Stahl’s Self-Assessment Examination in Psychiatry

Fourth edition
Stahl’s Self-Assessment Examination in Psychiatry
Multiple Choice Questions for Clinicians

Fourth edition
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INTRODUCTION/PREFACE

As many readers know, Stahl's Essential Psychopharmacology started in 1996 as a textbook (currently in its fifth edition) on how psychotropic drugs work and then expanded to a companion Stahl's Prescriber's Guide in 2005 (currently in its seventh edition) on how to prescribe psychotropic drugs. In 2008, a website was added (stahl-online.org) with both of these books available online in combination with several more, including an Illustrated series of several books covering specialty topics in psychopharmacology. In 2011 a case book series was added, called Case Studies: Stahl's Essential Psychopharmacology (now with three volumes and more to come), that shows how to apply the concepts presented in these previous books to real patients in a clinical practice setting. Now comes the fourth edition of a comprehensive set of questions and answers that we call Stahl's Self-Assessment Examination in Psychiatry: Multiple Choice Questions for Clinicians, designed to be integrated into the suite of our mental health/psychopharmacology books and products in the manner that I will explain here.

Why a question book?

Classically, test questions are used to measure learning, and the questions in this new book can certainly be used in this traditional manner, both by teachers and by students, and especially in combination with the companion textbook in this suite of educational products, Stahl's Essential Psychopharmacology. That is, teachers may wish to test student learning following their lectures on these topics by utilizing these questions and answers as part of a final examination. Also, readers not taking a formal course may wish to quiz themselves after studying specific topics in the specific chapters of the textbook. The reader will also note that documentation of the answers to each question in this book refers the reader back to the specific section of the textbook where that answer can be found and explained in great detail; outside references for the answers to the questions in the book are also provided.
Do questions just document learning?

For the modern self-directed learner, questions do much more than just document learning; they can also provide beacons for what needs to be studied and the motivation for doing that even before you read a textbook. Thus, questions are also tools for pre-study self-assessment. If you want to know whether you have already mastered a certain area of psychopharmacology, you can ask yourself these self-assessment questions BEFORE you review any specific area in the field. Many reading a textbook of psychopharmacology are not novices, but lifelong learners, and are likely to have areas of strength as well as areas of weakness. Getting correct answers will show you that a specific area is already well understood. On the other hand, getting lots of incorrect answers not only informs the self-motivated learner that a specific area needs further study, but can provide the motivation for that learner to fill in the gaps. Failure can be a powerful focuser for what to study and an energizing motivator for why to study.

“Adults don’t want answers to questions they have not asked”

The truth of this old saying is that taking a test AFTER study tends to feel like being forced to answer questions that the teacher has asked. However, modern readers with the mind-set of a self-directed learner want to focus on gaps in their knowledge, so looking at these same questions PRIOR to study is a way of asking the questions of yourself and thus owning them and their answers.

What is a “knowledge sandwich?”

Ideally, self-directed learners organize their study as a “knowledge sandwich” of meaty information lying between two slices of questions. The questions in this book can be the first slice of questioning, followed by consuming the “meat” of the subject material in any textbook, including Stahl’s Essential Psychopharmacology, or if you prefer, from a lecture, course, journal article, etc. At the end of studying, another slice of testing shows whether learning has occurred, and whether performance has improved. You can utilize, for example, the continuing medical education (CME) tests that accompany Stahl’s Essential Psychopharmacology to test yourself after studying and document your learning (available at neglobal.com). The rationale for this instructional design is also discussed in another one of our books, Best Practices in Medical Teaching, published in 2011. The self-assessment questions, additional “meaty”
content on all the subject areas, plus posttests are also available as
the “Master Psychopharmacology Program” at neiglobal.com for
those who prefer online learning rather than a textbook.

Recertification/maintenance of certification by the
American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN)

Utilizing self-assessment questions as the first “slice” of the learning
“sandwich” is not just theoretical, but is gaining prominence among
expert educators these days, and indeed is now part of the require-
ments for maintenance of certification (MOC) in a medical specialty
in the USA, including by the ABPN, which has accepted the ques-
tions in this book not only for ABPN CME requirements but also
for their SA/self-assessment activity requirement, a sort of pretest.

Is your learning unforgettable?

