Diploma in GU Medicine (Dip GUM) and Specialty and Associate Specialist (SAS) Doctors

The purpose of this letter is to offer suggestions as to how SAS doctors contemplating taking the Dip GUM can plan their preparation.

The Dip GUM examination is set at ST4 level, this being held to be a reasonable benchmark of acceptable competence in the specialty. The exam is taken by Specialty Trainees (ST) and SAS doctors; it has been noted that SAS doctors tend to find it more difficult to pass than do STs.

Initial analysis of performance in the 2 most recent Dip GUM examinations suggests that all candidates do well on “barn door” questions in both the BOS and the OSCE parts of the exam. Specialty trainees tend to do better where specialist knowledge/experience of both HIV and GUM is required, and non trainees tend to do better on bread-and-butter GUM and HIV seen in routine clinics, and in some common general medicine problems e.g. hypertension. There is no evidence to indicate that non-trainees perform specifically worse in HIV-related questions.

As for all examinations, the amount of preparation that candidates conduct will impact on their performance. The syllabus is published in the Guide to the Diploma (available to download), so that all candidates can assess their experience against it.

BASHH is keen that SAS doctors continue to take the exam and the BASHH Board recommends:

- All candidates for the Diploma in Genitourinary Medicine are advised to:
  1. Discuss their intention to take the examination with their consultant(s) at the earliest opportunity.
  2. Read the examination syllabus and guidance carefully so as to gain a full appreciation of what is required. This can be accessed at:
3. Join/organize a study group with other local candidates for the examination.
4. Attend the Dip GUM study day organised by BASHH and the Dip GUM workshop at the Annual SAS conference.
5. Arrange to attend extra clinics to address perceived gaps in their knowledge or expertise.

- Consultants supporting SAS candidates are requested to:
  1. Ensure that SAS doctors are aware of this guidance as some are not BASHH members
  2. Ensure that SAS candidates have sufficient clinical exposure to:
     • Patients with HIV related problems
     • More complex/challenging clinical cases
  3. Have sufficient formal teaching
  4. Have sufficient access to study leave.

BASHH hopes that these steps will help SAS doctors’ preparation for the Diploma examination, thus leading to better trained more highly skilled doctors thereby improving patient care.

Dr John Lee       BASHH SAS representative
Dr Siobhan Murphy  Convener Diploma in Genitourinary Medicine
Dr Janet Wilson   BASHH President