying Exam (QE) = written boards
 - Certifying Exam (CE) = oral boards
 - MOC = maintenance of certification

Preparation

- Spring of chief year
- Application
- Case logs
- QE first step
 - must pass to register for CE



Timeline to the CE



June – Graduation from Surgical Residency

- July – take QE

- August – QE results

- September 1st – CE registration deadline

- Active medical license

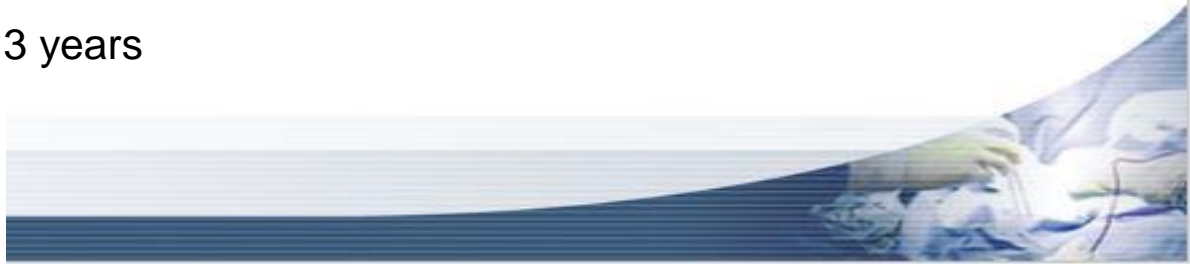
- First come, first served (300 spots per date/location)

- Miss deadline or choose to defer = lost opportunity

- 1 chance per academic year

- 3 chances over 3 years

PRE-COVID19



CE Updates



Going Virtual

- General Surgery CE exams in 2021-22 will be delivered virtually in the via Zoom.
- **No need** to download any software
- Zoom can be launch from link emailed week prior to your exam

https://www.absurgery.org/default.jsp?news_virt_27



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CE Updates



- Medical License Requirement

- A full and unrestricted license to practice the U.S. or Canada is **not required** to register for the CE
- A full and unrestricted state medical license **will be required** before a candidate will be considered certified by the ABS
 - Candidates will be listed as "in the examination process" until proof is submitted.
- https://www.absurgery.org/default.jsp?news_virtualgsqe08.27



CE Updates



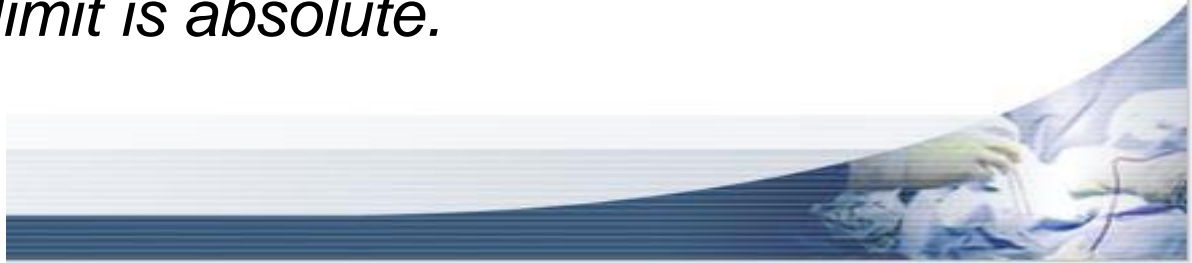
- One Opportunity Per Year
 - All candidates are offered no more than one opportunity per academic year in each year admissibility to take the CE
 - ***Failure to select a date is considered a lost opportunity***
- https://www.absurgery.org/default.jsp?news_virtualgsqe08.27





CE Details

- Individuals will be granted a maximum of 3 attempts within a three-year period to pass the CE *after passing the QE*
- One opportunity per academic year
 - *If a candidate chooses not to take the exam in a given year, this is considered a lost opportunity as the three-year limit is absolute.*



