

**The  
Path to  
250**

# **First Aid for the USMLE Step 1: The Really Short Version**

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Relax.

# Overview

- USMLE Step 1 – The Basics
- Defining Your Goals
- Timelines for Study
- Approaching Each Subject
- Choosing Prep Resources
- More Tips
- Overview of First Aid/USMLE-Rx
- Special Offer
- Q&A

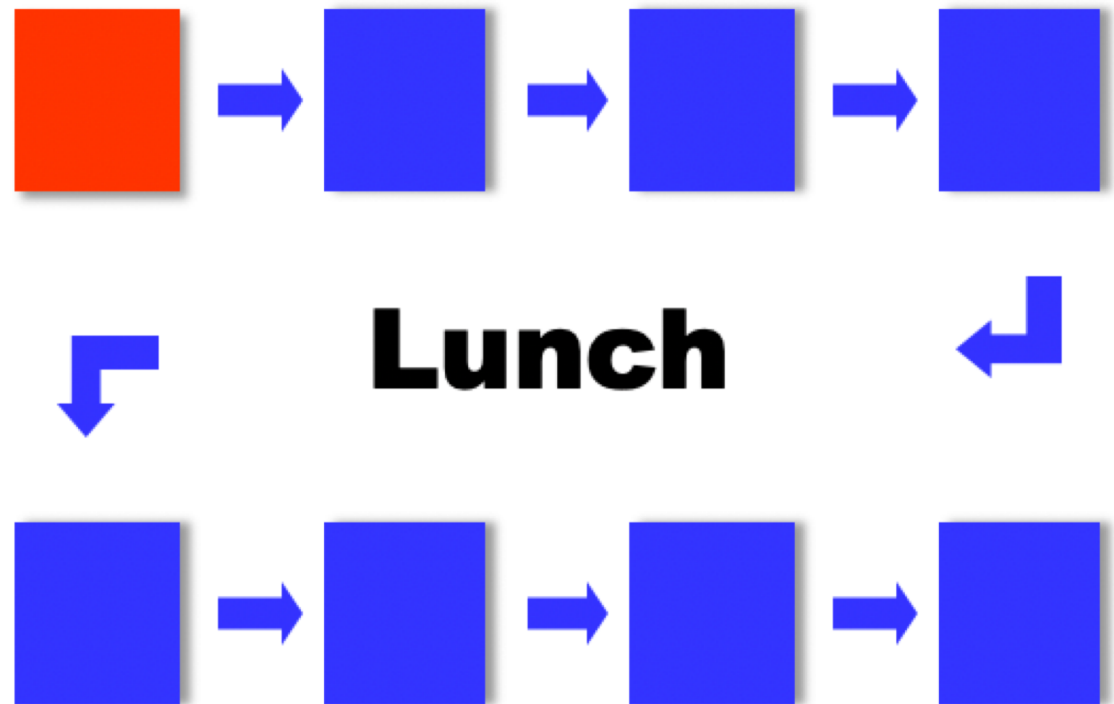


Poll Question

# USMLE Step 1 – The Basics

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- 8 hours total
- 280 questions in 7 one-hour blocks
- 40 questions per block
- 45 minutes of break time



# Question Types

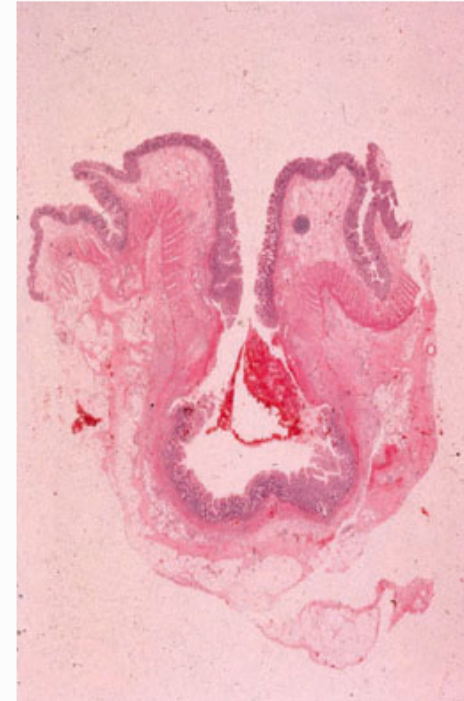
- Best answer
- Multimedia
- Clinical vignettes
  - 70-80% of exam
  - Multi-step reasoning

