

Preparing for the Rheumatology Board Exam

Important dates:

<u>Exam Date</u>	<u>Registration Dates</u>	<u>Late Registration Dates</u>
Nov. 13, 2017	Mar 1, 2017 through June 14 2017	June 15, 2017 through June 28, 2017
Oct 31, 2018	Jan 8, 2018 through June 14, 2018	June 15, 2018 through June 28, 2018

Subspecialty Certification Exams: \$2,255

Late Registration Fee: \$400

The “Blueprint” for the exam:

<http://www.abim.org/~media/ABIM%20Public/Files/pdf/exam-blueprints/certification/rheumatology.pdf>

<u>Medical Content Category</u>	<u>% of Exam</u>
Basic and Clinical Sciences	7%
Crystal-induced Arthropathies	5%
Infections and Related Arthritides	6%
Metabolic Bone Disease	5.5%
Osteoarthritis and Related Disorders	5%
Rheumatoid Arthritis	13%
Seronegative Spondyloarthropathies	6.5%
Other Rheumatic and Connective Tissue Disorders (ORCT)	16.5%
Lupus Erythematosus	9%
Nonarticular and Regional Musculoskeletal Disorders	7%
Nonrheumatic Systemic Disorders	9%
Vasculitides	8.5%
Miscellaneous Topics	2%
	100%

What to expect on exam day:

<http://www.abim.org/certification/exam-information/exam-day.aspx>

Tips and Tools for studying:

1. Find the highest-yield information and memorize it cold. With active methods such as mnemonics, teaching others, lecturing “to the wall,” writing notes out from memory, writing your own multiple-choice questions, etc. — before moving on to information that’s less likely to be tested.
2. Identify the highest-yield question banks — the ones that best resemble the exam — and test yourself frequently while studying. Look up every unfamiliar answer choice (even the wrong ones) following each question. Try to buy or obtain practice exams that closely resemble the actual test and take them after every few weeks of studying to gauge your progress.

Do both steps in parallel, not in sequence. The better you execute these steps, the higher your score on a medical board examination.

Resources:

The consensus is that the highest-yield review book is Rheumatology Secrets.

The Rheumatology Image Library is also a critically high-yield source of information. It takes, at least, two weeks of part-time studying to get through this image bank the first time.

In rheumatology, the question banks to study are the CARE modules. Use spaced repetition to learn (at least) the most recent five years' worth of CARE questions completely, looking up anything you don't understand.

Read and re-read the entire chapters on *Rheumatoid Arthritis* in one of the major textbooks in rheumatology (Hochberg or Kelley's). These chapters are very high yield for the following reasons: RA is the single most tested category on the boards. Much, if not most, of the basic science questions come from rheumatoid arthritis (the second most common basic science category is from the crystalline diseases). Much, if not most, of the questions regarding medications (including MOA and drug-drug interactions) come from RA meds.

Additional Online Resources:

- Preparing for the boards – Vikas Majithia - <http://slideplayer.com/slide/5258462/>
- www.rheumpearls.com

Popular Board Review Courses:

UCSF Rheumatology Board Review Course
<http://www.ucsfcmecme.com/2017/MDM17F01/info.html>

The Brigham Board Review in Rheumatology
<http://www.oakstone.com/the-brigham-board-review-in-rheumatology>

Johns Hopkins Advances in the Diagnosis and Treatment of the Rheumatic Diseases Symposium
<http://www.hopkinsrheumatology.org/rheumatology-conference/>

Test Taking Tips:

1. There are no longer EXCEPT questions (yay!)
2. Most (if not all) questions are “Single Best Answer”
3. Unfortunately you can no longer solely rely on “good test taking skills”. Most of the “clues” which helped identify the correct answer in the past are now closely watched for by test writing groups and corrected before approval. For example, the longest answer choice used to clue one that it was the right option... now a days, it is likely NOT the correct answer because test question writers actively avoid this phenomenon.
4. That being said – there are always a few questions with some technical flaws and some strategies to be aware of. Take the test to see how you do. Answers are on the back.

Flawed questions: can you determine the correct answer based on clues?

1. The primary purpose of the stam is to remove the
 - A. carm
 - B. denton
 - C. menice
 - D. stam bar

2. Which of the following pairs has won the greatest number of Abby awards?
 - A. Jones and Smith
 - B. Smith and Taylor
 - C. Smith and White
 - D. White and Allen

3. How many pounds of pressure are exerted by a callam?
 - A. 2.6
 - B. 150
 - C. 260
 - D. 2600

4. The stanon is aided by a
 - A. anstel
 - B. immon
 - C. octal
 - D. port

5. The stanon frequently overheats because
 - A. all grestels are bilious
 - B. no immon are directly fectitious
 - C. octals are usually casable
 - D. ports are always actial

6. Stamation normally occurs when the
 - A. ansetls rupture
 - B. immon falls and the denton is in place
 - C. octal rotates easily
 - D. ports pass the carm

Question 1: D
word repeat: a word or phrase is included in the stem and in the correct answer
convergence strategy: the correct answer included the most elements in common with other options
Question 2: C
logical cues: a subset of the options are collectively exhaustible. Often, the correct answer is in the middle of the range
Question 3: C
grammatical cues: one or more of the options don't follow grammatically from the stem
Question 4: D
absolute terms: terms such as "always" or "never" are used in options
Question 5: B
long correct answer: correct answer is longer, more specific, or more complete than other options