

PREPARING FOR THE AKT

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WHY AM I TALKING TO YOU ABOUT THE AKT?

- ▶ 20-25 trainees in our Deanery fail each exam
- ▶ Two thirds have failed on their first attempt

AVOIDABLE

AKT 1:1

- ▶ Every trainee who fails the AKT is offered a 1:1 meeting
- ▶ For the past 2 years these have been mostly with me
- ▶ Recently appointed exam support lead- Dr Salman Waqar

- ▶ What I do...
 - ▶ Coaching approach
 - ▶ Explore preparation for previous exam
 - ▶ Plan preparation for next attempt
 - ▶ Consider need for additional support

- ▶ What I've learned...
 - ▶ Common themes for why trainees fail
 - ▶ Most are avoidable
 - ▶ Trainers don't realise the impact they can have in helping their trainees to prepare for the AKT

WHY DO TRAINEES FAIL?

- ▶ Underestimate the challenge- especially if already done e.g. MRCP
 - ▶ Take it too early in their training
 - ▶ Start preparing too late- need at least 3 months- longer if busy home life
 - ▶ Unfocussed approach
 - ▶ Under-utilisation of available resources
 - ▶ Over-reliance on question banks
 - ▶ Poor exam technique
 - ▶ Undiagnosed dyslexia
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- ▶ Unavoidable events- MINORITY

ABOUT THE EXAM

- ▶ **APPLIED** Knowledge Test
- ▶ 3 sittings per year- January, April & October and from 2024 a 4th in July
- ▶ Pearson Vue Centre-watch the video
- ▶ 200 questions in 190 min (57s/question)
- ▶ SBA/EMQ/free text questions
- ▶ No negative marking
- ▶ Option to flag
- ▶ Pass rate in April 2023 was 68%

WHEN TO TAKE IT

- ▶ **Discuss readiness with your Trainer**
- ▶ Not before the **second half of ST2**
- ▶ After **at least 6 months of GP**
- ▶ When there is **time to study** in the 3 months leading up to it
- ▶ Avoid taking it after a period of absence e.g. mat leave
- ▶ More trainees taking it in ST3 which adds to an already busy year

HOW TO PREPARE

allow sufficient time & use available resources

- ▶ Start preparing at **least 3 months** before the exam
- ▶ Read the AKT section on the RCGP website <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/mrcgp-exams/applied-knowledge-test>
- ▶ Subscribe to a question bank and/or use GPSelfTest
- ▶ Read the PSWS Revision Guide <https://thamesvalley.hee.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/02/Maximising-the-Effectiveness-of-Revision-Workbook.pdf>
- ▶ Join a study group
- ▶ Involve your Trainer [What can Trainers do to help AiTs prepare for the AKT? \(PDF file, 578 KB\)](#)
- ▶ Dyslexia screening tool <https://gp-training.hee.nhs.uk/reading/wp-content/uploads/sites/74/2018/12/Dyslexia-Screening-Tool.docx>

IDENTIFY LEARNING NEEDS

Focussed revision

- ▶ Prior clinical experience
- ▶ Seeing patients (PUNs & DENs)
- ▶ Ask your Trainer
- ▶ Curriculum guide <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/mrcgp-exams/gp-curriculum/super-condensed-guides>
- ▶ Question banks

HIGH YIELD TOPICS

Focussed revision

- ▶ Organisational - including administrative, statutory, ethical and regulatory frameworks (10%)
- ▶ Evidence interpretation - including research, statistics and epidemiology (10%) [Clinical evidence and data interpretation: 'Statistics' in the AKT \(PDF file, 1.6 MB\)](#)
- ▶ Clinical 80%
- ▶ Therapeutics (30%) - first few chapters of BNF; common & important contraindications, side effects and interactions of medications
- ▶ **THE 5 YEAR AKT FEEDBACK SUMMARY** [October 2018 to April 2023 feedback report \(PDF file, 148 KB\)](#)