A 32-year-old Caucasian woman presents with a 5 day history of occasional double vision and bilateral ptosis. What is the most appropriate diagnostic test?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
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- 41
- 42

A 73-year-old woman has episodes of abdominal pain and increasingly severe constipation. Test of the stool for occult blood is positive. The photomicrograph shows features of the resected colon. Which of the following is the most likely diagnosis?

- A. Adenocarcinoma
- B. Diverticular disease
- C. Polypoid adenoma
- D. Villous adenoma
- E. Volvulus



# Scores and Passing Rates

- Passing is 194
- Mean is 229
- 20 points is 1 SD
- Allopathic med students
  - 96% pass on first try
  - 99% eventually pass
- Osteopathic med students
  - 95% pass on first try
- IMGs
  - 78% pass on first try



# USMLE Percentiles

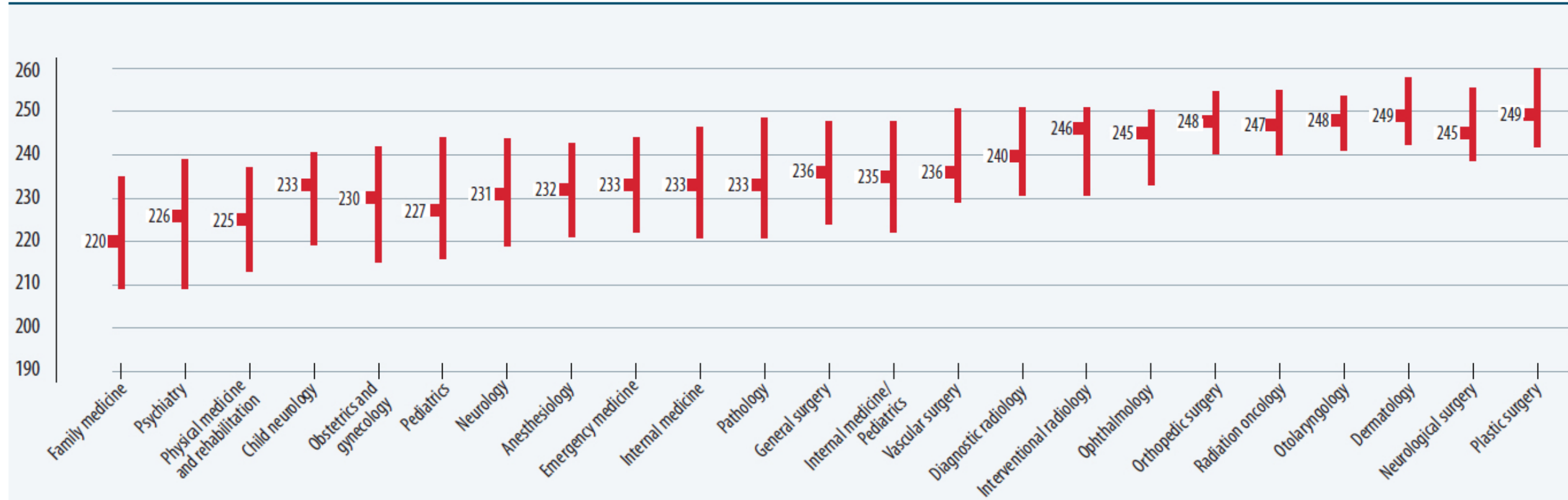
USMLE Score	Step 1 (N=69,359)	Step 2 CK (N=66,000)	Step 3 (N=56,840)
300	100	100	100
295	100	100	100
290	100	100	100
285	100	100	100
280	100	100	100
275	100	99	100
270	100	97	100
265	99	93	100
260	96	86	99
255	91	77	98
250	84	66	95
245	76	55	91
240	67	44	84
235	57	34	74
230	48	25	63
225	39	18	50
220	31	12	38
215	24	8	27
210	17	5	18
205	13	3	11
200	9	2	7
195	6	1	4
190	4	1	2
185	3	0	1
180	2	0	0
175	1	0	0
170	1	0	0
165	0	0	0
160	0	0	0
155 and below	0	0	0