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, tests prevent forgetting.
Thus, the self-assessment questions here actually create long-term
remembering, and do not just document that initial learning has
occurred. It is a sorry fact that learning that occurs following one
exposure/reading of material is rapidly forgotten. We have dis-
cussed this in the accompanying book in this series
Best Practices in
Medical Teaching. Perhaps 50% of what you learn after a single expo-
sure to new, complex information is forgotten in 3–8 days, with
some studies suggesting that little or nothing is remembered in 2
months! Exposing yourself to new material over time in bite-sized
chunks and encountering the material again at a later time leads to
more retention of information than does learning in a large bolus
in a single setting, a concept sometimes called interval learning or
spaced learning. Research has shown that when the re-exposure
is done not as a review of the same material in the same manner,
but as a test, retention is much enhanced. This results in the most
efficient way of learning because the initial encoding (reading the
material or hearing the lecture the first time) is consolidated for
long-term retention much more effectively and completely if the
re-exposure is in the form of questions. Thus, questions help you
remember, and we hope that you utilize this book to maximize the
efficiency of your learning to leverage the time you are able to put
into your professional development.

How do you use this book?

To use this book, simply look on every right-hand page where you
will see the question appear with a multiple choice format for the
answer. Read the question, answer the question either in your head, on the page, or on another piece of paper. Then, turn the page and on the left side will appear not only the correct answer, but also an explanation of why the correct answer is correct, why the incorrect answers are incorrect, and references that document the correct answers, both in the companion textbook *Stahl’s Essential Psychopharmacology* and elsewhere. The reader will also see at this time what peers who have already taken this test thought was the correct answer. While taking a test, the examinee is usually curious about how (s)he is doing, how many peers get a question right, and, if the wrong answer was selected, how many peers also selected that answer wrongly. Such information can provide motivation, either as reinforcement for correct answers (yes!) or to drive the reader to understand the correct answer and never to feel the sting of missing that question again (ouch!). So, it is with the greatest wishes for your successful journey throughout psychiatry and psychopharmacology that I present this question book to you as one of the tools for your professional development, as well as for your fascination, learning, and remembering!

Stephen M. Stahl, MD, PhD

In memory of Daniel X. Freedman, mentor, colleague, and scientific father.
CME/CE INFORMATION

Released: May 2022
CME credit expires: May 2025

The chapters of this book can be completed in any order. You are advised to read each question carefully, formulate an answer, and then review the answer/explanation on the following page. If you are interested in claiming the optional CME/CE credits for a chapter, refer to that section for instructions.

Learning objectives

After completing the ten Self-Assessments, you should have identified which areas you need further study in, and be better able to:

• Apply evidence-based standards to the diagnosis of patients presenting with psychiatric symptoms to improve patient outcomes

• Prescribe treatment by linking the mechanisms of psychotropic medications to the clinical neuropathology in order to optimize response

• Apply evidence-based standards to make treatment adjustments as needed to improve patient outcomes

Optional CME/CE credits

The optional CME/CE credits are available online for a fee (waived for NEI Members). A posttest score of 70% or higher is required to receive credit. NOTE: the questions within the assessments are not part of the posttest and do not count toward your passing score.

For participant ease, each Self-Assessment has its own credits certificate. To receive a certificate of CME/CE credit or participation:

1. Successfully complete a chapter posttest: available online at neiglobal.com/CME (under “Book”)

2. Print the chapter certificate

3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 for each chapter
**Credit Types.** The following are being offered for this activity:

- MOC SA (ABPN): Category 1 CME as Self-Assessment credits
- Nurse Practitioner (ANCC): contact hours
- Pharmacy (ACPE): application- and practice-based contact hours
- Physician (ACCME): *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*
- Physician Assistant (AAPA): Category 1 CME credits
- Psychology (APA): CE credits
- Social Work (ASWB-ACE): ACE CE credits
- Non-Physician Member of the Healthcare Team: Certificate of Participation stating the program is designated for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*

**Accreditation**

In support of improving patient care, Neuroscience Education Institute (NEI) is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

NEI designates this enduring material (ten Self-Assessments) for a maximum of 16.0 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

The content in this activity pertains to pharmacology and is worth 16.0 continuing education hours of pharmacotherapeutics.

**Peer review**

The content has been peer-reviewed by one of four MDs specializing in psychiatry (excepting “Dementia and Its Treatment,” peer-reviewed by a PhD specializing in dementia) to ensure the scientific accuracy and medical relevance of information presented and its independence from bias. NEI takes responsibility for the content, quality, and scientific integrity of this CME/CE activity.

**Disclosures**

All individuals in a position to influence or control content were required to disclose any relevant financial relationships, which were
then mitigated prior to the activity being planned, created, and presented.

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Disclosure of off-label use

This educational activity may include discussion of unlabeled and/or investigational uses of agents that are not currently labeled for such use by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Please consult the product prescribing information for full disclosure of labeled uses.

Cultural linguistic competencies and implicit bias

A variety of resources addressing cultural and linguistic competencies and implicit bias can be found here: https://nei.global/CLC-IB-handout

Support

This activity is supported solely by the provider, NEI.