CE Details



Certifying Examination

- Oral examination
- Consists of 30-minute sessions conducted by teams of two examiners
- "...evaluates a candidate's clinical skills in organizing the diagnostic evaluation of common surgical problems and determining appropriate therapy"
- *It is the final step toward certification in surgery*
- "...designed to assess a candidate's surgical judgment, clinical reasoning skills and problem-solving ability."
- <https://www.absurgery.org/xfer/BookletofInfo-Surgery.pdf>



CE Details



“...content of the CE is generally, though not exclusively, aligned with the SCORE® Curriculum Outline for General Surgery.”

“...The majority of the examination focuses on topics listed in the outline as **Core**. The remainder covers topics listed as Advanced, or complications of more basic scenarios.”



Core vs. Advanced



- **CORE**

- Diseases and procedures encountered in general surgery for which a *graduate of training will possess significant knowledge* and be able to provide comprehensive care, including procedural competency.

- **ADVANCED**

- Diseases and procedures that are *not consistently part of general surgery practice* for which a graduate of training should have sufficient knowledge to make a diagnosis and provide initial management. In some instances, graduates will have sufficient knowledge and experience to provide comprehensive care.

- http://files.surgicalcore.org/2020-2021_GS_CO_Booklet_v3editsfinal.pdf



4. Abdomen - Liver

Diseases/Conditions

Core

- Hepatic Abscess
- Hepatic Neoplasms – Metastatic
- Primary Hepatic Neoplasms – Benign and Malignant

Advanced

- Cirrhosis/Portal Hypertension (Ascites)

Operations/Procedures

Core

- Hepatic Abscess – Drainage
- Hepatic Biopsy

Advanced

- Hepatic Ultrasound – Intraoperative
- Segmentectomy/Lobectomy



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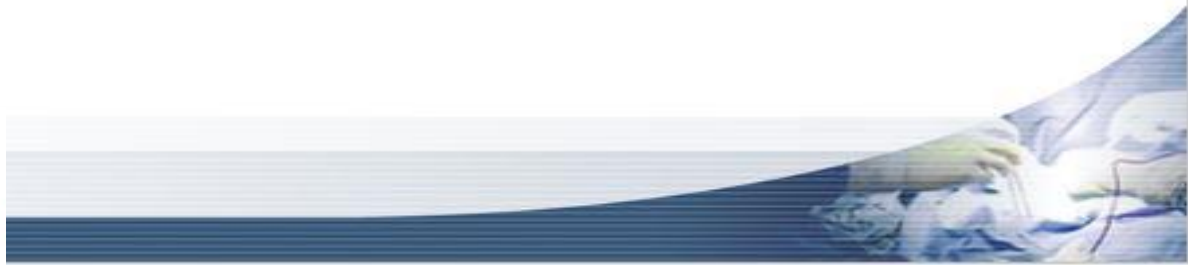


CE Details



What about details of operative procedures?

- Technical details of operations
 - MUST be able to describe technical details of all “core” procedures
 - 45 second rule
 - “Unsatisfactory performance” if can’t
- May ask about non-core cases



How to Prepare

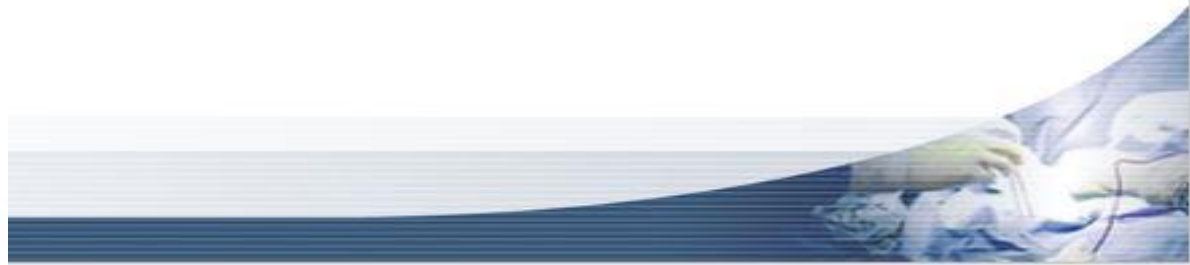


“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”

