



# TRACERS

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## ABMS Evidence Library

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The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) has an on-line evidence library, which highlights research studies and articles that demonstrate the value of Board Certification, and Maintenance of Certification (MOC). The evidence library can be accessed at <http://www.abms.org/EvidenceLibrary>. The library is updated as new data becomes available.

The evidence library is organized by topics, and is searchable using several different parameters. Only abstracts are provided, so users must retrieve articles using their own resources. One interesting article from the ABMS Evidence Library is summarized below.

The relationship between MOC and clinical knowledge of family physicians was studied by O'Neill et al. The authors wanted to compare the medical knowledge and clinical decision making skills of recent residency graduates versus seasoned physicians. The authors were able to make this comparison because physicians who are applying for initial certification by the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) and physicians who are taking the examination to maintain their certification must take the same examination.

Performances of 10,801 examinees were compared—2,440 seeking initial certification, and 8,361 seeking MOC—on the summer 2009 American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) certification examination. The results demonstrated that diplomates without gaps in their certification outperformed both initial certifiers and those who had gaps in their certification. Family physicians who maintained certification performed better than recent graduates. They increased their examination scores by almost 17 points each successive time that they took the exam, with scores reaching their highest point 28 to 31 years after initial certification. The findings suggest that ABFM diplomates who maintain their certification perform better on the ABFM certification examination with additional years of experience until approximately 30 years after residency training.

Reference: O'Neill, Thomas R. PhD; Puffer, James C. MD. Maintenance of Certification and Its Association With the Clinical Knowledge of Family Physicians. *Academic Medicine* 2013;88(6):780-787