NCCAOM Examination
Review

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NCCAOM Examination
Foundation of Oriental Medicine
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Foundation of Oriental Medicine

• Reference Books
  – All Knowledge points and Practice questions are from the following books:
    • Dongcheng Li, *Review and Pretest for NCCAOM and California Exams in TCM Foundation and Acupuncture*, the latest version.
    • Dongcheng Li, *Review and Pretest for NCCAOM and California Licensing Exams in TCM Foundation*, the latest version.

Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Foundation of Oriental Medicine

• **Domain A:** Clinical Examination Methods (10% of total exam)
• **Domain B:** Assessment, Analysis, and Differential Diagnosis Based Upon Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Theory (45% of total exam)
• **Domain C:** Treatment Principle (Zhi Ze) and Strategy (Zhi Fa) (45% of total exam)
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Foundation of Oriental Medicine

- **Domain A: Clinical Examination Methods (10% of total exam)**
  - Collect and recognize clinically significant signs and symptoms.
  1. **Looking (Wang)**
     1) Spirit (Shen) appearance (including color)
        - Observe outward manifestation of Shen (Spirit) (e.g., complexion, expression, demeanor, and general behavior)
        - Identify and relate Shen (Spirit) to pattern/syndrome differentiation*

        - CAM: p266-267
        - Dr. Li’s book: p22; p31; p241
        - Practice questions: Dr. Li’s book: p42 (No. 66); P46 (No. 100); p273 (No. 126); p358 (No. 64)

  2) Face, eyes, nose, ears, mouth, lips, teeth, and throat
     - Observe normal and abnormal conditions (including color, moisture, texture, mouth, lips, teeth and throat)
     - Identify and relate facial features
     - Recognize pathological manifestations and organ-indicative locations

      - CAM: p267-268; CAM: p269;
      - Dr. Li’s book:p9-11; p22; p241; Dr. Li’s book: p9; p22-25; p241
      - Practice questions: Dr. Li’s book: p39(No. 43); p259(No. 16); p261 (No. 28); p249(No. 146); p276 (No. 261, 264); p292 (No. 271, 275); p293 (No. 276); p433 (No. 56)……
      - Practice questions: Dr. Li’s book: p40 (No. 56); p47(No. 106); p269 (No. 90)
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Looking (Wang)

3) Tongue (body and coating)
- Observe normal and abnormal manifestations, patterns, conditions, and changes of the tongue and sub-lingual area
- Identify and relate features of the tongue to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
- Recognize pathological manifestations of the tongue and tongue coating, including color, size, moisture, texture, shape, position, movement, organ-indicative locations

- CAM: p270-274;
- Dr. Li’s book: p9; p22; p243-247
- Practice questions: Dr. Li’s book: p39(No. 46); p39 (No. 49); p41 (No. 61); p42(No. 70); p48(No.115); p189(No. 110); p189(No.114); p257(No.2. 5); p258(No. 9); p260(No. 21); p260(No.22, 26); p261(No. 32); p279(No. 170---215)……

Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Looking (Wang)

4) Physical characteristics of the body
- Observe form, movement, and physical characteristics (e.g., head, hair, neck, back, chest, abdomen, extremities, nails)
- Identify and relate form, movement, and physical characteristics to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
- Recognize pathological significance of form, movement, and physical characteristics
- Observe conditions and changes of the skin
- Identify and relate conditions and changes of the skin to pattern/syndrome
- differentiation*
- Recognize pathological significance of conditions and changes of the skin
- Observe normal and abnormal excretions (e.g., phlegm, sputum, saliva, sweat, discharge, stool, urine)
- Identify and relate conditions and changes of excretions to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
- Recognize pathological significance of excretions
### Examination Contents Outline (2015)
#### Looking (Wang)

- CAM: p268; CAM: p269; Dr. Li’s book: p9; p22-25; p241; Dr. Li’s book: p30; p54; p241

- Practice questions: Dr. Li’s book: p273 (No. 128, 134); p274 (No. 136); p275 (No. 142, 143); p40 (No. 53); p273 (No. 125); p428 (No. 22); p441 (No. 27); p452 (No. 27)

- Practice questions: Dr. Li’s book: (phlegm) p36 (No. 26); p59 (No. 15); p61 (No. 32); p262 (No. 37); p264 (No. 55); p270 (No. 104); p275 (No. 144); p277 (No. 154); p278 (No. 134) (urine) p34 (No. 7); p268 (No. 83) (stool) p265 (No. 62); p266 (No. 71); p268 (No. 87); p271 (No. 107); p272 (No. 120); p277 (No. 153);
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Listening and smelling (Wen)

2) Odors
- Smell body odors
- Identify and relate body odors to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
- Recognize pathological significance of body odors
- Smell breath and mouth odors
- Identify and relate breath and mouth odors to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
- Recognize pathological significance of breath and mouth odors
- Smell excretions (e.g., sweat, urine, feces, leukorrhea, flatulence, wound exudates)
- Identify and relate excretions to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
- Recognize pathological significance of excretions

