

Questions asked and answers given at the Board Exam Question session 21-7-2011

(Note this was discussed with the exam committee 2012)

1. **When asked for an etiology, does that mean asking for an infectious agent?**
No, etiology and cause are literally the same, it can also be a non-infectious cause.
2. **Do we need to have 60% in every section of Vet Path to have passed?**
No, points in Vet Path are summated, so you can do very well in two parts and rather badly in one part and still pass. However, it is dangerous to rely on this strategy and ignore the third part during preparation.
3. **Which combinations can be chosen for Vet Path?**
See website.
4. **Comprehensive: Changes in tables in Tox Path are quite obvious, but do we need to mention only the statistically significant changes?**
No, there might be changes which are treatment related but not statistically relevant, these have to be mentioned as well. Remember to state if you consider the changes treatment or non treatment related.
5. **Do we need to add Morbillivirus behind Canine distemper virus?**
No. But add the number of a virus if there are multiple viruses: Canine adenovirus
1. Do not write: Infection with canine adenovirus; that is not correct, just the name of the agent
6. **Do we need to add in-utero infection when asked for the cause of cerebellar hypoplasia (bovine viral diarrhea virus)?**
In this case we would most likely decide that it was better to ask for the pathogenesis and not the etiology.
7. **Do I get points when I write BPV instead of bovine papillomavirus 1?**
Usually partial credit. Generally avoid abbreviations!
8. **What modifiers are needed for the macroscopic morphologic diagnosis with tumors?**
Go as far as you can, certainly organ and tumor type, sometimes add metastases.
9. **What modifiers do we need to write for gross morphologic diagnosis?**
As many as possible, especially for inflammation. It is not always possible to add all, but go as far as you can. (remember acute, diffuse, severe)
10. **Does the order of modifiers play a role?**
No, not at all; do not forget to name the organ.

11. If at the end we have two slides left and no time, what do we do?

Just listing the main features will result in losing style points but you should get partial credit if you get the pertinent features of the slide. Just writing down a morphologic diagnosis or disease will most likely not be enough. Remember, on average you need 12 points per slide to pass. If you lose 24 points at the end, it is very hard to have them picked up with the other 18 slides.

12. Do we need to follow a certain order during the description to get style points?

Not really, for example with a skin lesion: you can start from the outside or with the lesion, as long as it is logical. Do not start with the stratum corneum, jump to sebaceous glands and continue with the stratum basale. This will result in loss of style points. If you start with the lesion you have fewer chances to miss points because you are running out of time. However, you should always describe lesions from the more important to the less important features (from a pathogenetical point of view), since this is more logical and easier to read and making up changes which aren't there will result in style points being deducted.

13. Do you give only points to key words?

This depends on the slide: if you describe a granuloma without naming it, partial credit. On a slide with only few changes to describe you should always describe the important features; by just naming it you will lose points. You can put descriptions or features in brackets, the famous "characterized by..." costs a lot of time and usually does not get points. Remember, there are 20 points per slide and on a slide with fewer features these become more important and need to be described in more detail than in a busy slide.

14. Do we need to indicate sizes of tumors?

Yes, but only roughly. Do not give sizes for normal cells, you will lose time doing this and not get extra points.

15. Do you specifically ask for 2 diagnoses or not?

The consensus was that in gross we do ask specifically for 1, 2 or 3 diagnoses, but NOT for histology. This resembles real life where any sample can have more than one change and nobody will tell you.

16. Can you bring your own microscope?

Yes, you can bring your own microscope. Alternatively, you can get a microscope from Hannover or rent a microscope from Leica. Bringing your own has the advantage that you are used to it. However, there will be time on the day before the exam to familiarize yourself with the place and the scopes.

17. How do I hire a microscope?

The information will be sent out by the secretary after you sent in your application.

18. Will I know the person I have to share a slide set with?

No, you will be assigned a place randomly.

19. How are the chairs?

They are wooden and cannot be adjusted in height. Smaller candidates may want to bring their own cushions to sit on. There are books to adjust the height of the microscope.

20. What should be in the morphologic diagnosis?

As much as needed (all modifiers!), but it should not be a repetition of the description. It must show that you understand what is important and what is secondary/less important.