# Defining Your Goals

- Just pass the exam → 210 – 229
- Beat the mean → 230 – 249
- Ace the exam → 250+
- **“ROAD to Riches”**
  - Radiology/Radiation Oncology
  - Ortho/Ophtho/Otolaryngo/Urology
  - “Aesthetic” Surgery (plastics)
  - Dermatology

# NRMP: Charting Outcomes in the Match

FIGURE 3. Median USMLE Step 1 Score by Specialty for Matched US Seniors.<sup>a,b</sup>



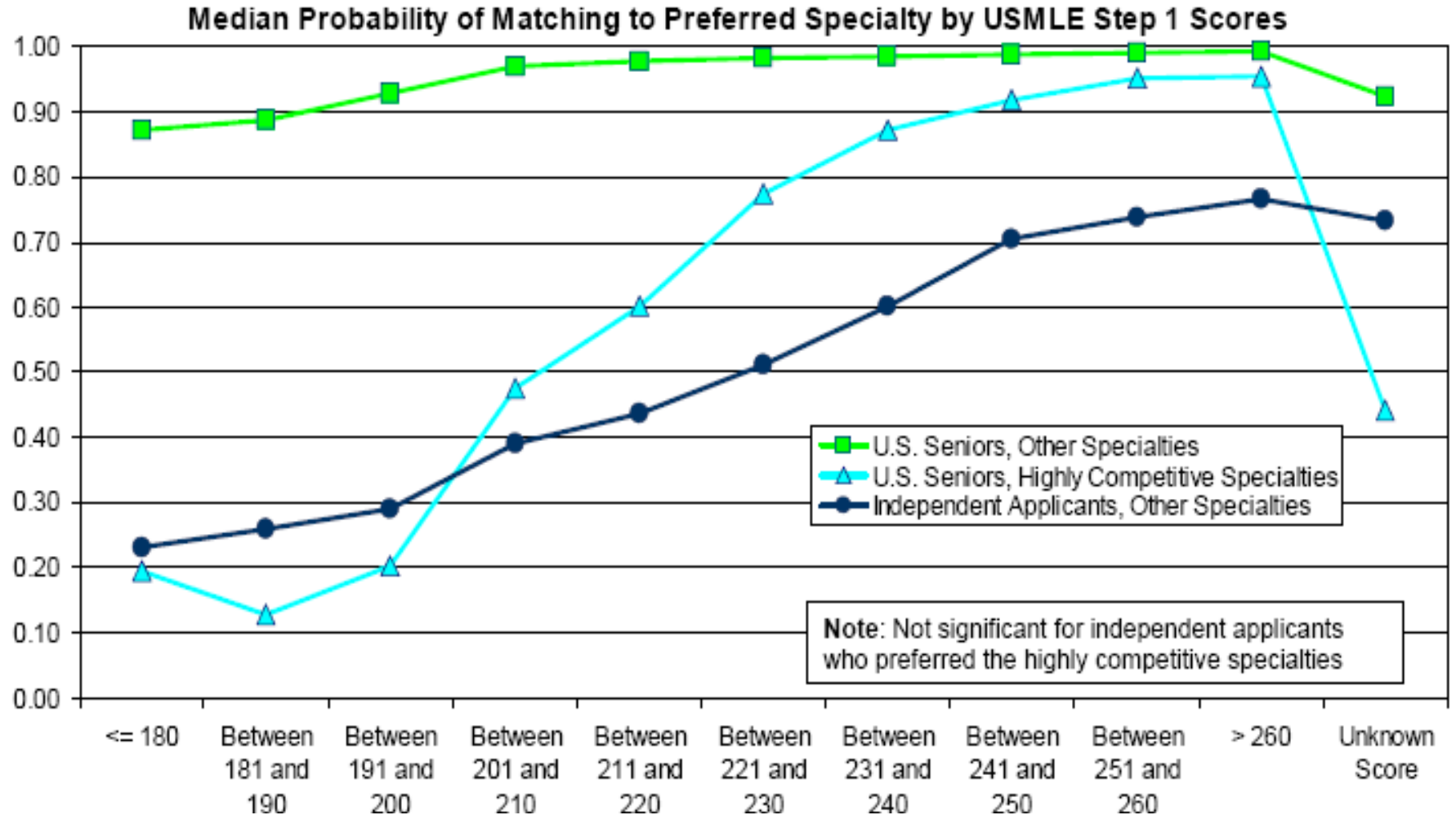
<sup>a</sup>Vertical lines show interquartile range.

