

Frequently Asked Questions
Certified Geriatric Pharmacist Examination

July 2010

Q: What resources are available to help pharmacists prepare to take the CGP examination?

A: CCGP has prepared a document with a list of geriatric resources that may be useful to pharmacists who desire to learn more about geriatric drug therapy. The document is available free on the CCGP Web site and includes links to a variety of geriatric Web sites, full text journal articles, and other resources. Many of the listed resources are available free. The link to the document is:

<http://www.ccgp.org/documents/IntroGeriatricPharmCCGP.pdf>

CCGP also has a self-assessment examination (SAE) available for purchase, in either print form or online. The SAE contains 150 multiple-choice questions and may be useful for candidates as part of the process of preparing for the examination. The link for more information about the SAE is:

<http://www.ccgp.org/pharmacist/self.htm>

The American Society of Consultant Pharmacists has also developed an educational Web site on geriatric drug therapy with 50 hours of continuing education provided in 20 modules. There is a fee to access the Web site, and a discounted rate is available for members of ASCP. The link to the Web site is:

<http://www.GeriatricPharmacyReview.com>

Q: Are there any live preparatory courses for the CGP examination that have been approved by CCGP?

Several organizations offer live conferences on geriatrics, some of which are marketed as “board preparation” conferences for physicians and/or pharmacists. CCGP has not endorsed or approved any live programs that are intended or marketed as programs to prepare pharmacists to take the CGP examination.

Q: The area where I need the most help in preparation is the part of the exam about population-specific activities (Domain #3 on the content outline). Are there specific resources that I could use to help prepare for this part of the exam?

A: Shown below is a list of resources that have been recommended by Certified Geriatric Pharmacists. CCGP makes no claims about the value or relevance of these resources to the CGP examination. The list is provided for information only.

Full text journal articles

Below is a series of six articles from the Canadian Medical Association Journal that provide an overview of statistics and literature evaluation. The full text of the articles is available free online.

Wyer PC, et al. Tips for learning and teaching evidence-based medicine: introduction to the series. CMAJ. Aug. 17, 2004. 171(4):347-348.
<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/reprint/171/4/347>

Barratt A, Wyer PC, Hatala R, et al. Tips for learners of evidence-based medicine, Part 1: relative risk reduction, absolute risk reduction, and number needed to treat. CMAJ. Aug. 17, 2004. 171(4):353-358.
<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/reprint/171/4/353>

Montori VM, Kleinbart J, Newman TB, et al. Tips for learners of evidence-based medicine, Part 2: measures of precision (confidence intervals). CMAJ. Sept. 14, 2004. 171(6):611-615.
<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/reprint/171/6/611>

McGinn T, Wyer PC, Newman TB, et al. Tips for learners of evidence-based medicine, Part 3: measures of observer variability (kappa statistic). CMAJ. Nov. 23, 2004. 171(11):1369-1373.
<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/reprint/171/11/1369>

Hatala R, Keitz S, Wyer P, et al. Tips for learners of evidence-based medicine, Part 4: assessing heterogeneity of primary studies in systematic reviews and whether to combine their results. CMAJ. March 1, 2005. 172(5):661-665.
<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/reprint/172/5/661>

Montori VM, Wyer P, Newman TB, et al. Tips for learners of evidence-based medicine, Part 5: the effect of spectrum of disease on the performance of diagnostic tests. CMAJ. Aug. 16, 2005. 173(4):385-390.
<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/reprint/173/4/385>

Book

Woloshin S, Schwartz LM, Welch HG. Know Your Chances: Understanding Health Statistics. 2008. This inexpensive paperback book was written for lay audiences and is very readable.
Link to Amazon.com: <http://tinyurl.com/29s42d2>

Malone P, Kier K, Stanovich J. Drug Information: A Guide for Pharmacists. 2006. Has a chapter on "clinical application of statistical analysis," which is reportedly very good. The book costs over \$50 though.
Link to Amazon.com: <http://tinyurl.com/2q8app6>

Online Continuing Education

A Primer on Interpreting Published Studies, 1 hour continuing education. Cost = \$10. Available at: <http://www.theceinstitute.org/>

Module #19 at www.GeriatricPharmacyReview.com is 1 hour of continuing education on “Evaluation and Use of Clinical Information to Improve Patient Care.” Access to this module can be purchased for \$14 for ASCP members and \$35 for non-members.

Q: How is the examination scored?

A: The examination has 150 multiple-choice questions. Each question has one correct answer and three incorrect answers. Credit is granted for the question only if the correct answer is chosen. Candidates are advised to answer every question on the examination, as there is no penalty for guessing.

Of the 150 questions on the examination, only 140 questions are used in the scoring. Each version of the exam contains 10 questions that are being pre-tested for validation. Once validation is completed, these questions will be used on future versions of the examination. These questions that are being validated are randomly scattered through the examination and are not marked or identified as “pre-test” items. They will look just like any other question.

Q: Candidates have the opportunity to provide comments on test items during the examination. If I comment on a question, do I have a better chance of being credited for the question?

A: No. All comments that candidates submit on the test questions are reviewed by the Examination Development Committee (EDC). These comments will be considered during periodic review of the examination questions. Comments submitted by candidates will not affect the candidate’s score on the examination.

Q: Where do the questions used on the examination originate, and how is the “correct” answer determined?

A: Examination questions are written by a member of the EDC and then reviewed and edited by the full committee, with consultation and input from test development specialists at Applied Measurement Professionals (AMP). Depending upon the topic of the question, the “correct” answer may be based upon pharmacology of a particular drug or drug class, expert consensus from clinical practice guidelines, or the collective clinical judgment of the experts on the EDC on how to handle a particular patient case.

CGP Exam FAQs

Examination questions fall into three categories: recall, application, and analysis. Recall questions are generally straightforward and fact-based, and the “correct” answer is well-defined. Application questions test the ability of the candidate to apply factual knowledge to patient situations. Analysis questions are the most complex and test higher-level judgment and analytical skills.

Q: Some of the items on the examination did not appear to have a correct answer. For some of the scenarios presented, I would have handled the patient differently.

A: Many of the test scenarios, especially at the “analysis” level, involve complex older adults with multiple morbidities. In many of these cases, there could be more than one “correct” or acceptable way to manage the patient. In the real world, patterns of practice may vary based upon settings of care, medication formulary limitations, federal or state regulations, and other factors.

In the context of a multiple-choice examination, the candidate is expected to choose the best strategy for patient management from among the four options presented. While this may be frustrating for the candidate who, for example, might usually prefer to use a different medication, the successful candidate should be able to focus on the options presented, analyze pros and cons, and choose the best option from among those provided.