- CAM: p273
- Dr. Li's book: p247-252
- Practice questions: Dr. Li's book: p273 (No. 124); p293 (No. 277, 278)
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Asking (Wen)

3. Asking (Wen)
   1) Chief complaint
      ❑ Inquire about presenting complaint (onset, duration, location, nature, alleviation, aggravation)
      ❑ Inquire about the history and development of chief complaint
      ❑ Identify and relate chief complaint to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
      ❑ Identify appropriate additional questions based on examination findings and patients’ response to inquiries

Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Asking (Wen)

2) Current health conditions
   ❑ Conduct a review of systems, including the “Ten Questions” (Shi Wen)
   ❑ Identify and relate current health conditions to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
   ❑ Identify appropriate additional questions based on examination findings and patients’ response to inquiries
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Asking (Wen)

3) Health history
- Inquire about personal health history, including previous symptoms, diagnoses, and treatments
- Inquire about familial history
- Identify and relate health history to pattern/syndrome differentiation
- Identify appropriate additional questions based on examination findings and patients’ response to inquiries

Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Touching (palpation) (Qie)

4. Touching (palpation) (Qie)
   1) Radial pulses (including the 28 Qualities)
      - Identify the location of radial pulses
      - Identify qualities of radial pulses (including rate, depth, strength, and shape) as indicators of patterns of disharmony and of normal and abnormal states of organ and meridian function
      - Identify and relate radial pulses to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Touching (palpation) (Qie)

2) Abdomen
- Identify, through palpation, normal and abnormal conditions of the abdomen (e.g., temperature, texture, shape, and pain)
- Identify abdominal regions representing organs and meridians
- Identify and relate abdominal palpation findings to pattern/syndrome differentiation*

3) Meridians
- Identify, through palpation, findings along the meridians (e.g., nodules, tenderness, numbness, temperature, sensitivity)
- Identify and relate meridian palpation findings to pattern/syndrome differentiation*

4) Other body areas
- Identify, through palpation, pain, body sensations (e.g., numbness, tingling, sensitivity), temperature changes, and quality of tissue (e.g., edema, hardness/softness, tension/flaccidity)
- Identify and relate palpation findings to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
Examination Contents Outline (2015)

*Pattern/Syndrome Differentiation:

- Eight Principles (Ba Geng)
- Organs (Zang Fu)
- Meridian/Channel (Jing Luo)
- Six Stages (Liu Jing)
- Four Levels (Wei, Qi, Ying, Xue)
- Five Elements (Wu Xing)
- Qi, Blood, Body Fluids (Qi, Xue, Jin Ye)
- Triple Burner (San Jiao)

Examination Contents Outline (2015)

Fundamental theory of traditional Chinese medicine

- **Domain B: Assessment, Analysis, and Differential Diagnosis Based Upon Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Theory (45% of Total Exam)**
  - Formulate a differential diagnosis (Bian Zheng).
  - 1. Knowledge and Application of Fundamental Theory of TCM Physiology (Sheng Li), Etiology (Bing Yin), and Pathogenesis (Bing Ji)
    - 1). Yin/Yang theory (e.g., Interior/Exterior, Cold/Heat, Deficient/Excess)
      - Describe Yin/Yang theory
      - Evaluate symptoms according to Yin/Yang theory
      - Identify pathologies according to Yin/Yang theory
      - Apply Yin/Yang theory to clinical assessment
## Examination Contents Outline (2015)
### Fundamental theory of traditional Chinese medicine

### 2) Five Elements (Five Phases/Wu Xing)
- Describe Five Elements theory
- Evaluate symptoms according to Five Elements theory
- Identify pathologies according to Five Elements theory
- Apply Five Elements theory to clinical assessment

- CAM: p20-26
- Dr. Li’s book: p10-13
- Practice questions: Dr. Li’s book: p16 (No. 18) ……

### 3) Organ theory (Zang Fu)
- Describe Organ theory
- Evaluate symptoms according to Organ theory
- Identify pathologies according to Organ theory
- Apply Organ theory to clinical assessment

- CAM: p27-50
- Dr. Li’s book: p21-27
- Practice questions: Dr. Li’s book: p33 (No.1) ……
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Fundamental theory of traditional Chinese medicine

4) Channel theory (Jing Luo) (including regular channels, Extraordinary channels, Luoconnecting channels, divergent channels, muscle channels, and skin regions)
   - Describe Channel theory
   - Evaluate symptoms according to Channel theory
   - Identify pathologies according to Channel theory
   - Apply Channel theory to clinical assessment

   - CAM: p59-65
   - Dr. Li’s book: p62-70
   - Practice questions: Dr. Li’s book: p71-77

5) Essential Substances theory [Qi, Blood (Xue), Fluids (Jin Ye), Essence (Jing), Spirit (Shen)]
   - Describe Qi, Blood (Xue), Body Fluids (Jin Ye), Essence (Jing), Spirit (Shen)
   - Evaluate symptoms according to Qi, Blood (Xue), Body Fluids (Jin Ye), Essence (Jing), Spirit (Shen)
   - Identify pathologies according to Qi, Blood (Xue), Body Fluids (Jin Ye), Essence (Jing), Spirit (Shen)
   - Apply Qi, Blood (Xue), Body Fluids (Jin Ye), Essence (Jing), Spirit (Shen) to clinical assessment

