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Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Board Certification Test Content Outline - effective date: March 1, 2010

There are 175 questions on this examination. Of these, 150 are scored questions and 25 are pretest questions that are not scored. Pretest questions are used to determine how well these questions will perform before they are used on the scored portion of the examination. The pretest questions cannot be distinguished from those that will be scored, so it is important for a candidate to answer all questions. A candidate's score, however, is based solely on the 150 scored questions. Performance on pretest questions does not affect a candidate's score.

This Test Content Outline identifies the areas that are included on the examination. The percentage and number of questions in each of the major categories of the scored portion of the examination are also shown.

Category	Domains of Practice	No. of Questions	Percent
I	Nurse Practitioner/Patient Relationship	21	14.30%
II	Assessment and Diagnosis	36	23.60%
III	Clinical Management	51	33.90%
IV	Health Care Delivery	21	14.10%
V	Professional Responsibility	21	14.10%
	Total	150	100%

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Please note that the entire test content outline is associated with health related problems/issues of adult patients (ages 18 years and above) as indicated in the following notes:

Note 1: System-Specific Health Problems

0. Non-Specific

A. Cardiovascular

1. Acute coronary syndromes/ coronary artery disease
2. Hypertension
3. Heart failure
4. Valvular disease
5. Peripheral vascular disease
6. Deep-vein thrombosis
7. Pulmonary hypertension
8. Cardiac rhythm disturbances
9. Pericarditis
10. Tamponade
11. Cardiomyopathy
12. Aneurysm
13. Endocarditis

B. Pulmonary

1. Emphysema
2. Asthma
3. Bronchitis
4. Respiratory infections
5. Tuberculosis
6. Pulmonary embolism
7. Acute respiratory failure
8. Acute respiratory distress syndrome
9. Pneumothorax
10. Pleural effusion

C. Endocrine

1. Diabetes mellitus
2. Thyroid diseases
3. Addison's disease (adrenal insufficiency)
4. Syndrome of inappropriate secretion of antidiuretic hormone (SIADH)
5. Cushing's disease
6. Pheochromocytoma
7. Diabetes insipidus
8. Endocrine Imbalances

D. Neurologic

1. Cerebrovascular disease (e.g., Transient ischemic attack, Stroke, Aneurysm)
2. Neurologic Inflammatory/Degenerative Processes (e.g., Myasthenia gravis, Guillain-Barré syndrome, and Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson)
3. Head trauma
4. Spinal cord trauma
5. Meningitis
6. Encephalopathy
7. Seizure disorder (including status epilepticus)
8. Herniated disk
9. Headache

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- 10. Intracranial Pressure (ICP)
- E. Renal/genitourinary/ gynecologic
 - 1. Infection (EGSTD, renal, urinary)
 - 2. Renal Disease (e.g., renal insufficiency, acute tubular necrosis, end stage renal failure)
 - 3. Benign prostatic hypertrophy
 - 4. Renal artery stenosis
 - 5. Renal calculi
- F. Gastrointestinal
 - 1. Peptic ulcer disease
 - 2. Hepatitis
 - 3. Hepatic failure
 - 4. Cholecystitis
 - 5. Pancreatitis
 - 6. Diverticulitis
 - 7. Peritonitis
 - 8. Mesenteric ischemia
 - 9. Appendicitis
 - 10. Ulcerative colitis
 - 11. Bowel obstruction
 - 12. Esophageal varices
 - 13. Gastrointestinal bleeding
 - 14. Cirrhosis
- G. Hematology/oncology
 - 1. Anemias
 - 2. Cancers (e.g., lung, colon, breast, prostate, ovarian, lymphoid, melanoma)
 - 3. Sickle cell disease
 - 4. Coagulopathies
- H. Immunology
 - 1. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome/human immunodeficiency virus infection
 - 2. Rheumatoid arthritis
 - 3. Other autoimmune diseases (e.g., systemic lupus erythematosus, scleroderma, sarcoidosis)
 - 4. Acute allergic reactions
 - 5. Immunosuppression
- I. Musculoskeletal
 - 1. Trauma
 - 2. Degenerative joint diseases (e.g., rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, gout)

