



## **BASIC PATHOLOGICAL SCIENCES EXAMINATION; A MINI REVIEW**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Basic Pathological Sciences (BPS) examination is an examination performed annually by the Royal College of Pathologists of Australia. The aim of this short communication is to shed some lights on this examination.

**Keywords:** Education, Examination, Pathology.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Medical education to undergraduates is facing many changes. Teaching pathology is no exception. New technologies influenced the process of teaching and learning alike. Teaching materials utilizing personal computers and the Internet are becoming more and more important [1].

Studies have indicated significant improvement in knowledge base by students using interactive videodisc modules. Optical videodisc computer-directed learning was shown to be well-suited for medical student instruction in pathology [2].

However, it is still thought that the courses given in pathology to undergraduate are not adequate [3,4]. This is because of the reduction of the time devoted to pathology teaching to students<sup>4</sup>.

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) has since the early 1980s conducted an examination in Basic Pathological Sciences (BPS) that trainees normally sit within the first three years of their training to ensure that all pathology trainees are equipped with the necessary foundation knowledge of pathological processes [4].

It is not an entry requirement for post graduate pathology training but it shows the interest and dedication of the candidates to the pathology. All RCPA trainees must complete the exam at some stage unless exempt.

In the past four years the College has allowed medical students to sit this examination and this has allowed an assessment of to what extent students learn

about pathology in their medical school training. Over the past four years the pass rate of candidates overall ranged from 59% to 86%, and in every year trainees performed better than medical students [4].

The examination which is a unique in its kind is a means to enforce the deep understanding of basic sciences of pathology as it is not perfectly delivered by medical colleges.

The applicants will be supported by educational materials and review in the forms of PDF's and PPT's files from RCPA to make them ready for the examination. It is composed of one hundred multiple choices questions to be done in two and a half hours. Questions based on first ten Chapters of Robbins and Cotran "Pathological Basis of Disease" 9th ed. plus some additional topics. Details might be viewed online at: <https://www.rcpa.edu.au/Education/Basic-Pathological-Sciences/BPS-Syllabus>. Questions vetted by seven examiners with Angoff and Hoftsee used to determine cut score. Classical psychometrics performed as well as Rasch analysis in accord with AMC recommendations.

The exam is supervised by the BPS Chief Examiner, Prof John Nicholls, and supported by the Education Team at the RCPA. It is also followed by a review from the organizers who get a feedback from the candidates.

It is preceded by an online mock examination but the score of this examination does not count to the result of the BPS examination. In 2015, BPS examination was

conducted in nine centers in Australia. It was, also, held concurrently in centers from Middle East to New Zealand. This year ,it was conducted in seven overseas centers (Riyadh, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Singapore, Auckland, Dunedin, Wellington) [1-3].

## CONCLUSION

Forty overseas candidates applied to the examination this year. The results of this year examination are seen in table.1.

Historically, many factors influenced the development of this branch of pathology.

**Table 1. Basic Pathological Sciences (BPS) examination results in 2015**

Country	Number sat	Pass Rate
Australia	161	75%
New Zealand	16	81%
Other overseas	21	76%
Total	198	76%

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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