- Ben Franklin



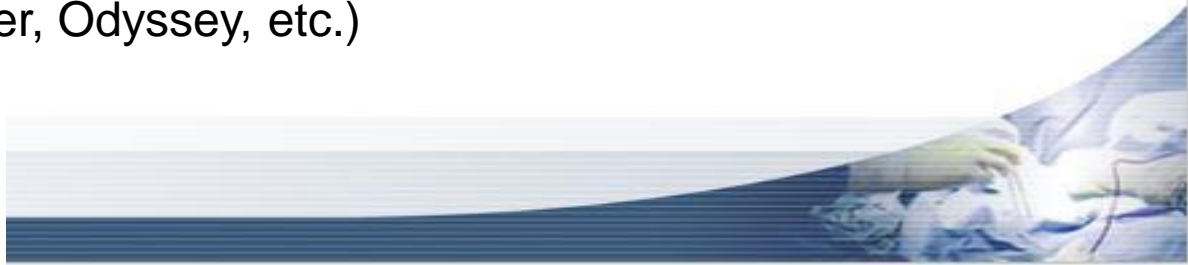
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How to Prepare



- Review **YOUR** Source
 - Surgery textbook (if you previously took notes, review for content)
 - Procedural text (e.g. Mastery of Surgery – helpful for technical steps)
 - SESAP audio (for long commutes)
 - Review books (Safe Answers, How to Win, Neff's Passing Gen Surg Oral Board, Clinical Scenarios in Surgery, etc.)
 - Society guidelines
 - ACLS/ATLS, EAST, NCCN
 - Review course (Osler, Odyssey, etc.)



