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978-1-107-60406-3 - SBA and MTF MCQs for the Primary FRCA

Dr James Nickells and Dr Benjamin Walton

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The FRCAQ Writers Group

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North Bristol NHS Trust

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# Preface

By the time you have started revising for the Primary FRCA two things are true, namely that you will have taken (and passed) a fair number of exams and also that you will have developed a way of revising that works best for you. When we took the Primary FRCA there were a number of revision aids available to us including textbooks, MCQ books, past questions that were surreptitiously passed from person to person and any number of revision courses, depending on how wealthy or nervous you were feeling. Most of our peers utilised various combinations of the above, but it would be fair to say that, at some point, MCQ books featured in everybody's plans. Since then the World Wide Web has appeared – and this has given another option that is rapidly growing in popularity, with a number of websites offering banks of questions that purport to be an accurate reflection of those contained within the exam. Some offer some explanation to go with them and others just the answers. The reasons for the growth in popularity of the Web as a revision aid are multi-factorial. The Web allows large volumes of material to be accessed and utilised in a far more dynamic way than content contained in books. This material is easier to update, and analysis of performance compared to other candidates is also possible. On a good website, candidates can also feed back comments about questions, which can then be altered if appropriate.

We believe that the Web will play an increasingly important part in exam revision, which is why, in conjunction with Cambridge University Press, we have developed FRCAQ.com. This is a bespoke site for candidates attempting both the Primary and Final FRCA examination. Contained within it is a mixture of multiple true false (MTF) and single best answer (SBA) MCQ questions. All the questions are written in a similar style to those contained within the exam and each is accompanied by both a short and a long explanation. The questions cover every aspect of the published College syllabus and are constantly reviewed and updated.

This book contains 180 questions from the website, allowing both a taster of the full website content and also a different way of learning that will suit some people's working patterns and preferences and allow people to still work when internet reception is poor!

We hope you will enjoy this book, and we trust that both it and the website will help you pass the exam with flying colours!

**The College exam**

At time of writing the MCQ component of the Primary FRCA exam consists of 90 MCQ questions. 60 of these are MTF and 30 are SBA, the latter first appearing in the September 2010 exam. The 30 SBA questions are made up of 20 in clinical anaesthesia, 5 in intensive care medicine and 5 in pain management. There is no negative marking, so our all-encompassing and incisive exam technique advice is “read each question carefully and answer them all”! The MTF questions are there to test theoretical knowledge and factual recall, whereas the SBA questions are designed to test the ability of the candidate to process and apply this knowledge. SBAs also help to spread the range of marks in an exam, and in the absence of negative marking they reduce the power of pure guesswork.

One needs to employ a different technique when answering an SBA question compared to an MTF. A good SBA question should contain more than one answer where you are left thinking “well, that’s possible” or words to that effect. Therefore you must read each answer carefully before deciding on the best option. It is very unlikely that all answers will sound equally plausible, so it should be possible to eliminate one or two of the options, even if deciding between those that remain will involve an element of guesswork.

James Nickells and Benjamin Walton  
on behalf of the FRCAQ.com writing team