<sup>b</sup>Data from National Resident Matching Program. Charting outcomes in the match. <http://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Charting-Outcomes-in-the-Match-2018-Seniors.pdf>. Published July 2018. Accessed October 1, 2018.

# NRMP: Charting Outcomes in the Match

Chart  
15

## USMLE STEP 1 SCORES



?

Poll Question

## The “Just Pass” Schedule – 1 to 2 months

- First Aid High Yield Facts
- Crammable subjects
- Review questions – 2 question banks

## The “Gunner” Schedule – 2 to 6 months

- All of the above, plus:
- Less cramable subjects
- More review questions – 2-3 question banks

# Timeline for Study

# Choosing Study Strategies



Your learning preferences



Structure and characteristics of the subject



Structure and characteristics of your curriculum



Time assigned to a particular subject or system

# **Anatomy**

- Traditional anatomy is low yield
- Know anatomy for specific diseases, traumatic injuries, procedures, and common surgeries
- Neuroanatomy, embryology, basic cross sectional anatomy is high-yield
- Be able to identify structures on X-rays, CTs, MRIs, electron micrographs, and photomicrographs



# Biochemistry

- Crammable!!
- High yield topics include vitamin deficiencies, diseases of genetic errors, and key regulatory enzymes
- Understand the “pathobiochemistry”
- Be familiar with medically relevant laboratory techniques

# **Microbiology & Immunology**

- Crammable!!
- 40% bacteriology, 25% immunology, 25% virology, and 5% parasitology. So don't fixate on bacteriology!
- Focus on distinguishing characteristics, target organs, method of spread, and diagnosis
- Know the immune response, vaccines, immunodeficiency diseases
- Know viral structures and genome

# Pathology

- Huge but important topic
- Know hallmark characteristics of each disease including signs and symptoms
- Look for clues in age, sex, ethnicity, and activity
- Know descriptions of “trigger” words
- Most questions with gross specimens and photomicrographs can be answered from the history alone

# Pharmacology

- Crammable!!
- Focus on prototypic drugs; forget obscure derivatives, trade names, dosages
- Major categories are ANS, CNS, antimicrobial, cardiovascular, and oncology
- Mechanisms, clinical uses, and toxicities are high-yield
- Review associated biochemistry, physiology and microbiology

# Physiology

- Concept oriented
- Diagrams work well in physiology
- Know basic physiologic relationships, hormones
- Many clinical vignettes incorporate pathophysiology

# Psychiatry

- Includes psychology, sociology, psychopharmacology
- High-yield- personality, psychosomatic/ somatoform, substance abuse, eating disorders

# Public Health

- Mix of biostats, epidemiology, ethics, law, healthcare delivery, patient safety, and quality improvement
- Biostats and epidemiology is very high-yield
- Doctor-patient interactions



