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Message:

Dear Sir,

I will be appearing for the final exam for DNB family med in the month of dec2010. as the passing percentage is very low, I request u to guide me how to prepare for exams (i.e ?books,? study material, etc) to get success.

Reply by Dr Prince Christopher:

Dear Friend(s), I hope by this message I can bring you to the reality of preparing for exams well ahead of time and also the attitude of constantly preparing for the exams. I will here suggest some of the things I have learnt in the recent past. The counsel is in no means complete and I hope all of you would use this as a guide for preparing for the exams.

Clearing exams:

It has become a big question since in the last 4 years we have had very few doctors clear the final exam. I need to let you know that it is surely hard to clear the exam and in a way that is good. I prefer it that way since, we need well trained FPs who can teach and have content knowledge rather than have them have degrees that has no use since it was easily got, without much effort. There is a wide area of content to cover. There has to be constant studies happening through the course rather than near the exams. Let me see if I can help you here since you must be doing a lot of things as preparation but will still have doubts whether it is enough. The Board also is going through a change in its understanding of the course in India. To make it more relevant, they have made the exam paper tough and the correction strict. It is possible to clear the exams but needs hard work. How much hard work depends on your capabilities?

- Look up the syllabus for Family medicine as given in the National Board website/handbook/prospectus. It may be sketchy but they stick to it and expand on it very much. you may have to read up each topic and also read around it looking for relevant material.
- Look at old question papers in all four papers and prepare notes on each. (i will let you know how to prepare notes in a short while)
- Be current on the public health aspects in our country. Whenever a health issue is hot in the media and the news bustles with it, read up about it.
- See if you can get hold of the National board's journal. http://www.natboard.edu.in/journal_of_pg_medical_education.php. Many questions come from that. It will be good to find out the topics that are relevant and keep up to date.
- The National board's teleconferencing sessions are important. They are keen to ask questions from the sessions since they do spend a lot of various resources on that program. I heard that the sessions are loaded on the internet somewhere. The suggestion was to open YOUTUBE (<http://www.youtube.com>) and type in the search box "IGNOUSOHS". The findings lead you to various teleconferencing videos that could be potentially useful. Try it!
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare website also has some details of the latest public health activities in the country and you need to know that. <http://www.mohfw.nic.in/>
- Get hold of someone to set question papers for you from these sites and topics and write mock exams and ask the person to correct it. Use the same short structured question format used by the national board in your mock exams. Be strict in your timing and in your corrections.
- Check this site out for I had written some guidelines for approaching the exams: <http://afpionline.com/Documents/HOW%20TO%20ATTEMPT%20DNB%20THEORY.pdf>

Use standard books we used for our undergraduate exams but for specific topics we may need to refer larger text books. You need to know what Kumar and Clark says about diabetes but you may have to read it up in Harrison's since it is an important topic. In the same way, specific topics in all the subjects may need to be looked up in specific books that are the authority in those subjects.