Your Brain

Your Brain on Step 1
Outline

- Scheduling Update
- UASOM USMLE Hx
- Step 1 Scores
  - Ranges, Meaning, Impact
- Commercial Prep
- Study Resources
- Three essentials
  - Knowing Facts
  - Applying Knowledge
  - Managing the Test
    - Logistics
    - Anxiety & Confidence
- Study Schedule
- “Supplemental”
- Delaying Step 1
Objectives

You Should:
- Be aware of upcoming dates and timelines for your Step 1 preparation.
- Be aware of Commercial Resources to assist.
- Be aware of strategies that are proven to improve scores.
- Be aware of the Support System, Delay, and Basic Science Elective.
Scheduling Update

We are always watching the data and trends for grades, match rates, published research, etc. Based on some recent changes in the match day, we are changing the third year scheduling. It will give you more input and an easier time adjusting your schedule as you learn more about clinical medicine and your competitiveness.

More Details soon.
Your Brain

Your Brain on Step 1
Step 1 Scores (What are they?)

- 2-digit and 3-digit scores
- Minimum to Pass: 188 (May change next month)
- Maximum Possible: 300
- Mean: 227 (in 2013 Administration)
Step 1 Scores (What’s their Impact?)

• Importance for Program RoL
  1. Interview (by far)
  2. Match violation (Professionally not “safe”)
  3. Grade in specific related clerkship
  4. LOR from Clerkship Director in related clerkship
  5. Step 1 Score

• Specialties with highest Step 1 means:
  Plastics, Derm, Diagnostic Rad, Neurosurg, Ortho, ENT, Rad/Onc., Oph, Urology = 240 or above.
Commercial Prep Programs

Becker* (Falcon)
DiT*
Firecracker*
Kaplan*
Northwestern
PASS
Pathoma
USMLE Eagle*
Most often recommended resources

- An overall review book such as First Aid or Kaplan’s MedEssentials.
- Pathology: Goljan’s audio lectures, Pathoma, Rapid Review Pathology, and the on-line questions that come with that text.
- Microbiology: Microbiology Made Ridiculously Simple, Microbiology for Boards and Wards.
- Pharmacology: Pharmacology for Boards and Wards, Pharm Cards, First Aid, the first 2 chapters of Goodman and Gilman’s Pharmacology text.
- Immunology: How the Immune System Works.
- Anatomy: First Aid, BRS.
- Behavior: First Aid, High Yield Behavior.
Three essentials to success

• Knowing Key Facts –
  – Drilling Facts

• Applying the knowledge –
  – Practice Questions

• Managing the Test –
  – Logistics
  – Anxiety
  – Confidence
A 50-year-old man who lives in Mississippi presents because of an ulcer on his right arm. It began to appear 2 weeks ago. He is an avid gardener with a large rose garden. At physical exam, he has a painless ulcer of 1 cm in diameter on the arm and axillary lymphadenopathy. At microscopic examination, cigar-shaped bodies are seen. What is the best treatment for this disease?

A. Ciprofloxacin  
B. Doxycycline  
C. Potassium iodide  
D. Rifampin  
E. Tetracycline

1 min 18 seconds
• Knowing the key facts -
  – A common cause of skin ulcer is
    • Common in Mississippi Valley (?)
    • Infection most often puncture from conifer or rose (?)
    • Lymphadenopathy is common in infections hand and arm (?)
    • Cigar shaped bodies on biopsy.
    • A Fungus.
    • Potassium Iodide is a common antifungal (all other options are antibiotics.)
    • Sporothrix schenckii (?)

• Applying the knowledge -
  • Test Banks and Question Strategy
  • Why biopsy not culture?
  • Why geography?
  • Why mention rose gardening?

• Managing the test -
Knowing the Facts

Common summary lists – Not Exhaustive!!