# **Review Resources**

- Text reviews
- Test banks
- Self-test reviews
- Case-based reviews
- Review courses
- Other media
  - Flash cards
  - Videos
  - Mobile apps



# Picking and Choosing Resources



Check out the book reviews in ***First Aid for the USMLE Step 1*** (Section 4)



Buy books/apps/resources early



Buy only what you can use



Don't blindly buy a whole series

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Poll Question



# Study Tips

- Establish a study schedule and stick with it
- Integrate and apply everything
- Save “crammable” subjects for the end
- Focus on high yield material and previously learned material
- Allow time in schedule for breaks, exercise, and personal issues
- Stay relaxed and grounded
- Use our checklist to keep you on track

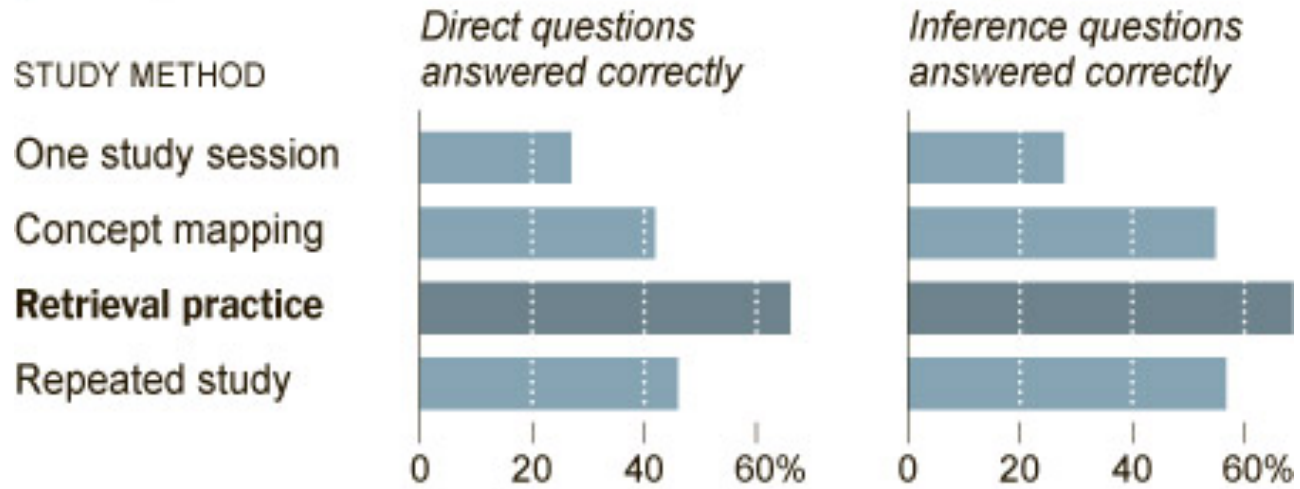
# CBT Tips



- Be very familiar with the CBT tutorial
- Know the keyboard shortcuts
- Use computerized practice tests in addition to paper exams
- Mix Q&A throughout and at the end

## Learning Through Testing

Researchers asked college students to study a short science text using one of four study methods, then tested them a week later. The most effective study method combined two study sessions with retrieval practice, tests that asked the students to recall what they had read.



Source: Science

**The New York Times**

# CBT Practice Options

<b>Types</b>	<b>Suggested Use</b>
USMLE sample test	Format familiarity
NBME/CBSSA	Benchmarking
Commercial test banks	Practice/study Simulation

# More Research

- Deng et al, 2015
  - Qbanks > Flashcards
  - 445 MCQs → ↑ 1 pt on Step 1
- Burk-Rafel et al, 2017
  - >3200 MCQs – best performance
  - Unique MCQs > repeat MCQs
  - 3+ passes in FA → ↑ USMLE score



# Test Day Tips

- Less coffee on test day
- Layered clothing
- Read lead-in first for long questions
- Manage the clock
- Light lunch
- The “C” reflex
- P = MD/DO



# Let's Get Social!

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# Questions and Answers