THE FACULTY OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY

TO: TRAINING PROGRAMME DIRECTORS
REGIONAL POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION ADVISERS

COLLEGE TUTORS

EXAMINATION CANDIDATES

FIRST EXAMINATION FOR THE FELLOWSHIP IN CLINICAL ONCOLOGY AUTUMN 2017

The Examining Board has prepared the following report on the AUTUMN 2017 sitting of the First Examination for the Fellowship in Clinical Oncology. It is the intention of the Specialty Training Board that the information contained in this report should benefit candidates at future sittings of the examinations and help those who train them. This information should be made available as widely as possible.

Dr Frances Yuille
Medical Director, Education and Training

FIRST EXAMINATION FOR THE FELLOWSHIP IN CLINICAL ONCOLOGY EXAMINERS' REPORT – AUTUMN 2017

The pass rates achieved at the AUTUMN 2017 sitting of the First Examination for the Fellowship in Clinical Oncology are summarised below.

	All Candidates		UK-trained Candidates		UK First Attempt Candidates	
Overall*	48/141	34.0%	27/79	34.2%	13/49	26.6%
Cancer Biology & Radiobiology	84/123	68.3%	45/67	67.2%	36/57	63.2%
Clinical Pharmacology	82/133	61.7%	45/72	62.5%	38/59	64.4%
Medical Statistics	62/137	45.3%	35/75	46.7%	23/58	39.7%
Physics	56/119	47.2%	30/65	46.2%	27/55	49.1%

This examiners' report does not provide an in depth breakdown of performance on individual questions but is intended to guide trainers and candidates by highlighting particular areas of concern. Candidates are reminded that it is recommended that all modules are attempted at the first sitting, to maximise chances of success over the total of four permitted attempts.

Cancer Biology

The candidates performed well, with the pass rate consistent with previous years. The only areas in which candidates performed less well were cell cycle and cancer stem cells. Candidates should focus on these areas in greater detail in future.

Radiobiology

Overall candidates performed well, demonstrating a good understanding of radiobiology and especially radiobiology calculations. Improvements in understanding are required in the following areas:

- Early and later tissue responses for a range of tissues and modification of the response with fractionation protocol.
- Cell cycle delay and mechanisms controlling checkpoints.
- Details relating to radiation induced DNA lesions.
- Quantification of agents modifying the dose response.

Clinical Pharmacology

Overall candidates performed well in clinical pharmacology. Areas for improvement include newer therapies and their toxicities. Generally candidates performed less well on questions about adverse effects of medication. It is important that candidates are familiar with all drugs on the list of anti-cancer drugs even if they are not frequently involved in their routine practice.

Medical Statistics

Descriptives statistics and study designs were generally well understood. Areas for improvement include: a clearer understanding of the difference between absolute and relative risk statistics, and appropriate methods for the analysis of time to event data. For diagnostic tests, candidates need to understand the relationship between different statistics, such as predictive values and sensitivity/specificity. Candidates may need to be able to manipulate the information given in a question in more than one step to complete calculations.

Physics

Candidates should ensure they have a good working knowledge of the following:

- IRMER regulations/ roles/duty holders
- Simple monitor unit calculations
- Inverse Square Law calculations
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