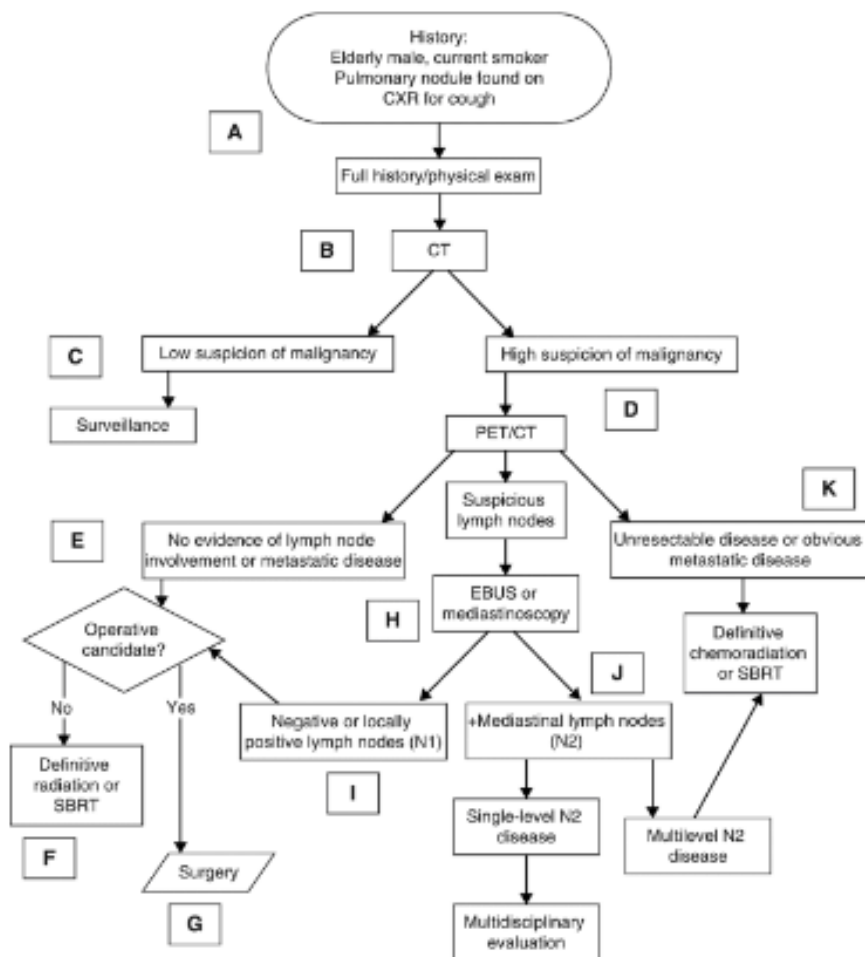
Clinical Algorithms in General Surgery

A Practical Guide

Salvatore Docimo Jr.
 Eric M. Pauli
 Editors

Springer

- C
- A
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- p



Algorithm 14.1





How to Prepare

- Practice, Practice... and Practice Again
 - Start Early – End of your Fourth Year (or earlier)
- Practice with residents, faculty, classmate
 - Anyone who has taken the Oral Exam Previously
- Few Months Before the Exam
 - Practice Daily

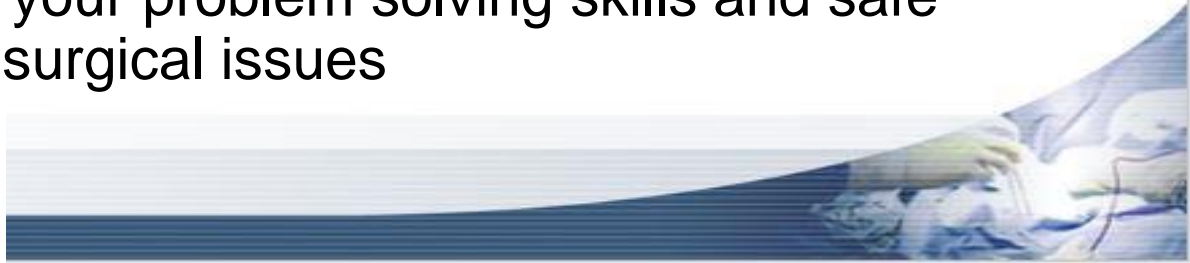


How to Prepare



Focus on a General Case Outline

- Presentation (diagnose quickly – not med student HPI)
- Workup
- Management (... This IS a surgery exam)
- Prepare for a Complication
 - You WILL have complications even if you do everything perfectly
- Oral Exam tests your problem solving skills and safe management of surgical issues





How to Prepare

- Be Confident
- Imagine you are at the patients bedside
- State *WHAT* you would do, *HOW* you would do it, and *WHY* you are doing it
- Do not give answers based on what you think the examiners want to hear



How to Prepare



**BEST ADVICE IF YOU
HAVE A BAD CASE...**



How to Prepare

- If you have a bad case – Let it GO





Day of the Exam

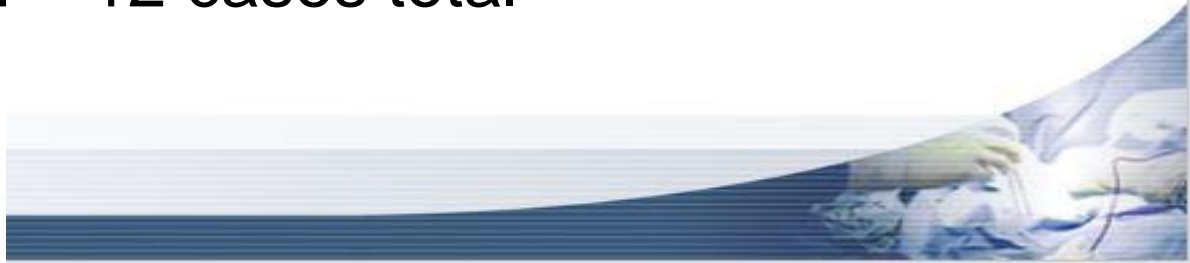
- Bring CE admission card and photo ID
- No bags, purses, cell phones
- May bring paper/pen
- A Bottle of Water
- A watch for time management (no smart watches)