   - CAM: p51-58
   - Dr. Li’s book: p28-31
   - Practice questions: Dr. Li’s book: p36 (No. 26-29)
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Fundamental theory of traditional Chinese medicine

6) Causes of Disease: External (Six Excesses [Liu Yin]), Internal (Seven Emotions), and Miscellaneous (diet, excessive sexual activity, excessive physical work or lack of exercise, trauma, bites, parasites, Phlegm, Blood stasis)

- Describe Causes of Disease
- Evaluate symptoms according to Causes of Disease
- Identify pathologies according to Causes of Disease
- Apply Causes of Disease to clinical assessment

Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Differential Diagnosis

2. Formulation of a Differential Diagnosis Based upon Chief Complaint (Zhu Su), Prioritization of Major Symptoms (Zhu Zheng), Knowledge of TCM Diseases (Bian Bing), and Pattern Identification (Bian Zheng)

1) Eight Principles (Ba Gang) (i.e., Yin/Yang, Interior/Exterior, Cold/Heat, Deficient/Excess)

- Describe Eight Principles differentiation
- Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Eight Principles differentiation
- Formulate a diagnosis based on the analysis of Eight Principles differentiation
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Differential Diagnosis

2) Organ theory (Zang Fu)

- Describe Organ pattern differentiation
- Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Organ differentiation
- Formulate a diagnosis based on the analysis of Organ differentiation

Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Differential Diagnosis

3) Channel theory (Jing Luo) (including regular channels, Extraordinary channels, Luo-connecting channels, divergent channels, muscle channels, and skin regions)

- Describe Channel theory
- Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Channel theory
- Formulate a diagnosis based on the analysis of Channel theory
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Differential Diagnosis

4) Six Stages (Tai Yang, Yang Ming, Shao Yang, Tai Yin, Shao Yin, Jue Yin) Knowledge of San Jiao differentiation in relationship to meridians and organs, and interrelationships among San Jiao

- Describe the Six Stages differentiation
- Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Six Stages differentiation
- Formulate a diagnosis based on the analysis of Six Stages differentiation

Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Differential Diagnosis

5) Four Levels (Wei, Qi, Ying, Xue)

- Describe the Four Levels differentiation
- Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Four Levels differentiation
- Formulate a diagnosis based on the analysis of Four Levels differentiation
Examination Contents Outline (2015)  
Differential Diagnosis  

6) Five Elements (Five Phases/Wu Xing)  
- Describe Five Elements differentiation  
- Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Five Elements differentiation  
- Formulate a diagnosis based on the analysis of Five Elements differentiation  

7) Qi, Blood, Body Fluids (Qi, Xue, Jin Ye)  
- Describe Qi, Blood, Body Fluids differentiation  
- Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Qi, Blood, Body Fluids differentiation  
- Formulate a diagnosis based on the analysis of Qi, Blood, Body Fluids differentiation
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Differential Diagnosis

8) Triple Burner (San Jiao)

- Describe Triple Burner differentiation
- Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Triple Burner differentiation
- Formulate a diagnosis based on the analysis of Triple Burner differentiation

9) Six Excesses (Liu Yin)

- Describe Six Excesses
- Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Six Excesses
- Formulate a diagnosis based on the analysis of Six Excesses
Examination Contents Outline (2015)

Formulate treatment principle and strategy based upon

・ **Domain C:** Treatment Principle (Zhi Ze) and Strategy (Zhi Fa) *(45% of Total Exam)*

Formulate treatment principle and strategy based upon differential diagnosis (Bian Zheng).

1. Treatment Principle Based upon Differential Diagnosis
   ① Eight Principles (Ba Gang)
   ② Organs (Zang Fu)
   ③ Meridian/Channel (Jing Luo)
   ④ Six Stages (Liu Jing)
   ⑤ Four Levels (Wei, Qi, Ying, Xue)
   ⑥ Five Elements (Wu Xing)
   ⑦ Qi, Blood, Body Fluids (Qi, Xue, Jin Ye)
   ⑧ Triple Burner (San Jiao)
   ⑨ Causes of Disease: External (Six Excesses [Liu Yin]), Internal (Seven Emotions), and
   ⑩ Miscellaneous (diet, excessive sexual activity, excessive physical work or lack of exercise, trauma, bites, parasites, Phlegm, Blood stasis)

Select appropriate treatment principle based on pattern/syndrome differential diagnosis
Examination Contents Outline (2015)
Formulate treatment principle and strategy based upon

2 Treatment Strategy to Accomplish Treatment Principle

- Select appropriate treatment strategy (e.g., disperse, tonify, cool, warm) treatment principle
- Prioritize treatment focus [e.g., Root and Branch (Biao Ben), acute/chronic, external/internal, Pathogenic Factors, constitutional, seasonal]
- Adjust treatment principle and/or strategy based on patient’s response, disease progression, and lifestyle (e.g., substance use, smoking, exercise, diet)