

National Board Report

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Irregular Behavior

The NBVME is presently dealing with several incidents of irregular behavior on the part of NAVLE candidates. Last year, we discovered what appeared to be NAVLE content posted on two internet message boards. The NBME was able to match some of the posted material to actual NAVLE items. Several of the individuals who posted information could be identified as NAVLE candidates. In late January, the NBVME wrote to the licensing boards that approved three of these candidates to take the NAVLE, and provided copies of the posted information. None of the three candidates has been licensed.

Late last year, the NBVME received information alleging that several NAVLE candidates were exchanging test content via the internet. The information included e-mail correspondence and several text files. On advice of legal counsel, the NBVME has to date written to four of the candidates identified, and has corresponded with a licensing board regarding three more candidates. The investigation is ongoing.

There is a difference between preparing for the NAVLE by studying information that might be covered on the examination, and exchanging NAVLE test materials. The NBVME publishes the NAVLE blueprint and job analysis, and an extensive NAVLE content outline on its web site. Candidates are encouraged to use this information to help prepare for the examination. On the other hand, memorizing items and sending or receiving actual or purported NAVLE test questions constitute violations of the NBVME's published policy on irregular behavior and also violate copyright laws. The NBVME is prepared to take all necessary actions to deal with these situations.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

Strategic Planning Is Focus of January Meeting

The NBVME expanded its January 2006 meeting in Orlando to add time for two additional activities. On Thursday afternoon, January 19, the NBVME met with the Executive Committee of the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) to discuss matters of mutual concern. The group first reviewed a history of the two organizations, and their close working relationship dating back to the founding of the NBVME in the late 1940s. Members then discussed a variety of topics, including ways to improve communications, efforts to enhance the use of the Qualifying Examination (QE) and the Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA), and concerns expressed by the AAVSB about the NBVME's use of Executive Sessions. Each group agreed to investigate ways to establish a closer working relationship between the two organizations.

On Friday, the NBVME held an all-day strategic planning session. Serving as a facilitator for the session was Ms. Eleanor Stell of North Carolina State University. In preparation

for the meeting, Ms. Stell interviewed each NBVME member by telephone, and also attended the Thursday meeting with the AAVSB. During the strategic planning session, members worked in groups to identify where the NBVME is at this time, where the organization would like to be in the future, and strategies to make the transition. In the coming months, the board will be addressing a variety of goals and action items identified in the strategic planning session.

Saturday was devoted to the NBVME's business meeting, chaired by Dr. Mike Thomas of Indianapolis, IN. Here are some highlights of actions taken:

NAVLE® Retake Policy

The board reviewed and slightly revised its policy on NAVLE retakes, previously approved in January 2005. The revision makes it clearer that the intent of the policy is that candidates may take the NAVLE no more than five times, and that all attempts must be completed in five years from the date of the first attempt. Each of the final two attempts



Eleanor Stell and NBVME Chair Mike Thomas open the strategic planning session.

January Meeting (continued from page 1)

must be at least one year from the previous attempt. The policy took effect with the fall 2005 NAVLE administration, and has been endorsed by the AAVSB. The revised language will be incorporated into the 2006 NAVLE State Letters of Agreement.

QE Use by Veterinary Schools

Staff was asked to develop a business plan to address the number of candidates and the cost factors involved in making the QE available to veterinary schools.

NAVLE Fee Increase

The board approved an increase of the NAVLE fee from \$450 to \$465 for the 2006-07 testing cycle, and \$480 for 2007-08.

NAVLE Eligibility

In response to an inquiry about allowing veterinary school faculty members to take the NAVLE, the board reiterated its present policy limiting the NAVLE only to bona fide candidates for licensure, members of licensing boards, and NBVME members.

Practice NAVLE

The NBVME will work with the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) to prepare a full length practice version of the NAVLE for review this summer and release later this year.

