

# The Benefit of a Formal Plastic Surgery In-Service Conference in Improvement of In-Service Scores

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**INTRODUCTION:** Annually, residents are expected to take an In-service exam to gauge their understanding of plastic surgery knowledge and prepare them for the American Board of Plastic Surgery written examination. In addition, In-service score are now being used as an assessment tool for fellowship applicants. Because of the breadth of Plastic Surgery material, it is difficult to prepare a resident for such a comprehensive exam. At the University of Utah, a weekly conference was instituted to help prepare residents for the In-service and board examination in hopes of improving scores.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:** A weekly 90 minute review conference was initiated in 2014 at the University of Utah. Residents along with a member of the faculty reviewed old In-service exam questions and discussed the selected topics in depth. We assessed resident scores from 2013 to 2015. The residents' exam score averages per PGY level were compared from years prior to and after initiation of the conference. In addition, exam scores for each individual were compared before and after initiation of the conference. Paired T-test comparisons were performed to analyze the results.

**RESULTS:** Statistically significant improvement in residents exam scores averages were observed from years prior to and after initiation of the conference after the second year of training (42% vs 62%,  $p=0.03$ ). In the first year of training, we found no statistical improvement in scores after implementation of conference (20% vs. 28%,  $p=0.35$ ). Furthermore, exam scores for each individual obtained the years before and the year after initiation of the conference significantly improved (31% vs 71%,  $p=0.01$ ). When comparing individuals in years prior to implementation of the conference there was no statistically significant improvement from year to year.

**CONCLUSION:** Implementation of a formal weekly in-service conference significantly improved performance on the In-service examination. Improvement was found when comparing between PGY training level after the second year of training and individually for residents. These results advocate for a focused educational conference for preparation for the In-service exam.

## REFERENCES:

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