DrExam Part B MRCS OSCE Revision Guide: Books 1 & 2

Benjamin H Miranda, Kamil Asaad, Simon P Kay, Peter EM Butler, Eds. Published by Libri Publishing, Oxfordshire, UK. ISBN: 978-1907471056 and 978-1907471063

The Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS) examination is one of the first hurdles that needs to be negotiated for the junior doctor embarking on a surgical career. It requires a significant commitment of time and energy to succeed as well as a great deal of planning. Success in the examination brings an overwhelming sense of pride.

Part A requires a sound understanding of the basic sciences, with the necessity to return to those dusty medical school notes and hone one's technique of multi choice questions. Part B is a quite different kettle of fish! This examination focuses on the applied surgical sciences and practical elements required for a successful career in surgery.

There is a plethora of books and revision aids in the market for the MRCS examination. *DrExam Part B MRCS OSCE Revision Guide: Book 1 & 2* are an excellent addition to the books in the market. Edited by Ben Miranda and Kamil Asaad, two plastic surgery registrars, and with the contributions of six professors, 26 consultants and 23 specialists, the two volumes encompass all aspects of the Part B examination. Volume 1 covers radiology, applied surgical science critical care, anatomy and surgical pathology, surgical skills, and the principles of surgery and patient safety. Volume 2 covers clinical examinations, lumps and bumps, head and neck, trunk and thorax, limbs, spine and vascular, neurosciences, communication skills, ethics, and history taking. In addition, volume 2 is accompanied by a DVD which carefully demonstrates all of the major examinations in order to facilitate learning and enable the candidate to pick up the subtleties required to excel in the examination.

Combined together, the *DrExam Part B MRCS OSCE Revision Guide* books provide a comprehensive approach to the intercollegiate examination. The new syllabus appears to have been at the forefront of the editors' minds ensuring its relevance to the new format intercollegiate examination. The books take a question and answer (Q&A) format which is well suited to the examination and lends itself to particular use for revision groups. Despite the potential limitations of the Q&A format, these revision guides manage to cover a large proportion of the examination contents with ease.

The quality of the prosections, all in colour, is of particular note. In terms of a realistic representation of those encountered in the examination they could not be bettered. The nature of the questions closely matches those likely to be faced in the viva. If one criticism of the anatomy section could be made, it would be that it could be

expanded to encompass a little more of the anatomy that may be encountered, particularly within the Neurosciences section.

It will be argued by some that the series is not comprehensive enough for the examination. I fear that this would be an unfair criticism. The books are best used to develop and enhance the candidate's examination technique. The intention of the series is not to be all encompassing. It, quite rightly, expects candidates to have done the 'leg work' and develop a sound knowledge of the applied surgical sciences as well as hone their clinical skills in clinical practice. Rather, *DrExam Part B MRCS OSCE Revision Guide: Books 1 & 2* provide a failsafe framework for approaching the daunting prospect of the examination. Answers are set out in a clear and logical manner, which enable the candidates to cover questions in an organised manner, thereby maximising their chances of impressing the examiners. These books provide a great source of fine tuning for the MRCS Part B OSCE examination and to surgical trainees, foundation year doctors and students who require an approachable tome to revise their core knowledge.

The DrExam Part B MRCS series have proved to be a worthy addition to the cluttered MRCS revision market place. Edited by two enthusiastic young surgeons with an oversight of their more senior colleagues, they provide the perspective of both sides of the examination: the candidate and examiner. There is no 'quick fix' to passing the MRCS examination and while this book cannot be a substitute for a gruelling period of revision, it certainly helps.

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