

The APPLIED Examination tests application of knowledge organized around the assessment of specific skills. Both common and uncommon conditions are included on the exam, with emphasis given to conditions that are relatively more important, either because they are common or because they have significant associated morbidity or mortality.

For examples of the knowledge base upon which the APPLIED Exam builds, please refer to the [Core Exam Study Guide](#). For examples of APPLIED Exam questions, please refer to the [Sample Items](#) on the ABD website.

Acquire knowledge base

1. Prioritize appropriately which knowledge is essential to be able to recall.
2. Evaluate the medical literature in an objective, scientific manner.

Assess the physical findings

1. Distinguish primary lesions from secondary changes, and physiologic from pathologic findings.
2. Accurately diagnose skin lesions and eruptions based on morphology, color, and distribution, and on dermoscopy when appropriate.

Generate a realistic differential diagnosis

1. Assign realistic probabilities to entities in the differential diagnosis, taking into account the patient's age, comorbidities, and environmental and hereditary factors.
2. Consider uncommon conditions, particularly potentially life-threatening conditions. Know when it is important to perform testing for an uncommon condition, even if it is not the most likely diagnosis.

Obtain additional information, if necessary

1. Obtain a directed history to narrow the differential diagnosis.
2. Select and interpret appropriate laboratory tests, imaging studies, and other types of evaluations. Take into account the characteristics of an individual patient and the relative costs and efficacy of laboratory tests, imaging and other evaluations.
3. Determine when to perform a skin biopsy, choosing the optimal site, type, and clinical setting.
4. Utilize additional sources of information appropriately.

Determine the most likely diagnosis

1. Interpret skin biopsy findings.
 - a. Correlate the clinical with the histologic findings.
 - b. Recognize when the histologic findings are not specific and form an appropriate plan for diagnosis and/or management.
 - c. Recognize when the histologic findings are discordant with the clinical findings and form an appropriate plan for diagnosis and/or management.
 - d. Know when additional testing, such as immunohistologic stains, are appropriate and cost-effective in a given situation.
 - e. Know when to request a second opinion about the histologic diagnosis.
2. Integrate history, findings, and laboratory data to narrow the differential diagnosis.

Form a management plan

1. Determine urgency of treatment and triage appropriately.
2. Recognize when referral or second opinion is indicated.
3. Develop management plan in the context of the patient and the health care system. Take into account the individual characteristics of the patient, including age, patient preference, ability to comprehend and communicate, culture, psychosocial factors, comorbidities, logistical issues, family and caregiver concerns, prognosis, financial considerations, and healthcare system.
4. Initiate management in the absence of a definitive diagnosis, when appropriate.
5. Choose appropriate procedures.
6. Perform procedures effectively and safely.
7. Communicate management plan clearly to other care providers.

Communicate with and educate the patient

1. Recognize and provide appropriate education clearly to the patient and/or their proxy about their condition's etiology, natural history, associations, and exacerbating factors.
2. Involve the patient in decision-making. Understand issues related to consent for special populations such as children.
3. Articulate clearly the risks and benefits of management choices.
4. Know how to manage difficult patients and difficult situations.
5. Practice in an ethical and compassionate manner.

Evaluate effectiveness of the management plan

1. Determine appropriate need and interval for follow up care.
2. Monitor therapy appropriately.
3. Know when to modify the management plan.
4. Reassess diagnosis when necessary.

Manage complications of therapy

1. Recognize and manage side effects and complications of medical therapy.
2. Recognize and manage side effects and complications of surgical therapy.
3. Recognize and respond to emergency situations.

Oversee environment of care

1. Apply principles of quality and safety in clinical practice. Maintain a safe environment of care.
2. Practice ethical principles of coding and billing.
3. Comply with requirements of relevant regulatory authorities. Know when patient or family requests are overridden by other considerations, such as government statutes.