

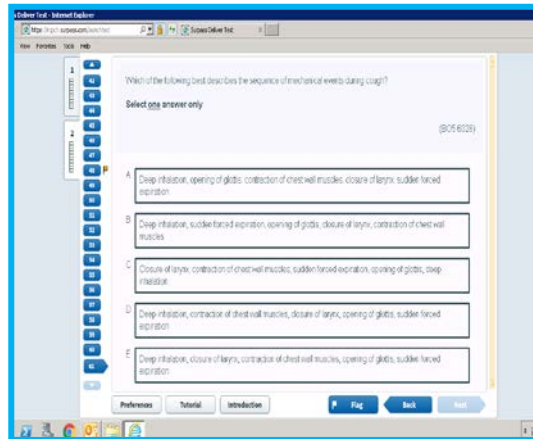
Background

From 2015, the RCPCH has administered its written examinations using Computer-Based Testing.

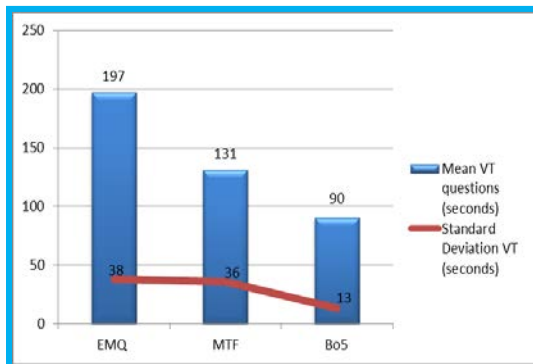
Surpass software allows us to evaluate candidate exam behaviour for the first time.

Summary of Work

We analysed viewing time (VT) data for all questions included within the Theory and Science 2016.1 exam, with particular focus on the different question types; Extended Matching (EMQ), Multiple True-False (MTF) and Best of Five (Bo5)



Novel insights from computer-based testing



Summary of Results

For all candidates (n=759), the mean (SD) viewing time (VT) for the exam was 143(12) minutes.

The mean (SD) viewing time for an EMQ question was 197(38) seconds, for MTF questions was 131(36) seconds and for a Bo5 question was 90(13) seconds.

Discussion

Despite their experience and knowledge of the current marking scheme (4 marks for a Bo5, 5 for MTF and 9 for an EMQ) candidates spend a disproportionate amount of time on the MTF-type questions.

These data will allow us to plan better the number of questions asked in an exam. The extra time required to answer MTF-style questions may limit their value.

Conclusions and Take-home Messages

These data show that there is time to add additional questions to the exam. If MTF questions are removed there is scope to add a larger number of Bo5 questions which is likely to increase reliability.