NAVLE Security

The board reviewed information regarding NAVLE item exposure and candidate irregular behavior, and voted to take several actions to address the situation.

Next Meeting

The board voted to hold its summer meeting in the Chicago area June 22-23.

From the Past: State Board Questions

Number 19 in a Series

The following questions are taken from *Veterinary State Board Questions and Answers* by V.G. Kimball, published in 1917. These questions continue from the chapter on *Materia Medica*.

Questions

1. Describe the treatment of influenza in its simple form.
2. What are the general actions of opium? Give the dose of opium for the horse, the cow, and the dog.
3. What preparations of arsenic are most used in veterinary medicine?
4. Define the following terms: haustus, collyrium, electuary, decoction, infusion, elixir, emulsion.
5. How do tinctures differ from spirits? Give examples.

Answers

1. A laxative condition of the bowels should be secured by feeding bran-mashes and administering calomel. Stimulants such as liquor ammonium acetatis or ammonium carbonate are valuable. If the fever is high, quinine, acetanilide and antipyrine are important antipyretics which can be used. In oedema of the extremities, potassium nitrate is indicated. Support a weak heart with digitalis, camphor, or strychnine. Counterirritants on the chest and throat may be useful. Treat complications symptomatically.
2. Opium is analgesic, hypnotic, diaphoretic, antispasmodic, and narcotic;

also cardiac and respiratory depressant, after brief stimulation. Dose of powdered opium for the horse, 20 to 90 grains; for the cow, 1 to 2 drachms; for the dog, 1/4 to 3 grains.

3. Arsenous acid, iodide of arsenic, Fowler's solution, and Perason's solution.

4. Haustus is a draft, or drench, of medicine. Collyrium is an eye-wash. Electuary is a medicinal powder, beaten up with sugar, honey, or molasses to the consistency of thick paste. Electuaries are intended to be smeared on the teeth of animals where they melt at body temperature and act locally on the mouth and throat. Decoction is an aqueous preparation, obtained by boiling drugs in water. Infusion is an aqueous solution of a drug, macerated in boiling water without the aid of ebullition. Elixir is a sweetened, aromatic, alcoholic solution of a drug. Emulsion is a milky fluid obtained by mixing an oil or resin with water. The globules of oil or particles of insoluble resin are held in suspension by some gummy substance, usually acacia. Milk is a natural emulsion.

5. Tinctures are alcoholic solutions of non-volatile principles (except Tr. iodine), made usually by maceration and percolation of the crude drug. Examples, belladonna tincture, aconite tincture, etc. Spirits are alcoholic solutions of volatile substances. Example, spirits of camphor.

Next Issue: More *Materia Medica*.

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2006 NAVLE and QE Item Writers Appointed

Each year, the NBVME assembles teams of NAVLE and QE item writers. The NBVME's Examination Development Committee has primary responsibility for identifying NAVLE item writers. QE item writers are selected by NBVME staff, with input from NBVME members and present and former item writers.

Experienced item writers are encouraged to serve at least two or three years if they wish, but the NBVME believes that it is important to involve new individuals in the item writing process each year.

New NAVLE item writers for 2006 include Drs. Johanna Heseltine, Steve Marks, and Dianne Dunning, (canine and feline); Paul Coe and Kevin Anderson (bovine); Alison Eddy and Tom Bohanon (equine); R.B. Baker (swine); and Roger Gibson

(public health). These individuals will join 19 returning NAVLE item writers to write and review questions to be used for the first time on forms of the NAVLE administered in the 2007-08 testing cycle.

New QE item writers for 2006 include Drs. Linda Blythe and Marc Ratzlaff (anatomy), Thomas Caceci (histology and histopathology), Ronald Green (principles of radiology), Lee Wilke and Dean Schwartz (physiology); Lynette Kushner (principles of anesthesiology), Jérôme Del Castillo (pharmacology), Jean Whichard (bacteriology), Tom Phillips (virology), and Gayle Johnson, (pathology). These individuals will work with returning QE item writers Drs. Phillip Nelson (immunology), Anne Zajac (parasitology), and Darren Wood (clinical pathology) to write

and review new QE items.

