

**Guide for Developing Questions for the ECVCP Examination
Appendix 3 (1.7.1.)**

Examples of poorly constructed MCQs:

1. A bearded dragon presents with focal areas of yellow discolouration of the scales. Samples taken for cytologic examination revealed heterophilic and macrophagic inflammation, with numerous ovoid basophilic conidia with a thin clear capsule, with chains of arthroconidia and undulated hyphae. On culture, white powder-like colonies grew. The most likely diagnosis is:

***A. *Chrysosporium*-related infection**

- B. *Aspergillus* spp. infection
- C. *Fusarium* spp. infection
- D. Clostridial cellulitis

Answer: A. *Chrysosporium*-related infection

Reference: VCP 45/2 (2016) 368-375

Issues:

- Stem too long. This subject knowledge would better tested visually in the Projected Images section.
- Foils arranged in incorrect order (should be increasing length)
- Repetition of word 'infection' in multiple foils, with foil D standing out (unfairly 'cued') because only foil not to include this word. Could have been avoided by phrasing question as 'Which infection is this most likely to represent?'
- Reference obsolete

2. Regarding the measurement of alkaline phosphatase (ALP) in equine tracheal washes, which of the following is CORRECT?

- A. ALP release from neutrophils is NOT considered to be a significant contributing factor
- B. ALP in tracheal washes is thought to originate from proliferating Type II pneumocytes
- C. A semi-automated chemistry analyser has been fully validated for measuring ALP in tracheal washes

***D. ALP concentration is significantly higher in horses with cytology consistent with lower respiratory tract inflammation than those with no evidence of inflammation on cytology**

Answer: D. ALP concentration is significantly higher in horses with cytology consistent with lower respiratory tract inflammation than those with no evidence of inflammation on cytology

Reference: VCP 45/2 (2016) 376-380

Issues:

- This is a 'True/False' type question, not a 'One Best Answer' type question
- Foils are wordy
- Foil A is negatively worded
- This does not test one important aspect of well established knowledge. Rather, it requests a 'brain dump' of everything the candidate can recall from a single study research article
- Reference obsolete

3. EMH has been observed in aspirates of:

1. Lung
2. Liver
3. Lymph node
4. Splenic haemangiosarcoma
5. Cutaneous haemangiosarcoma

- A. 1, 2, 4
B. 1, 2, 3, 4
C. 2, 3, 4, 5
D. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Answer: D. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Reference: Dunbar and Conway: What is your diagnosis? Cytologic findings from a subcutaneous nodule over the left epaxial musculature in a dog. VCP 41/2 (2012) 295-6 Raskin. Lymphoid System. In Canine and Feline Cytology, Eds Raskin and Meyer, 2nd Ed, Saunders Elsevier, St. Louis, Missouri, 2010, p104

Issues:

- Pyramid questions no longer accepted
- Stem is not phrased as a question
- Answer D is effectively 'all of the above', which should be avoided (absolutes tend to cue correct/incorrect answer)
- Journal reference is obsolete. Textbook reference needs updating