

National Board Report

A Quarterly Newsletter of the National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners

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50 Years

The first National Board Examination in veterinary medicine was administered 50 years ago. Three states (Connecticut, California, and Kansas) administered the 435 question multiple choice examination to a total of 210 candidates in the spring of 1954. The per-candidate fee was \$10. The Professional Examination Service (PES) served as the test vendor.

The report given to the NBVME at its August 1954 meeting by Dr. Charles W. Bower of the Kansas Board (Dr. Bower also served as NBVME President) is interesting: "One candidate out of 68 failed. The reaction of the candidates, after they recovered from their initial surprise at encountering a multiple-choice examination, was favorable. Dr. Bower stressed the importance of practical examinations and oral interviews in addition to the objective examination as part of the licensing process."

It is difficult to comprehend the amount of time and effort that has gone into the national licensing examination program over the last half century. Most of the work was done by volunteers who wrote items and reviewed examinations for no reward other than the knowledge that they were serving their profession and society. On behalf of the present members of the NBVME and the NBVME staff, it is truly an honor to serve in this capacity. The NBVME looks forward to many more years of developing and delivering high quality assessment instruments for use by licensing boards.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

NBVME Meeting Report

The Marriott Camelback Inn in Scottsdale, Arizona was the site of the NBVME's January 10 meeting. Dr. Jan Krehbiel presided. Here are some highlights:

Qualifying Examination

The board agreed to proceed with plans to offer the Qualifying Examination (QE) via the internet, beginning in August 2004. The examination will be available to candidates enrolled in the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE) at least three times per year. The NBVME is working with the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) to develop written policies and procedures for offering a web-based QE. Internet-based testing offers the potential to deliver the examination at any site that has adequate computer facilities. Proctors will be present during the administration to ensure test security.

Several veterinary colleges have approached the NBVME about the possibility of using the QE as a standardized assessment of basic science knowledge. Dr. Krehbiel will discuss this topic with veterinary school academic deans during the AAVMC meeting in March.

The NBVME will continue discussions with the ECFVG about the potential use of the QE in the ECFVG program.

VCSA

The board spent considerable time discussing the Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA). The VCSA will be a hands-on practical examination to evaluate the clinical skills of PAVE candidates. Significant challenges include the costs involved in developing the examination, its validation, and the

limited number of candidates expected to take it. Work on the VCSA will continue under the direction of NBVME members Drs. Jan Krehbiel, Jim Dalley, and Mike Thomas, but the examination will not be available in 2004.

Executive Session

In Executive Session, the board reviewed financial data and approved the NBVME's 2004 budget, showing income of \$1,760,823 and expenses of \$1,607,653.

In other actions, the board finalized plans for the April 14 strategic planning meeting in Philadelphia, reviewed liability insurance coverage, and discussed the development of a statement on confidentiality and conflict of interest for board members.

Practice Examination

The board decided not to develop additional sample NAVLE items or a full-scale practice version of the NAVLE. Instead, members of the NBVME's Examination Development Committee will review the existing 60 sample items to ensure that they remain accurate and current. The sample items are printed in the NAVLE candidate bulletin and are available on the NBVME's web site as a practice examination.

NBVME Award

The board selected a recipient for the 2004 NBVME Award. The award will be presented at the July meeting. Information on this year's recipient will be provided in the next issue of the *National Board Report*.

Next Meeting

The board will meet in Philadelphia on Monday morning, July 26.

NAVLE Adds New Content Category

Items on the NAVLE are classified according to a two dimensional test blueprint, which is derived from the NAVLE job analysis. The two dimensions are *Animal Species* and *Activities* (previously called *Veterinary Practice Roles*). Activities describe tasks performed by entry-level veterinarians in private clinical practice. The previous NAVLE job analysis included two main activity categories: *Data Gathering and Interpretation* and *Health Maintenance and Problem Management*. The new job analysis completed last year added a third main category: *Professional Behavior, Communications, and Practice Management*. The test blueprint approved by the NBVME last July assigns 7% of the items on the NAVLE to this new category.

