The Impact of Changes to The National Board Dental Examinations

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The Issue

- Boards moving to pass/non pass format starting January 1, 2010
Why?

- Boards were never meant to measure anything else except a threshold for licensing.
◆ Bad decision? :(
◆ Good decision? :)
Why the anxiety?

- Change
- Uncertainty - unanswered questions
- More work for most of those involved (PG Directors, Admissions Officers, Academic Deans, Students)
- Some extra cost
Other professional licensing exams

- **Veterinarian - P/F**  
  American Association of Veterinary State Boards

- **Nursing - P/F**

- **Dental spec. - P/F: Pros, Endo, OS, Ortho**

- **Law - Bar exams - P/F** - no requirement to pass individual subsections,

- **Architecture - P/F**  
  (National Council of Architectural Registration Boards)

- **Pharmacy - P/F**  
  Applicants not obtaining a score of 75 or higher are given a performance profile, which details their relative areas of strength and weakness. They must wait at least 91 days before retaking the NAPLEX (North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination).
NBDE scores are used in...

1. Postgraduate applications
2. Admissions to Dental School for AP students
3. State Boards
4. Graduation requirements
NBDE scores are used in...

5. School ranking
6. Drive curricular change
7. Individual subject performance compared to nat’l data
8. In schools without GPA and ranking
Some related sites which may be affected

The NBDE Test
The NBDE Test- Guaranteed to raise NBDE test scores in a few hours.
www.mo-media.com/nbde

Kaplan NBDE Prep
In-Depth Review, Proven Results.
Score Higher On The NBDE!
www.KapTest.com/NBDE
Do Admissions Data and NBDE Part I Scores Predict Clinical Performance Among Dental Students?


These data indicate that, within this study population, there is little to no uniform association between preclinical didactic performance and measurements of clinical productivity and clinical proficiency. It is possible that the overlap in skill sets required for success in the predental/preclinical and clinical areas is minimal.
ADA - Validity Study 2004-5

- Both predental GPA, science GPA and DAT scores, together are important predictors of 1st and 2d year dental school Biomedical grades.

- Biomedical > Average GPA > Preclinical

- DAT, AA, Sci - Biomedical grade

- PA - Preclinical grade
How are board scores used now and how can we adjust?
1. Postgraduate Application

- NBDE scores made screening easy
- In the absence of a score what can be done?
  - GPA, ranking,
  - portfolios and resumes,
  - interviews, better evaluation letters, phone calls, prior experience with schools, GRE
Student comments at:

http://forums.studentdoctor.net

• “how will this effect specialty programs? ... Will there be a beauty contest to select candidates for specialties now?” I hope this doesn't put more emphasis on undergrad grades!

• “While this may take a while to fully be fleshed out, I think this is a very good idea. It will simply change the focus. The NBDE is simply not a good measure of success for specialties. Those interested in specializing will have to take their noses out books for a few minutes and give back to their communities. Yes, this takes away an objective measure, but this wasn't a good one.”
2. Admissions for AP

- The great equalizer for admissions
- In the absence of a score what can be done?
  - DAT, GRE
  - Interview, On-site statement writing
  - ECE/WES grading - standardization
  - 5 week prescreening of candidates
  - Requirement for passing both part I and II
3. State board requirements

- NBDE - actual scores are not relevant for licensing, only passing it
- No change - issue a license based on a passing score
4. Graduation/promotion requirements

- NBDE - scores are important for licensing and hence for graduation
- use the passing score as the threshold
5. School ranking by JCNE

- NBDE - scores are inappropriate for ranking purposes.
- JCNE stopped ranking schools based on actual scores. Currently lists only failure rates.
6. To Drive Curricular Change

- NBDEs - test what schools teach and what the profession expects them to know.
- Board scores should not be used to gauge what schools should teach.
7. Comparing individual scores with nat’l. scores.

- NBDE - scores cannot really be compared with national scores to derive meaningful information. Raw scores are not standardized.
8. Schools without ranking and GPA

- How will schools without a GPA, class ranking be affected?

- Add other evaluation tools:
  - portfolios
  - personalized letters of evaluations,
  - community work,
  - surveys of PG directors
Likely Outcome
Likely outcome:

Ultimately, it will have a positive effect:

- Proper use of the boards
- Students will focus broadly - not just on board scores - well rounded graduates
- Improved security for the exams
- Curriculum will move toward portfolios
...and you thought **YOU** had a bad day
Ready for Questions?
In other studies overall DAT have largely shown insignificant correlation with preclinical laboratory course performance.