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35. THE COMPETITIVE EDGE: IMPROVING ABSITE SCORES THROUGH A TEAM-BASED APPROACH

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Introduction: A competitive team-based approach to encourage self-studying and didactic participation is a novel method of American Board of Surgery In-Training Examination (ABSITE) preparation. We aimed to determine if this method significantly improves residents' percentile performances on the ABSITE.

Methods: We reviewed ABSITE performance and preparation from general surgery residents for the last ten years. Percentile scores were compared before and after implementation of a purchased online question bank (TrueLearn LLC, Mooresville, NC), a team-based competition, and a virtual format of the team-based competition. Statistical analysis was performed with ANOVA Kruskal-Wallis and Mann Whitney tests where appropriate.

Results: 378 ABSITE scores from 112 residents were analyzed. Overall median ABSITE percentile at the program level increased from 40.5 (IQR 20.5, 66.8) to 76.0 (49.0, 85.0) percentile ($P < 0.001$) from 2011 to 2021. There was an increase but no significant difference in ABSITE percentile (median 57.0 (IQR 26.5, 71.5) vs 67.0 (IQR 33.5, 85.5), $P = 0.068$) when comparing percentiles from two years prior and two years after implementation of an online question bank. However, there was a significant increase in ABSITE percentiles after implementation of an in-person team-based competition (median 67.0 (IQR 31.5, 95.5) vs 84.5 (IQR 60.8, 91.0), $P = 0.026$). There was no significant difference of percentile scores after conversion to a virtual team-based competition (median 84.5 (IQR 60.8, 91.0) vs 76.0 (IQR 49.0, 85.0), $P = 0.146$).

Conclusions: While question banks are important to exam preparation, implementation of a team-based competition, which fosters individual preparation as well as team discussions, significantly improves ABSITE performance.

