The SCE in Geriatric Medicine: Friend or Foe

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Aims and Objectives

• To try and de-mystify the SCE

• Appreciate the process of question-writing

• Understand how best to approach revision for the exam

• Get a feel for the ‘house style’ with some sample questions
Conflict of interest
Disclaimer

• Not defending the SCE rationale
cost
process
Current feelings about the SCE
How you should feel about the SCE

- Calm
- Scholarly
- Analytical
- Prepared
What is the SCE?

• An assessment attempting to test knowledge of the Geriatric Medicine curriculum (JRCPTB)
• Conducted across (nearly) all medical specialities
• Essential in progressing through HST
  monitored at ARCP
  1st attempt by ST5, completed at CCT

It is not
• A device to get as much money out of you as possible
• An attempt to prevent trainees’ progression
MRCP(UK) says

• ensure that certified specialists have **sufficient knowledge** of their specialty to practice safely and competently as consultants
• **complement** workplace-based assessments
• provide a rigorous national assessment to establish **public confidence**
• offer a challenge similar to sub-specialty certification examination in **North America**
What is the SCE?

• Initial pilots in 2006
• Roll out since 2007/8

In 2017
• 231 candidates (195 UK trainees)
• Pass rate 89% in UK trainees
• Highest marks in nutrition (77%)
• Lowest marks in basic science/gerontology (52%)
“Never tell me the odds”
What’s the pass mark?

Hofstee compromise method
• SSG meets in Autumn
• Questions are scored
• Modified Anghoff technique
• Criterion-referenced pass mark
Very interesting... but what’s the pass mark?

In 2017: 57.4%

58% 2016, 59% 2015, 60% 2014, 57% 2013
What is tested?

- **Anything** which is covered by the *curriculum* for Geriatric Medicine
  published by the JRCPTB
  revised by the SAC for Geriatric medicine
- This includes basic science related to Geriatric Medicine, and gerontology
- Lots of crossover with General Medicine/MRCP part 2 written type questions
  “Geriatric flavour”
- Recently, **greater emphasis on Geriatrics** than GIM
  eg dementia, delirium, falls, bones, community, perioperative care, continence, stroke etc
How is the exam structured?

• Two papers
• Each 3 hours
• 100 questions per paper
• 108 seconds per question
• Multiple choice ‘best of five’ format (more later)

• Pearson Vue test centres across the UK
Exam blueprint

- Acute illness 29
- Basic science and gerontology 6
- Chronic disease and disability 33
- Dementia and delirium 20
- Continence 10
- Falls/poor mobility 16
- Geriatric assessment 8
- Surgical liaison 3
- Intermediate and long-term care 9
- Nutrition 4
- Rehabilitation and transfers of care 14
- Subspecialty topics 48
What is the question style?

• ‘Best of five’ (BOF) format
• Similar to MRCP Part 2 style
• Single best answer
• All options should be plausible

• Question writing/setting by ‘normal’ Geriatricians
• Consensus agreement around questions
• Reliable standard-setting process
Example question of BOF

A team of alliance rebels were planning an attack which would destroy the Death Star. The aim was to fire a torpedo into an exhaust outlet, to set off a chain reaction resulting in the destruction of the battle station.

Which spaceship would be best suited to this task?

A  B-wing
B  medical frigate
C  Millenium Falcon
D  Mon Calamari cruiser
E  X-wing
Example question of what is not BOF

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, there was a great conflict between good and evil.

In a combat situation, which character is most likely to use a light sabre as their weapon of choice?

A  Boba Fett
B  C3-PO
C  Lando Calrissian
D  Luke Skywalker
E  Princess Leia
The Millenium Falcon is a starship known throughout the galaxy for its speed and manoeuvrability.

Famously, how quickly did it complete the Kessel Run?

A 10 Parsecs  
B 12 Parsecs  
C 14 Parsecs  
D 16 Parsecs  
E 18 Parsecs
“It’s a trap!”
How should I prepare for the exam?
How should I prepare for the exam?

• Familiarise yourself with the curriculum

• Look at the exam blueprint

• Sample questions
How should I prepare for the exam?

- Don’t go with systematic textbook reading!
- Oxford Handbook of Geriatric medicine for targeted revision

- Practice questions
  - RCP sample questions & mock exam
    - www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/geriatric-medicine/geriatric
  - RCP Clinical Medicine CPD
  - BGS trainees page
  - MRCP Part 2 questions
  - BoF MCQs textbook Duncan Forsyth et al
    - passgerimed.com

- NICE guidelines
  - eg hypertension, heart failure, bladder, stroke, delirium, dementia

- Screening tools eg cognition, nutrition, osteoporosis
- Experience > knowledge and judgement
Tips from the floor?

Tips from me

• There will always be things you won’t know

• Don’t fret too much about the basic science and Gerontology

• If short if time, concentrate on the Geriatric Giants and their NICE guidance.
And finally

Use the Force *your experience* as a Geriatrician