– NBME List of topics
– Goljan review lists
– “Medical Student Amnesia”
– Sporcle
– Flash Cards
– Picmonic
– High Yield Facts sections in First Aid and other review books
– Other resources previously mentioned
– Firecrackers
Applying the Knowledge

• Test Banks
  – THE SILVER BULLET
  – Using the Bank to assess your progress and your needs. (Later slides will illustrate)
  – Using the Bank to learn content.
    • 1 note page for each missed question
  – Using the Bank to learn Application of Knowledge.
    • A partner and a plan
Managing the Test

• Logistics – Read the USMLE Bulletin
• Anxiety & Confidence

• Using your test prep time to address each of these.
Managing the test - Logistics

• Test Day
  – Arrive 15-20 minutes early
  – Take scheduling permit and Drivers License.
  – Take lunch and snacks and a plan.
  – Don’t carry anything you don’t NEED.
  – Earplugs and headphones.
  – Plan your time well (15 minute tutorial).
Managing Anxiety in Prep

• Systematic Desensitization
  – Prometric Site
  – Computer testing in “strange” environment
  – Timing of questions (1 minute 18 seconds)

• Predictive Tests
  – NBME
  – KAPLAN or U-World
  – At Prometric
Developing Confidence

• Question: One of the most obvious Step 1 trends is that the earlier you take it, the better your score. Why?

• Set and meet process goals.
• Use a disciplined approach.
• Learn from setbacks.
• Identify strengths.
• Face your Fears.
Managing Anxiety on the Day

• No “tricky” questions. Just hard questions.
  – “What’s black and white and lives in Africa and looks like a horse and is made of concrete?”
  – The details are either important or not important, they are not misleading.

• Most common errors.
  – Decide “I don’t know it, so it must be tricky.”
  – “I’m pretty sure I know this, but it seems easy, so I must be wrong.”
  – Look for the answer somewhere other than Applied Basic Science.
Study Schedule

• NOW – Neuro and Behavior

• Holiday Break – Biochem, Gen Path, Phys.

• During Spring Courses – Spring Courses! (Plus a little Biochem, Gen Path, Phys)

• After Spring Courses – Dedicated Step 1 prep
Your Study Schedule

• Why I don’t like most schedules:
  • 2 days on Anatomy
  • 3 days on Neuro

• A better schedule – Structured but reactive to a focus on highest yield topics for you and highest yield methods for you.
Time invested

45-55%  60%
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Random (timed) questions for one hour.</td>
<td>Physical acclimation – Timing acclimation – Track problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Review the questions from the first block.</td>
<td>Read “all” explanations</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Focused review of identified weak areas.</td>
<td>Using texts and other resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>In depth review</td>
<td>As above</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>Take a one hour block of questions focused on the topic of today’s review.</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>Review that practice session</td>
<td>Read “all” explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Rest and Relax</td>
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Special Schedules – Final Week & Transition over Time & Weekly Simulation
Trouble? Possible Signs

- Low MCAT
- Low RSA in SOM
- Low score on CBSSE (relative, not absolute)
- Slow reading speed
- Consistently better on final than on mid-term in SOM
- More Concrete Learning on the LSI
“At Risk”

- At risk determination
  - RSA – (Knowledge?)
  - CBSSE – Feb. 27 and 28 (During Endocrine)
  - MCAT
  - (LSI?)

- How accurate is the determination?
  - Over the past few years, 1-4 points mean. (With a regression towards the mean. +16 vs. +3)
If I am “at risk,” what does that mean?

• Supplemental Assistance program
  – Opt in
  – Opt out
  – Weekly Group Session
  – Weekly “Study” Group
  – Every week – Practice test, share results with me

• 80% of Step 1 failures in past 2 years have been identified at risk and either waived this program or signed up but didn’t really do it.
Delay

• What if I do all the preparation and I’m just not ready to take it? (April 30)

• There are associated costs.
  – Most delays last longer than expected
  – Most delays complicate MS-3 schedule
  – Most delays complicate MS-4 schedule and the Match

• There are 2 ways it can be done
  – BSE
  – Personal
Should I delay?

NO – (Unless you need to)
- 4-5 weeks is optimal (+10, +10, +9, +7, +5, +<1)
- Greater time correlates with increased anxiety
- Greater time correlates with lower score

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<th>no delay</th>
<th>BSE</th>
<th>personal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students predicted &lt;188</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students predicted &gt;187 &lt;207</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>Students predicted &gt;206</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>-4.5</td>
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<td>Overall</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>2.53</td>
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* NOTE – These numbers do not reflect a true experimental design.
Target Areas

240

Obvious example:
Don’t delay
Focus on Respiratory
Less obvious example
Proceed with test
Focus on Phys, Path, Nervous... in the week remaining.
Need to delay

The cost of delay – time in 4th year
Questions and Feedback