Caring For Candidates: Revising Score Reporting for a High Stakes Examination

2023 Innovations in Testing Conference
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PROTECTING THE PUBLIC BY PROVIDING THE MEANS TO ASSESS COMPETENCIES FOR OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE AND RELATED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS

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NBOME
If you’re not sleeping, eating, and nourishing your relationships—your mental, emotional, and spiritual needs—you’re not only going to have a hard time showing up for your exam, but also for your life as well as you should be.
Goal: Helping to reduce the stress of osteopathic medical students
Osteopathic Medical Student Stress

What is COMLEX-USA Level 1?

• First examination in a 3-exam licensure series for osteopathic physicians
• Tests content from 2 years of medical school

Why is there performance stress on Level 1?

• High scores might provide access to competitive clinical rotations
• Secondary use of scores for residency applications - score high and increase your odds

Preparation for Level 1 takes time and money

• Test prep courses
• Dedicated study time in medical school
Changing the Reporting Format

• NBOME for years considered changing Level 1 from numeric score to Pass/Fail
• Stakeholder survey in 2020 provided supporting data
• Survey majority agreed with changing to P/F but maintaining formative feedback
• Most felt P/F score reporting would still allow students to advance in their training

BUT...

“How can I stand out without a score?”
Considerations for Change To P/F

**Pro**
- Enhance student wellness
- Meets licensure assessment objective
- Reduce disparities and inequities (test prep cost, school-sponsored study time)

**Con**
- Reduced content feedback
- Changes the incentive to prepare adequately?
- Transfers stress to the subsequent examination in the series

**Anticipated Outcomes**
- Schools reduce “teaching to the test”
- Encourage holistic selection rather than test scores for residency program applications
NBOME Implementation

- Converted from 3-digit standard score to Pass/Fail in May 2022
- Kept a revised formative performance profile
- Offered same report format to Passers and Failers
- Cautioned against unintended uses by students
COMLEX-USA Level 1 Score Report

The Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX-USA) series is designed for use for all applicants for osteopathic medical licensure. COMLEX-USA consists of three progressively higher level examinations. Level 1 indicates that the candidate has demonstrated competence in the foundational biomedical sciences and osteopathic principles and related physician competency domains for osteopathic medical care of patients as required to enter supervised patient care settings and to continue lifelong learning. Your result for COMLEX-USA Level 1 is reported below.

Result: **PASS**

This candidate score report does not constitute an official transcript. Only official transcripts from the NBOME should be used for primary verification of COMLEX-USA performance.

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COMLEX-USA Level 1 Formative Performance Profile

This performance profile provides a comparison of your performance to the performance of other first-time test takers in the content areas tested in the examination.

- "Lower" indicates performance below an approximate 50% confidence interval of the national mean performance.
- "Average" indicates performance within an approximate 50% confidence interval of the national mean performance.
- "Higher" indicates performance above an approximate 50% confidence interval of the national mean performance.

Because the examination is highly integrative, NBOME recommends reviewing all content areas if failing the examination.

⚠️ The NBOME provides this formative information to the candidate and the school for the purposes of continuous quality improvement and lifelong learning. The relative strengths and weaknesses information relates to the COMLEX-USA master blueprint. The NBOME strongly cautions against the use of this information for any other purposes, including sharing in any form as part of application to residency programs.

Please visit our website at www.nbome.org for details about the COMLEX-USA Master Blueprint.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Domain</th>
<th>Minimum % of Test Questions on Level 1</th>
<th>Your Performance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Presentation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Health and Patient Presentations Related to Wellness</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Presentations Related to Human Development, Reproduction, and Sexuality</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Presentations Related to the Cardiopulmonary System and Metabolism</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Presentations Related to the Nervous System and Mental Health</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Presentations Related to the Musculoskeletal System</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Presentations Related to the Gastrointestinal/Reproductive System and Breasts</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Presentations Related to the Endocrine System and Metabolism</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Presentations Related to the Circulatory and Hematologic Systems</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Presentations Related to the Respiratory System</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Presentations Related to the Immunologic System</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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USMLE IMPLEMENTATION

• USMLE also converted their Step 1 exam to Pass/Fail

• Offered different score report formats to Passers and Failers

_We did not confer with USMLE on the decision_
Outcomes

- Student feedback - mostly positive
- School feedback - varied
- Social media feedback - positive
- Clinical rotation directors - varied
Next Steps

Provide the failing students with more information

• “How close was I to passing?”
• “What do I need to study next time?”

Research topics

• Impact on pass rates
• Exam prep and changes in stress
• Candidate satisfaction pre/post
• Residency application performance pre/post
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