

First European ORL-Board Examination during the 1st Meeting of the European Academy of ORL-HNS 27th to 30th June 2009 in Mannheim

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UEMS ORL-HNS Section and Board

Background

To achieve an European standard in knowledge, skills and attitudes in ORL, standards in quality, content and also duration of training need to be adhered to. Some - but not all - European countries have an end exam in order to evaluate the knowledge acquired during their training programme.

The UEMS section-ORL-HNS (Oto-Rhino-Laryngology-Head and Neck-Surgery) has developed and revised for years a logbook for the training of residents (www.uems.net, www.orluems.com). But it became clear in the last years, that the training had to be monitored and the results of the education assessed. Therefore the European Examination Board in Otorhinolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery (EBEORL-HNS) was created by the UEMS ORL-HNS Section and Board in October 2008 in Norway. It was intended both as a quality mark and to help in the harmonisation of standards of ORL-HNS in the UEMS member countries.

Formal arrangement

Structurally the examinations are UEMS-Examinations, which will be organized and performed by the UEMS- ORL-HNS Section and Board respectively its Examination Committee (for further information see www.ebeorl-hns.org)

But there is a close cooperation of the UEMS- ORL-HNS Section and Board with the **European Federation of Oto-Rhino-Laryngology Societies (EU.F.O.S)**, (for further information see www.eufos.org/), which represents 46 National European Societies, and the **European Academy of Oto-Rhino-Laryngology and Head&Neck Surgery (EA-ORL-HNS)**, (for further information see www.eaorl-hns.org), which represents 16 European Subspeciality Organisations and allied societies in Europe.

The executive boards of these two societies have in the last year decided to merge under the name

European Confederation (EC-ORL/HNS). The aim is to strengthen and focus the energies in the ENT-field to master better the challenges of our speciality in the coming new developments of the different European health systems.

It is hoped, that the general assemblies of the two societies will agree upon this merger at the upcoming 1st Meeting of the European Academy of ORL-HNS 27th to 30th June 2009 in Mannheim, which only adds to this meeting's importance.

Examination

Through the European ORL-Board Examination a supranational independent board organised and implemented by specialists will set up a quality standard for all Europe, to enhance free movement of specialists between the member countries.

The European board Exam ORL is as many others at the moment NOT an alternative to a national examination , where one exists.

But in some medical specialities like Anaesthesiology or Urology, there is in some EU-Member countries an official reciprocal acknowledgment and the European Board Examinations are substitutes of the National examinations. In Anaesthesiology f.e. this is the case at the moment in 9 EU-countries, a very interesting, possibly trend-setting development.

Candidates who pass the European board exam in ORL and who are certified specialists in an UEMS member state may call themselves “**Fellow of the European Board of Oto-Rhino-Laryngology**”.

Other successful candidates from non-EU member countries will receive a “**Diploma of the European Board of Oto-Rhino-Laryngology**”.

Format and specification of the exam

The first exam will take place in Mannheim, Germany during the 1st Meeting of the European Academy of ORL-HNS 27th to 30th June 2009 in Mannheim

Application started 2nd of March and will end 29th May 2009.

The instructions and steps for applying to the ebeorl exam are outlined at the website [/www.ebeorl-hns.org/](http://www.ebeorl-hns.org/)

Information, questions, requests:

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Essential to be eligible to sit the exam are

1. Copy of Certificate or proof of accreditation as an ORL-HNS specialist by the responsible National authorities
2. For UEMS-Member countries only: certificate of being a resident in ORL HNS in the last year of training
3. The logbook signed by trainer (chairman, program director) or certification from the training Centre (Hospital, Department, Univ. Clinic), stating that the candidate has fulfilled the criteria set up by the UEMS-Section ORL-HNS as specified in the syllabus.