New NAVLE and QE item writers participated in an item writing workshop at the offices of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) in Philadelphia on February 28. During the workshop, participants received training in item writing from NBME staff and then had the opportunity to revise some poorly written items and review them as a group. Following the workshop, all item writers will be given specific item writing assignments. Most NAVLE and QE item writers are asked to write and submit 50 items in their content area(s).

Forms of the QE to be administered in September 2006 and January and May 2007 were reviewed and approved by all 14 2006 QE item writers in Philadelphia on March 1.

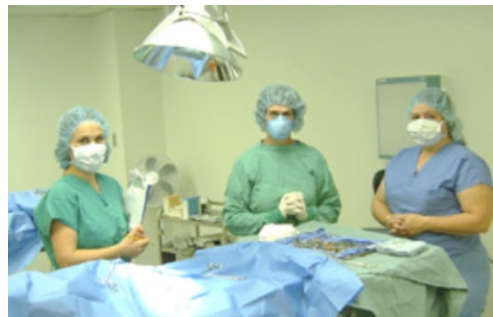
First Administration of Clinical Skills Examination

The Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA), a hands-on clinical skills examination developed for use in the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE), was given for the first time January 7-8, 2006 at Cedar Valley College in Dallas, TX. Two PAVE candidates completed the January examination, along with two recent graduates from an AVMA accredited veterinary school, who served as reference candidates.

The January administration followed a successful pilot test of the VCSA on October 15-16, 2005. The pilot test involved six PAVE candidates who took the examination for credit. Six recent graduates and six senior students from accredited schools served as reference candidates, to provide feedback on the examination and to help with the standard setting process.

The next VCSA is planned for April 22-23. Subsequent examinations will be scheduled approximately three months following each of the three annual administrations of the Qualifying Examination (QE). PAVE candidates must pass the QE in order to be eligible to take the VCSA.

The VCSA includes several stations that require candidates to interact with a person trained to portray a client. At these stations, called clinical encounters, candidates are evaluated on communication skills.



NAVLE and QE Stats

NAVLE

A total of 3,484 candidates took the NAVLE during the November 14 - December 10, 2005 testing window, the most fall candidates since the NAVLE was first offered in 2000. Scores were reported to licensing boards on January 27.

The fall 2005 candidate population included 2,594 criterion candidates, 192 non-criterion candidates, and 698 foreign-trained candidates. Criterion candidates are senior students at AVMA accredited schools taking the examination for the first time.

In mid-January, the NBVME Executive Committee reviewed the performance of the fall candidates, and approved a passing standard that was slightly higher than the standard applied to the 2005-06 examination. The passing rate for fall 2005 criterion candidates was 88%, compared to a passing rate of 89% for the same group for the fall 2004 examination.

At press time, 1,101 candidate eligibility records have been submitted for the April 10-22, 2006 NAVLE administration.

Qualifying Examination

The web-based Qualifying Examination (QE) was administered to 87 candidates on January 19, 2006. The examination was offered in Grenada and St. Kitts, and at eight sites in the US. Scores from the January administration were reported to the AAVSB on March 2. The passing rate for first time test takers was 80%, which is similar to the passing rate for previous administrations.

The next QE administration is scheduled for May 11, and approximately 75 candidates are expected. Subsequent QE administrations are planned for September 14, 2006, and January 18 and May 10, 2007

2006-07 NAVLE Agreements

Letters of Agreement between the NBVME and individual licensing boards covering the 2006-2007 NAVLE testing window will be mailed to boards in March. The NAVLE fee will increase from \$450 to \$465. The testing windows will be November 13 - December 9, 2006 and April 9-21, 2007. The application deadlines will remain the same. The Agreements will include revised language on NAVLE retakes, as noted on page 1.

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