PLAN YOUR STUDY

Focussed revision

- ▶ Daily questions (40%)
 - ▶ Protected blocks of study time in the week to address learning needs (60%)
 - ▶ Weekly timed questions- practice recall under pressure & exam technique
 - ▶ Regular questions with Trainer
 - ▶ Regular sessions with Study Group
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- ▶ Keep a list of learning needs
 - ▶ Keep notes on weaker areas
 - ▶ Revise your notes
 - ▶ Practice recall - DO NOT rely on question banks to practice recall

UTILISE RESOURCES

- ▶ RCGP website
- ▶ **5 YEAR AKT FEEDBACK SUMMARY**
- ▶ Your trainer
- ▶ VTS study groups
- ▶ Deanery sessions
 - ▶ Study skills for the AKT (includes exam technique)
 - ▶ Statistics for the AKT
 - ▶ Practice Management for the AKT
 - ▶ Monthly drop-in AKT Q&A sessions
- ▶ <https://home.pearsonvue.com/rcgp>

OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ Fourteenfish AKT Package
- ▶ <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/medicines-guidance/>
- ▶ https://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/akt_-_evidence_based_practice.pptx
- ▶ <https://www.bradforddvts.co.uk/mrcgp/akt/>
- ▶ <https://www.mims.co.uk/assessing-fitness-drive-dvla-guidance/cardiovascular-system/article/977866>
- ▶ <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance>
- ▶ <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/gp-mythbusters>
- ▶ <https://pckb.org>
- ▶ <https://geekymedics.com/fundoscopy-appearances-of-retinal-pathologies/>
- ▶ <https://www.pcds.org.uk>

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- ▶ Eat well
- ▶ Sleep
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ See friends & family

- ▶ You need to be in good shape to perform well on the day

A post-exam questionnaire answered by 800/1050 AITs sitting their AKT in April 2017 highlighted that a large majority (85%) did not feel their Trainer helped them with AKT preparation.

This confirms a commonly held belief amongst many GP Educators we have spoken to, encapsulated by such phrases as:

- “But I’m a Trainer, what can I do to help my AiT succeed at their AKT exam?”
- “I’m not sure I have anything to offer my AiT with regards the AKT”
- “In order to pass the AKT requires an AiT to read books in their own time”

[What can Trainers do to help AiTs prepare for the AKT? \(PDF file, 578 KB\)](#)

How can you help your trainee to pass?

- ▶ As ES initiate discussion with your trainee early on:
 - ▶ When to take the AKT - not before 2nd half ST2 ideally in a GP placement
 - ▶ check readiness with CS BEFORE booking exam
 - ▶ allow at least 3 months to prepare
 - ▶ Join a study group- speak to PDs
 - ▶ read the RCGP website AKT section especially:
 - ▶ <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/mrcgp-exams/applied-knowledge-test>
 - ▶ [October 2018 to April 2023 feedback report \(PDF file, 148 KB\)](#)
 - ▶ Attend the 3 Deanery courses-they will receive emails with dates
 - ▶ Avoid over-reliance on question banks
 - ▶ Practice timed questions
- ▶ As CS in ST2 discuss the above and
 - ▶ assess readiness by doing questions with your trainee
 - ▶ Tutorials

Tutorials for the AKT

- ▶ Do questions together- thinking like a GP + assessing readiness
- ▶ File blood test results
- ▶ Also ECGs, spirometry, audiograms-geeky medics
- ▶ Sign prescriptions-discuss common indications/ side effects/ interactions
- ▶ Also medicines monitoring <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/home/tools/drug-monitoring/>
- ▶ Look at photos of eyes, ears, skin- geeky medics/ pcds/ dermnz
- ▶ Look at the 5 year AKT feedback summary together
- ▶ Focus on learning needs e.g. neurology/ ophthalmology- ask your trainee
- ▶ Signpost & discuss resources you use e.g. UKMEC/ DSFRH/ fitness to fly/ DVLA/ BASSH/ notifiable diseases/ school exclusion for infections etc.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- ▶ <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/getmedia/8f99c1ac-7b31-44f8-8eaf-eb0c4174bf07/AKT-Example-Questions-with-answers2021.pdf>

Your thoughts?