



MOC Evidence Library



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This is the second in a series of short reviews for ABNM diplomats to help keep us updated on published findings regarding the value of the Maintenance of Certification Process (MOC) in our careers. These articles are often published in non-imaging related publications and may not be seen by members of our specialty. The American Board of Medical Specialties has an on-line evidence library where articles are listed with short summaries of their findings. It is constantly updated and can serve as a resource for ideas and provide background for the MOC as an important aspect of our professional careers, quality patient care, and re-impursement. Below is a summary of an article from the ABMS on-line evidence library published by our Internal Medicine colleagues regarding quality of care assessment.

Assessing Quality of Care Knowledge Matters

Eric S. Holmboe, M.D., Rebecca Lipner, Ph.D., Ann Greiner, MCP
JAMA. 2008;299(3):338-340. doi:10.1001/jama.299.3.338.

The article begins with the premise that “ what is often overlooked in quality improvement, but equally important, is that effective microsystems must have highly competent clinicians, who possess sufficient knowledge and clinical skills to make and execute evidence-based decisions, exercise informed clinical judgment, and deal effectively with uncertainty. Clinical judgment and the ability to deal with uncertainty are especially critical with respect to misuse and overuse of processes of care. Physician knowledge and clinical judgment also are central to making correct diagnoses.”

The article goes on to present a discussion of the issues in medical knowledge and quality. How does specialty board examination address these issues? Can we assess clinical reasoning and diagnosis ability in a meaningful way? The authors review and cite multiple literature references that support findings that over time, clinical skills tend to diminish for practitioners, and that engaging in continuous professional development, as aspect of which can be specialty board MOC and re-certification, can help reverse this natural trend. Patient care and outcomes data analyses for specific clinical conditions has also identified that better outcomes are associated with the specialty board certification status of the physician providing the care. In other words, the authors state that “evidence exists that medical knowledge as one of the foundational competencies for clinical practice, matters.” Our patients also care about this documentation of competence. Professional competence, cognitive and diagnostic skills in practitioners; their assessment and maintenance is an area of active investigation is beginning to be explored in evidence based investigations.