Venue: Rosengarten Congress Center of Mannheim (Germany)

Examination Committee:

Prof.Linda Luxon (Audiology, UK), Prof.Malou Hultcranz (Otology, Sweden), Prof.Stanislaw Bien (Head and Neck, Poland), Prof.Bernard Bertrand (Rhinology, Belgium), Prof.Geatano Motta (Laryngology, Italy), Prof.Angelos Nikolaou (Head and Neck, Greece), Prof.Jaime Marco (Otology, Spain)

Permanent Advisory Board:

Prof.Karl Hörmann (President UEMS ORL Section and Board, Germany)

Prof.David Proops (General Secretary UEMS ORL Section and Board, UK)

Prof.Thomas Somers (Treasurer UEMS ORL Section and Board, Belgium)

A pre-exam explanatory session will be held on Monday 29th June at 12.30hrs and it is open for all those willing to attend. It is not compulsory, though recommended to attend this session in order to have a good knowledge how this exam will be performed.

Duration of the exam: from 14.00 to 17.00 hrs

Fee for the exam 300,- €

The syllabus for this exam has been based in the log book, approved by the UEMS ORL Section and Board:

1. Basic Objectives (percentage of the exam approx. 5%)
2. Otology (including imaging , audiology, vestibular function, facial nerve ect, percentage of the exam approx. 22 %)

3. Nose and Paranasal Sinuses (including imaging, allergy, olfaction, endoscopic diagnostic and surgery ect., percentage of the exam approx. 17 %)
4. Larynx, Tracheobronchial Tree (including imaging, diagnosis, surgical and non surgical treatment, endoscopy, smell, swallowing disorders, sleep disorders, speech assessment and disorders ect., percentage of the exam approx. 17 %)
5. Oral Cavity, Pharynx and Oesophagus (including salivary glands, nasopharynx, ect., approx. 17%)
6. Head and Neck, Aesthetics (including injuries, lymphatic system, thyroid gland, plastic and reconstructive surgery , aesthetics (rhinoplasty, otoplasty, blepharoplasty, face lifting), ect., percentage of the exam approx. 22 %)

The written examination consists of 100 multiple choice questions only in English to assess the theoretical knowledge. Three hours are allowed to sit the exam. The questions are intended to avoid the use of national features or proper names as much as it is possible, replacing these with concepts which should be widely understood. A set of questions is given to each candidate, together with a special answer sheet. There are 4 or 5 possible answers to each question. The candidates must choose the one answer that they consider best (“single best choice”). The pass mark is 66%, and there are no negative marking for wrong answers. A software will be used to allow analysis of the questions and corrections for ambiguity or error, to make the exam as fair as possible. Questions seen to be incorrect or ambiguous may be withdrawn from the exam.

Candidates who fail the written exam may re-sit it at a later date. There is no limit to the number of attempts, but they must pay the fee and agree to the rules applicable at the time of the re-sitting.

Whereas the written exam only tests the theoretical knowledge, an oral exam is intended to test the clinical application of knowledge based on clinical problems that may present to ENT-Specialists. Only candidates who pass the written MCQ will be accepted for the planned oral examination, which has to be decided in the upcoming UEMS-section ORL meeting which will be held from the 1st to the 4th October 2009 in Ischia (Italy).

Conclusion

According to the Glasgow declaration of the Council of European Specialist Medical Assessments (CESMA) the Board examinations are regarded as a quality mark for independent practice at the end of specialist training. CESMA, which supported us very much in the preparation of this first European Board Exam in ORL-HNS, was created informally in 2007 in Glasgow, UK, with the purpose of harmonising the European board Assessments. Passing an European Board examination does not mean that specialists have the right to practise in UEMS-Member countries. Such rights are granted solely by the relevant National authorities. Generally candidates from all nationalities are eligible to sit the European Board examinations.

The first European ORL-Board Examination in Mannheim will be perhaps the most important step in further harmonisation of the ORL-HNS standards in and perhaps beyond Europe. The close cooperation with the upcoming European Confederation of ORL-HNS representing all European National Societies and European ORL-HNS Subspecialisations is an important scientific input, which on one side guarantees a continuous update of the current knowledge in Oto-Rhino-Laryngology and Head&Neck Surgery; and on the other hand it is an important requirement to enhance free movement of ENT-Specialists to and within European countries.