Sonography Principles and Instrumentation (SPI)

Semi-Interactive Console (SEMI INTERACTIVE CONSOLE)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The following FAQs provide responses to inquiries received regarding the semi-interactive console questions on the SPI examination.

1. How many questions are on the SPI examination?
   Answer: The SPI examination contains 110 questions, comprised of multiple-choice and semi-interactive console questions. This is a reduction from 120 questions to allow test-takers more time to complete the semi-interactive questions.

2. What is the length of time of the SPI examination?
   Answer: The examination is 2 hours (120 minutes) long.

3. What percentage of the examination are semi-interactive console questions?
   Answer: Approximately 5% of the examinations are semi-interactive console questions. The rest of the examination consists of traditional multiple-choice questions.

4. Do the images change when the test-taker adjusts the controls on the console?
   Answer: The images will not change as the test-taker adjusts the controls on the console. The candidate is being tested on their ability to identify and use the proper control to answer the question.

5. How will the test-taker know if an answer is correct if the image does not change?
   Answer: As with the rest of the examination, they won’t. The examinee is expected to know what impact the different controls would have on an image without actually seeing it happen. Groups of expert sonographers, clinicians and physicists have evaluated each item and have agreed upon a group of console settings that are the best combination to answer the question. For some settings, a range of console settings is allowed to account for individual preference in image display; such adjustments will neither increase nor decrease your score. Adjustments that WOULD degrade the image or violate the ALARA principle will result in a reduced score for the question.

6. Does the SPI examination contain pretest (unscored) questions?
   Answer: Yes. ARDMS includes a small number of randomly distributed pretest items on examinations. This is a standard examination process used to determine the suitability of the pretest questions to become scored questions for future examinations based on their performance (such as difficulty for the test taker to answer correctly) compared with other scored questions on the examination of known quality. Only the best pretest questions survive to become scored questions on future examinations.

7. Will the semi-interactive console questions count towards SPI scores?
   Answer: When the semi-interactive console questions launched August 21, 2012, they did not impact SPI scores. Sufficient data have now been collected to determine that the SIC questions are performing well, so some will become scored questions.

8. How are the semi-interactive console questions scored?
   Answer: The examination utilizes a partial-credit scoring model. The test-taker will receive full credit if the question has been answered correctly. Selecting controls that would degrade the image will result in less than full credit.
9. Which content areas on the SPI examination outline cover the semi-interactive console questions?
   Answer: The semi-interactive console questions contribute to coverage of Domains 1, (Clinical safety), 2 (Physical principles), 3 (Ultrasound transducers), 4 (Pulse-echo instrumentation), and 5 (Doppler instrumentation and hemodynamics) of the SPI content outline and include instrumentation.

10. Are Advanced Item Types (AITs) new to the SPI examination?
    Answer: No.

11. Why include semi-interactive console questions instead of continuing with the traditional multiple-choice questions?
    Answer: Traditional multiple choice will continue to be the core of all ARDMS examinations. Semi-interactive console questions move the Registry examinations closer to clinical practice, improving the level of certainty that the test-taker has demonstrated the basic levels of skill, knowledge and abilities when the ARDMS awards a credential.

12. Does the SPI practice test include semi-interactive console questions?
    Answer: Not currently. The existing SPI practice examination does offer the static AIT multiple choice version of the console question. Opportunities to practice with the semi-interactive console are available for free at www.ARDMS.org/SIC.

13. Whom may I contact if I have additional questions about the semi-interactive console questions on the SPI examination?
    Answer: Please send an email to: SIC@ARDMS.org.