



Sleep Medicine

Certification Examination Blueprint

Purpose of the exam

The exam is designed to evaluate the knowledge, diagnostic reasoning, and clinical judgment skills expected of the certified sleep medicine specialist in the broad domain of the discipline. The ability to make appropriate diagnostic and management decisions that have important consequences for patients will be assessed. The exam may require recognition of common as well as rare clinical problems for which patients may consult a certified sleep medicine specialist. The exam is developed jointly by the ABIM, the American Board of Anesthesiology, the American Board of Family Medicine, the American Board of Otolaryngology, the American Board of Pediatrics, and the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Exam content

Exam content is determined by a pre-established blueprint, or table of specifications, which is reviewed annually and updated as needed for currency. Trainees, training program directors, and certified practitioners in the discipline are surveyed periodically to provide feedback and inform the blueprinting process.

The primary medical content categories of the blueprint are shown below, with the percentage assigned to each for a typical exam:

Medical Content Category	% of Exam
Normal Sleep and Variants	20%
Sleep-Wake Timing	10%
Insomnia	17%
Hypersomnolence	12%
Parasomnias	6%
Movement Disorders	8%
Breathing Disorders	22%
Sleep in Other Disorders	5%
Total	100%

The blueprint can be expanded for additional detail as shown below. Each primary medical content category is listed again, with the *percentage of the exam* devoted to this content area. Below each major category are the content subsections and their *percentages within the exam*. Please note: The percentages for each subsection describe content of a *typical* exam and are approximate; actual exam content may vary.

Normal Sleep and Variants 20% of Exam	Approximate % of Exam
Sleep-wake mechanisms, neurophysiology Neurophysiology Other topics in sleep physiology	4%
Chronobiology/Neurophysiology Circadian timing Homeostatic sleep regulation Other topics in chronobiology/neurophysiology	2%
Sleep at different ages/stages of human life Infancy Childhood Adolescence Adulthood Elder years Pregnancy Menopause Other topics in sleep at different ages/stages	2%
Effects of sleep deprivation Neurocognitive function Mood disturbances Metabolic disturbances Other effects of sleep deprivation	2%
Technical	2.5%
Scoring/Staging Staging Respiratory events Movement Cardiac EEG variant Artifact Other staging/scoring topics	7.5%

Sleep-Wake Timing 10% of Exam	Approximate % of Exam
Circadian sleep disorders Delayed sleep phase type Advanced sleep phase type Nonentrained type (free-running circadian sleep disorder) Irregular sleep-wake type Other types of circadian sleep disorders	6%
Shift work	<2%
Jet lag	<2%
Other timing disruptions related to behavior, medical conditions, or drugs or other substances	2%

Insomnia 17% of Exam	Approximate % of Exam
General topics on insomnia	2%
Adjustment sleep disorder	<2%
Psychophysiologic insomnia	2%
Paradoxical insomnia	<2%
Insomnia due to mental disorder	2%
Idiopathic insomnia	<2%
Inadequate sleep hygiene	2%
Behavioral Insomnia of childhood Sleep onset association Limit setting	3.5%
Other insomnias related to behavior, medical conditions, or drugs or other substances	<2%

Hypersomnolence 12% of Exam	Approximate % of Exam
Narcolepsy Type I Type II	5%
Psychiatric disorders	<2%
Periodic hypersomnia (Kleine-Levin syndrome)	<2%
Idiopathic hypersomnia	<2%
Insufficient sleep syndrome	2.5%
Post-traumatic hypersomnia	<2%
Other hypersomnias related to behavior, medical conditions, or drugs or other substances	<2%

Parasomnias 6% of Exam	Approximate % of Exam
Sleepwalking	<2%
Sleep terrors	<2%
REM sleep behavior disorder	<2%
Nightmare disorder	<2%
Confusional arousals	<2%
Enuresis	<2%
Sleep-related eating disorder	<2%
Sleep-related hallucinations	<2%
Sleep paralysis	<2%
Other types of parasomnias	<2%

Movement Disorders 8% of Exam	Approximate % of Exam
Restless legs syndrome	3.5%
Periodic limb movement during sleep	2%
Rhythmic movement disorder	<2%
Bruxism	<2%
Other types of movement disorders	<2%

Breathing Disorders 22% of Exam	Approximate % of Exam
Obstructive sleep apnea	9.5%
Central sleep apnea	8%
Cheyne-Stokes respiration	
Periodic breathing at high altitude	
Idiopathic central apnea	
Primary sleep apnea of childhood	
Mixed apnea	
Related to medication	
Other topics in central sleep apnea	
Sleep-related hypoventilation/hypoxemic syndromes	3%
Congenital hypoventilation syndromes	
Acquired hypoventilation syndromes	
Other types of sleep-related breathing disorders	<2%

Sleep in Other Disorders 5% of Exam	Approximate % of Exam
Neurologic	2%
Neurodegenerative and neuromuscular disorders	
Cerebrovascular disorders	
Seizure disorders	
Congenital disorders	
Headaches	
Neurodevelopmental	
Other neurologic topics	
Psychiatric	2%
Mood disorders	
Psychotic disorders	
Anxiety	
Substance abuse	
Other psychiatric topics	
Other medical disorders	<2%
Genetic conditions	

Endocrine disorders Cardiac disorders Pulmonary disorders Gastrointestinal disorders Other medical disorders that affect sleep
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Exam questions in the content areas above may also address clinical topics in pediatric medicine, pharmacology, sleep evaluation, and organ system physiology that are important to the practice of sleep medicine specialists.

Exam format

The exam is composed of multiple-choice questions with a single best answer, predominantly describing patient scenarios. Questions ask about the work done (that is, tasks performed) by physicians in the course of practice:

- Making a diagnosis
- Ordering and interpreting results of tests
- Recommending treatment or other patient care
- Assessing risk, determining prognosis, and applying principles from epidemiologic studies
- Understanding the underlying pathophysiology of disease and basic science knowledge applicable to patient care

Clinical information presented may include other media illustrating relevant findings, such as diagnostic imaging studies.

Exam tutorial

A tutorial including examples of ABIM exam question format can be found at <http://www.abim.org/exam/prepare.aspx>.

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