The NBVME intends to work diligently to achieve the 7% goal. However, since this is an all new category for the NAVLE, it will take several years to develop enough items to make this possible. Two of this year's NAVLE item writers will be asked to write items exclusively for the new category, and other item writers will also supply some suitable items.

All 17 activity statements in the new category are listed in the job analysis report, a summary of which is on the NBVME's web site. Examples include:

- Conduct oneself in a professional, ethical, and legal manner
- Communicate effectively with colleagues and staff
- Address client concerns in empathetic and understandable manner.

From the Past: State Board Questions

Number 11 in a Series

Here are some more questions from the "Theory and Practice of Medicine" chapter of the 1917 book, *Veterinary State Board Questions and Answers* by V.G. Kimball.

Questions

1. Give the causes and treatment of an epizootic of scours in calves (white scours).
2. How would you guard against fraudulent attempts to conceal the symptoms of heaves?
3. Give the diagnostic symptoms of (a) crapulous colic, and (b) purely nervous colic. Give treatments of each.
4. What domestic animals are liable to be attacked by the hookworm (uncinaria, achylostoma)? How do such worms enter the body and what symptoms do they produce? Give treatment.

Answers

1. Accessory causes: Unclean surroundings; open umbilicus; and hereditary debility. Specific cause: umbilical and intestinal infection with *B. coli communis*. Treatment: Disinfect the umbilical region; sterilize the milk, feeding utensils, or udder before feeding; clear the intestinal tract of irritating matters with castor oil one ounce, or calomel 2 to 5 grains, and follow with subnitrate of bismuth 30 grains; one teaspoonful of a 1 to 4000 solution of formalin, to each pint of milk, is useful to check diarrhoea in artificially fed calves, but it should be preceded by castor oil.
2. Keep the horse under observation for 48 hours. Give plenty of hay and

water and exercise. The dilated nostrils are hard to conceal. Adrenalin chloride aggravates respiration and may be an aid to diagnosis.

3. Crapulous or engorgement colic is manifested by an overdistended abdomen, dull percussion sound, continuous dull pain, and a "saw horse" attitude. Rectal examination reveals the solid ingesta. Purely nervous or spasmodic colic is diagnosed by the remittent pain, intervals of ease; uneasiness, kicking of abdomen, getting up and down, increased peristalsis; more or less faeces passed. Treatment: in crapulous form give an aloes ball or one quart of linseed oil or both. Quick-acting cathartics, such as arecoline in one-fourth grain doses, repeated every twenty minutes. Quiet the pain with chloral hydrate. Spasmodic colic should be treated with antispasmodics, such as chloral hydrate and cannabis indica. Empty the bowels with an aloes ball, salts, or oil.

4. Ox, sheep, cat and more commonly the dog. The worms enter the intestinal tract through the drinking water which contains the larvae. Symptoms: digestive derangements, dulness and indifference; whining, tympanites, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, nervous disorders, nausea, anaemia and emaciation. Treatment: thymol, 2 to 15 grain dose. Separate the sick from the well to prevent reinfection. Thoroughly clean and disinfect kennels. Supply pure drinking water.

Next issue: Surgery.

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NAVLE and QE Item Development

The development of examination items begins with the selection of item writers. NAVLE item writers for the various content areas are chosen by the NBVME's Examination Development Committee (EDC). Qualifying Examination (QE) item writers are identified by NBVME staff, using recommendations from NBVME members, former QE item writers, and other sources.

All new item writers are invited to an item writing workshop at the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) in Philadelphia. At the workshop, NBME staff provide instruction on how to write good examination items. Following the workshop, item writers receive specific writing assignments in their areas of expertise. After the items are written and edited, the item writers meet again in Philadelphia to review and approve newly written items.

On February 23, 10 new NAVLE item writers and 9 new QE item writers met in Philadelphia for the 2004 workshop. New NAVLE

item writers for 2004 include Drs. Jean Hall, Belinda Thompson, David Anderson, Alex Bermudez, Joel Schrader, Joanne Hewson, Dennis Villani, Candace McCall, Kevan Flaming, and Robert Frohlich. New QE item writers include Drs. Bonnie Smith, Judy Klimek, Ed Murphy,

Mickey Sims, Tomas Martin-Jiminez, Robert Walker, Sharon Patton, Sheila Grimes, and Shelley Burton.