Note 2: Psychosocial Health Issues

- 0. Non-Specific
- 1. Violence
- 2. Depression
- 3. Substance abuse
- 4. Anxiety
- 5. Grief
- 6. Sexuality
- 7. Powerlessness
- 8. Altered mental status (e.g., delirium, dementia, psychosis)

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Note 3: Common Problems in Acute Care

0. Non-Specific
1. Fever
2. Shock (e.g., cardiogenic, hemorrhagic, neurogenic, septic)
3. Nutritional imbalances
4. Fluid, electrolyte, and acid-base imbalances
5. Poisoning and drug toxicities
6. Wound management
7. Infections (e.g., Community- and hospital-acquired, Opportunistic, Cellulitis)
8. Immobility
9. Palliative care (i.e., end-of-life care, including pain management)
10. Transplantation
11. Pain (e.g., acute and chronic)

I. Nurse Practitioner/Patient Relationship (14.3%)

A. Establish an effective professional therapeutic relationship

Knowledge of:

1. Components of a therapeutic relationship (e.g., mutual trust, professional boundaries, confidentiality, cultural respect)
2. Strategies for establishing therapeutic relationships, considering patient preferences and culture

Skills in:

3. Establishing rapport
4. Planning for patient and family psychosocial and spiritual needs

B. Maintain an effective professional therapeutic relationship

Knowledge of:

1. Advance directives
2. Privacy and confidentiality
3. How crisis situations affect therapeutic relationships

Skills in:

4. Serving as a patient advocate on issues related to health care management
5. Communicating therapeutically
6. Promoting patient autonomy
7. Collaborating

II. Assessment and Diagnosis (23.6%)

A. Perform a comprehensive health assessment

Knowledge of:

1. Appropriate level of history and physical examination (focused vs. comprehensive)
2. Anatomy and physiology
3. Normal and abnormal assessment findings

Skills in:

4. Obtaining an appropriate medical history (e.g., interviewing, alternative sources of information)
5. Performing an appropriate physical examination
6. Performing an appropriate psychosocial assessment

B. Analyze patient-specific risks (e.g., malnutrition, surgical risk, iatrogenic complications, environmental risks)

Knowledge of:

1. Life stages
2. Epidemiology

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Skills in:

3. Screening tests
4. Identifying risk factors (e.g., age-related, functional status, genetic)
5. Performing risk analyses

C. Develop differential diagnoses

Knowledge of:

1. Pathophysiology
2. Invasive (e.g., lumbar puncture, bone marrow biopsy, bronchoscopy) and non-invasive diagnostic tests (e.g., stress testing, tilt table, pulmonary function studies, laboratory): indications, patient preparation, risk benefit analysis, complications

Skills in:

3. Obtaining and appraising existing data to determine the need for testing
4. Ordering appropriate diagnostic tests (considering cost benefit ratio, pretest probability, and sensitivity and specificity of tests)
5. Diagnostic reasoning (e.g., analyzing data, critical thinking, interpreting test data)
6. Developing differential diagnoses
7. Prioritizing differential diagnoses
8. Confirming the clinical diagnosis

III. Clinical Management (33.9%)

A. Formulate and implement a patient-specific, cost-effective plan of care

Knowledge of:

1. Evidence-based practice
2. Standards of care and clinical guidelines
3. Invasive (e.g., intubation, central line insertion, wound debridement) and noninvasive procedures (e.g., orthopedic stabilization, reduction of dislocation, enhanced external counterpulsation): indications, patient preparation, risk benefit analysis, complications

Skills in:

4. Managing complex acute, chronic, and critical conditions
5. Prescribing appropriate pharmacologic treatment
6. Incorporating complementary therapies into the plan of care
7. Providing appropriate symptom management
8. Prescribing assistive and/or life support devices (e.g., ventilators, bilevel positive airway pressure device, pacemakers, Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) line, Inferior Vena Cava (IVC) filter)
9. Obtaining appropriate services (e.g., occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, nutrition support, home health services)
10. Integrating evidence-based care into practice
11. Formulating interdisciplinary discharge plans
12. Facilitating appropriate care at the end-of-life
13. Documenting care provided