21. Do we need to write "with cerebral compression atrophy" (case of meningioma) or with hemorrhage?

It depends, if it is an important feature in the case, yes, but it is not always needed.

22. Do we need immersion oil?

Never, we know that you will not have oil and do not expect you to see things which are only visible with oil.

23. How is the marking done in histology?

See also information on the web site. Two people independently mark one slide, then their markings are compared and in cases of discrepancy the answer is read again and discussed until an agreement is reached. This happens in all parts of the exam, not only histology.

24. What do we do if there may be two good ddx?

Just give one, we will accept any good one, but only one and not both.

25. Until what time do we need to read the articles?

The preparation meeting is in November. Although most questions are prepared during the summer, there is always the possibility that some questions are prepared at the preparation meeting. However, this does not happen often.

26. What do we need to read?

See also information on the web site. About 80% of the questions come from the reading list. There will be no questions from single animal case reports and most will be of medium difficulty. There will also be some questions from journals not present on the reading list, because they contain a subject which is considered to be of special interest and high importance for the field of Vet Path by the committee members. Do not forget the books!

27. Do you consider articles from animal models of disease?

Yes, in Tox Path. In addition, such articles can also serve as the basis for a question in comprehensive.

28. If a candidate is author of a paper, will such a paper be excluded?

No, we prepare question often before we know the names of the candidates and there are now too many candidates in order to pay attention to this point.

29. For domestic animals, do you consider induced diseases?

Usually we consider only naturally occurring diseases in their natural host. However, a pathogenesis study of a disease in a different host may show up in comprehensive.

30. Do you include articles referring to phenotyping in Lab animals?

Yes, but only rarely, and the question will consider more general knowledge important to pathologists when doing a phenotyping or with a very well known strain of Lab Animals which is commonly used. No questions will be asked about specific lesions in a seldom used specific strain of genetically engineered animals.

31. Can gross pictures from articles appear on the exam?

Yes.

32. Are you allowed to bring a timer?

Yes, as long as it does not make noises. The use of mobiles phones in any way is not allowed.

33. For plants, do we need to give the Latin or English name?

We accept both.

34. For bacteria, can we give old names?

No, we want the newest names, however if you can't come up with the new name, use the old one which will give partial credits.

35. Are short answer questions from books or articles?

They come from both sources.

36. Do we need to know human diseases?

No, but the mechanism for a disease can be asked. Diseases not reported in animals are usually only asked in question about animal models for Tox Path or Comprehensive.

37. Out your own personal experience, how long did you prepare for the exam?

This is very individual and depends on how much experience and how well you have prepared during your training..

38. Emerging diseases and global warning, are they important?

Emerging disease are certainly included (see reading list), global warming not really.

39. Do you take points away in any part?

Yes, in histology, when candidates just describe figments of their imagination, like a complete (4 lines) description of a non-existing parasite. It does not happen very often.

40. Do you require naming a grade for a tumor?

Not in histology, but in comprehensive, then we may even ask for an explanation of why a specific grade was chosen and what it means for the animal.

41. Can we continue if we passed three parts with 60% and have only 10% in the other two parts?

See also information on the web site.: no, you must have at least 30% in all parts in order to carry the passed parts forward.

42. In pyramid (hierarchical) questions, do you have for example an incorrect choice 4 and a correct choice 5?

No, all the correct choices are at the beginning and the incorrect are at the end. (Note that this can also be all incorrect choices at the beginning and correct ones at the end, depending on the question. But they will always be in order).

43. If the etiology of a disease in the article is not proven with Koch's postulates, can we ignore the article?

No, it still may be used.

44. Can we use bovine papillomatosis as a morphological diagnosis in gross?

No, this is the name of the disease. There are cases, where it is more useful to ask for the disease and not the morphological diagnosis, therefore read the question carefully.

45. Are small and large animals the main parts of Vet Path?

See also information on the web site., you can choose a certain combination, in every case small or large animals each will, if chosen, constitute 30% of the Vet Path part.

Thanks to the two residents from Bern who took notes during the session which formed the basis of this list!