Day of the Exam

- 3 rooms
- 30 minutes/room (1.5 hrs total)
- 2 examiners/room
 - Senior and associate examiners
 - Should only know your name (speak up if you know your examiner)
- 4 cases per room = 12 cases total



Day of the Exam



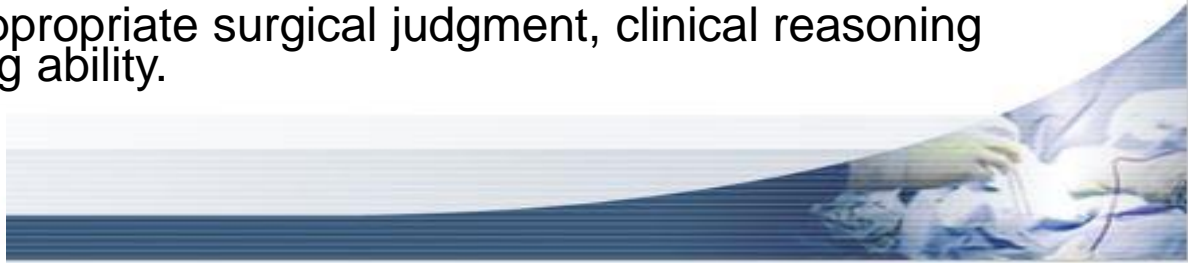
- Each examiner independently grades every scenario
- Final grade (PASS / FAIL) is based on overall evaluation of all 6 examiners



What are they looking for?



- Demonstrates an organized approach and solid rationale for planned actions
 - Rapidly determines and interprets key findings in a clinical presentation
 - Effectively and efficiently uses clinical knowledge to solve clinical problems
 - Effectively addresses key management points
- Avoids errors and critical fails (omission and commission) associated with the case
- Recognizes personal limitations in knowledge and expertise when diagnosing and treating clinical problems
- Reacts in a prompt but flexible manner to alterations in the patient's course (e.g., disease or treatment complications)
- Overall, demonstrates appropriate surgical judgment, clinical reasoning skills and problem-solving ability.



Results



QE

| Year | All Pass Rate | First Attempt Pass Rate | Total Candidate |
|------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 2015 | 80 | 87 | 1422 |
| 2016 | 80 | 87 | 1450 |
| 2017 | 90 | 95 | 1449 |
| 2018 | 94 | 97 | 1320 |
| 2019 | 92 | 96 | 1296 |

CE

| Year | All Pass Rate | First Attempt Pass Rate | Total Candidate |
|------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 2015 | 80 | 83 | 1419 |
| 2016 | 78 | 82 | 1344 |
| 2017 | 79 | 81 | 1437 |
| 2018 | 78 | 80 | 1466 |
| 2019 | 85 | 85 | 954 |

<http://publicdata.absurgery.org/PassRates/#section-tables>



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Important Dates



| Exam | Application Deadline | Late App Deadline | Exam Dates |
|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|--|
| Certifying Exam | By Exam | By Exam | 2021-2022 Dates*** Oct. 11-16, 2021 - Virtual Mar. 21-26, 2022 - Virtual Fee: \$1500 |



Online Resources



- <https://www.facebook.com/watch/AmBdSurg/>
- https://www.absurgery.org/default.jsp?news_covid19updates
- <https://www.absurgery.org/xfer/BookletofInfo-Surgery.pdf>
- http://files.surgicalcore.org/2020-2021_GS_CO_Booklet_v3editsfinal.pdf



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Thank you

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