On February 24, the new QE item writers, joined by returning item writers Drs. Tricia Heine and Paul Gibbs, reviewed upcoming forms of the examination.



QE item writers at the December 2003 item review meeting (l to r): Drs. Walter Hsu, Earl Dixon, Cliff Monahan, Tricia Heine, Amanda Fales-Williams, Paul Gibbs, Lola Hudson, and John VanVleet.

NBVME Member Profile: Ellen O'Connor

Since the NBVME became an independent organization in 1995, the 13-member board has had one public member. The newest public member is Mrs. Ellen O'Connor, appointed last summer by the AAVSB to succeed Mrs. Lynn Green.

Ellen O'Connor served as a public member of the California Veterinary Medical Board from 1992 through 2002, including three years as President. Ellen sought appointment to the California Board from the Assembly Speaker's office because of her strong interest in both government and animals. She was elected to the AAVSB's Executive Committee in 1997, and served in that capacity until her appointment to the NBVME.

Ellen has three decades of public policy experience with a variety of California departments and agencies, including the Governor's Office, the Public Utilities Commission and the Department of Corrections. Presently, she is a federal policy expert for the California

Department of Social Services.

Ellen and her dog Sarah were founding members of the Animal Assisted Therapy Visiting Program at the University of California Medical Center. Today, she continues her community service by visiting seniors in the Davis area with her Basset Hound, Beatrix.

A native of Minnesota, Ellen lived in Belgium, England, and several places in the US before moving with her family to Davis, CA in 1961. Ellen received a BA from UC Davis in art history, and has received accreditation from Harvard University's Publishing Procedures Program. She attended the University of London as an undergraduate and has taken graduate courses in environmental science at California State University Sacramento.

Having served on a variety of community service nonprofit boards, Ellen is a strong believer in the importance of public members on regulatory boards. She sees public



members as essential in focusing the boards' duties on the whole community.

Ellen and her husband Darryl Young reside in Davis with their two dogs, Capability and Beatrix and one cat, Hamish.

Exam Stats

NAVLE

A total of 3,239 candidates took the NAVLE during the November 17-December 13, 2003 testing window.

The fall 2003 candidate population included 2,470 criterion candidates, 241 non-criterion candidates, and 528 foreign trained candidates. Criterion candidates include senior students at accredited schools taking the examination for the first time in English, without accommodations. Forty-seven candidates were approved for test accommodations.

The passing standard was approved by the NBVME Executive Committee during a conference call on January 15, and scores were reported to licensing boards on January 22. The passing rate for criterion candidates was approximately 95%, which is somewhat higher than the passing rate for the previous three fall administrations (90%, 92%, and 93%, respectively).

Qualifying Examination

Thirty candidates sat for the Qualifying Examination (QE) at Prometric testing centers on January 2, 2004. Members of the NBVME Executive Committee reviewed data from the January administration and approved a passing standard during a conference call on February 3. The Executive Committee approved the same passing standard applied to previous versions of the QE (a scaled score of 203). This standard resulted in a passing rate of 70% (21 of the 30 candidates).

The QE is a 300-item multiple choice basic science examination, used as part of the AAVSB's PAVE program. The QE has now been administered four times. As noted elsewhere in this issue, the NBVME plans to begin offering the QE via the internet later this year.

Both the NAVLE and the QE are developed by the NBVME in cooperation with the National Board of Medical Examiners.

New NAVLE Application Deadline Beginning Fall 2004

As announced in the previous issue of the *National Board Report*, and in a memo sent to licensing boards last October, the NAVLE application deadline will now be no later than 92 days prior to the opening of the testing window. For the November 15 - December 11, 2004 administration, this will be August 14, although some licensing jurisdictions will have an earlier application deadline. The NAVLE fee will also increase to \$425 per candidate. These changes will be incorporated into a new NAVLE Letter Agreement that the NBVME will send to each licensing board in March. Boards will receive copies of the revised NAVLE candidate bulletins in May, and the on-line NAVLE application will be available on the NBVME web site (www.nbvme.org) in June.

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