B. Incorporate health promotion and health protection in the plan of care

Knowledge of:

1. Health promotion activities (e.g., vaccines, lifestyle modification)
2. Common risks (e.g., venous thromboembolism prophylaxis, decubitus ulcer, stress ulcer prophylaxis, nosocomial infection, adverse drug reactions)
3. Evidence-based practice related to the management of risk factors
4. Disease-related and age-related risk factors

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Skills in:

5. Modifying the patient's plan of care based on identified risk factors
6. Promoting follow up
7. Incorporating care to prevent exacerbation of coexisting conditions

C. Provide patient and family education

Knowledge of:

1. Expected and unexpected complications related to the patient's illness trajectory
2. Factors that promote patient adherence and learning
3. Self care management strategies
4. Considerations related to adult learners (e.g., barriers to communication)

Skills in:

5. Determining learning needs
6. Synthesizing advanced knowledge for the patient
7. Ordering consults and additional supports for patient education (e.g., cardiac rehabilitation, dietary instruction)
8. Tailoring content to meet patient and family needs and goals
9. Coaching the patient through behavior changes

D. Evaluate and modify the plan of care

Knowledge of:

1. Patient-specific disease process
2. Cost effectiveness

Skills in:

3. Identifying desired outcomes for the patient (e.g., prognosis, goals of care)
4. Evaluating patient responses to teaching
5. Identifying and responding to complications
6. Using standards of care and guidelines to evaluate outcomes of care
7. Using evidence-based practice to evaluate outcomes of care
8. Using quality indicators to evaluate outcomes of care

IV. Health Care Delivery (14.1%)

A. Coordinate patient-focused care among health care providers and between health care settings

Knowledge of:

1. Health care policy
2. Available resources
3. Regulatory and accrediting guidelines (e.g., Joint Commission, Department of Health)

Skills in:

4. Communicating appropriate care-related information to other providers
5. Promoting the efficient use of resources to achieve optimal outcomes
6. Incorporating current and appropriate information technology in the provision of care
7. Negotiating to implement the plan of care with the patient, family, and interdisciplinary team
8. Navigating the health care system on behalf of the patient

B. Evaluate and influence health care policy on the delivery of care

Knowledge of:

1. Federal and state regulations
2. Health care financing (e.g., billing, coding, reimbursement, third party payors)
3. Concepts in health care policy

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Skills in:

4. Interpreting and evaluating institutional, federal, and state regulations
5. Identifying issues affecting access to care (e.g., health care financing, distance to care, availability of providers and services, regulations)

C. Promote quality health care

Knowledge of:

1. Quality improvement processes (e.g., root cause analysis, sentinel events)
2. Safety initiatives (e.g., Joint Commission, Institute for Healthcare Improvement)

Skills in:

3. Engaging in continuous quality improvement
4. Responding appropriately to identified safety problems
5. Managing conflicts
6. Communicating effectively across disciplines
7. Preventing errors

V. Professional Responsibility (14.1%)

A. Function within the acute care nurse practitioner scope of practice

Knowledge of:

1. Scope and standards of acute care nurse practitioner practice

Skills in:

2. Credentialing and privileging
3. Identifying situations outside the scope of practice
4. Managing competing demands appropriately and effectively (e.g., time management, establishing priorities)
5. Advocating for the acute care nurse practitioner role
6. Collaborating with other health care providers (e.g., obtaining consultation, serving as a resource, interdisciplinary team work)

B. Incorporate ethical and legal principles into clinical practice

Knowledge of:

1. Ethical and legal principles
2. Standards of professional behavior (e.g., patient abandonment, confidentiality)
3. Principles of risk management
4. Medical futility

Skills in:

5. Obtaining informed consent
6. Resolving ethical dilemmas
7. Protecting patient autonomy

C. Apply evidence into clinical practice

Knowledge of:

1. Components of evidence-based practice (e.g., research, patient preferences, standards of care)
2. Research methods

Skills in:

3. Analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating evidence
4. Integrating evidence into practice

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