



NMRLD

NEW MEXICO  
REGULATION &  
LICENSING DEPARTMENT

## BOARD OF ACUPUNCTURE AND ORIENTAL MEDICINE

New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS DIVISION

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### New Mexico Board of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Clinical Skills Examination Tips and Suggestions

Dr. Kelly Murphy, DOM, with input from other examiners, has provided these tips and suggestions to past licensing candidates.

#### Section 1. Questioning

You will be expected to elicit details from the "Patient" when appropriate. Remember, if the "Patient's" response is vague or incomplete, you must follow up with more questions. It is not enough to ask, "How is your urination?" You will be expected to continue your query with questions regarding odor, color, frequency, urgency, etc., no matter whether you receive a positive or negative response to the original question.

#### Section 2. Physical Examination

Communicate to the Examiners to the best of your ability. They welcome detailed analyses. If examiners need additional verbal cues, they will be reasonable and ask for them. **Remember, this is an oral examination.**

Take into consideration the "Patient's" sensitivities in areas you palpate. If there is any injury or distress present, palpate only as lightly or as deeply as appropriate. Talk to your "Patient" and explain what you are doing.

**Observation.** Your two additional observations must be complete, independent and accurate. It is not sufficient to state, "This person's shen is good." You must also state how you determined that the shen is good (e.g. how the person walked into the room, the quality of posture, the quality of voice and speech, the quality of complexion, overall face, yin and yang, skin tone, clarity of eyes, etc.) You may use different terminology but all systems depend on specific criteria for a full observation.

Always tell the examiners what you are doing:

"I am now listening to the patient's respiration." You must then describe your observations such as, "I note the respiration to be shallow and labored. The patient has a cough which is deep, and the sound of the cough suggests the presence of phlegm."

**Palpation.** When you follow your palpation of the pulse with two other independent palpation methods, each of your methods must be clearly stated and explained. If your system is not familiar to your examiners, you may be asked to explain it. If your system involves a set of points, you must use the entire set. If the points in a set are bilateral, you must work bilaterally. For example, if you choose to palpate the Yuan Source Points, you must palpate all Source Points.

You may choose an alternate method. For example, while you palpate, make statements such as, "I am palpating the abdomen using a Japanese Abdominal Clearance System. Due to my limited

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### Exam Tips with Vitals

time, I am checking CV 14, 12, 5, 4, and ST 25 in order to determine the acute and/or chronic condition which may later require clearance with distal points." Following the palpation, you might say, "I have found that CV 14 was tight and CV 4 was empty. The patient stated that ST 25 on the left was tender on the deep level."

### **Section 3. Diagnosis and Treatment Plan**

As you know, Section three has three parts:

(a) Chief complaint, (b) Constitutional health status, and (c) Treatment plan.

**(a) Chief complaint:** An example:

My diagnosis of the chief complaint is exterior invasion of Wind Cold at the Tai Yang Stage."

"I reached this diagnosis from these conclusions:

- 1.) The patient complained of a runny nose and chills which suggests the invasion of wind cold.
- 2.) I observed shallow and weak respiration showing deficient Lung Qi and invasion of wind cold.
- 3.) I also observed a thick, white tongue coat, showing a possible invasion of cold or damp.
- 4.) The Lung Mu points were tender, indicating an imbalance in the lungs.
- 5.) The pulse was tight and superficial, indicating an external invasion."

**(b) Constitutional health status: It is the underlying constitution or the "root" condition of the patient. The process is the same as above.**

**(c) Treatment plan is followed by the presentation of your chief complaint and constitutional health status.**

**Section 4. Treatment and Safety Considerations** As stated in your General Information Sheet, you must here state the points you selected, your needling technique, appropriate herbal formula, safety considerations for these points, and herbal formula and your reasons (justification) for choosing these points and this herbal formula.

For example: "I will use LI 4 bilaterally to release exogenous wind cold. I will insert the needle to a depth of .5 to 1 inch, perpendicularly, using an even needle technique. Since the patient is not pregnant, there are no special safety considerations."