HESI CARDIOLOGY PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

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How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

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Questions

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1. What does the ejection fraction indicate?

A. The overall heart size

B. The percentage of blood pumped out of the ventricles with each heartbeat

C. The amount of blood returning to the heart

D. The frequency of heartbeats per minute

2. In a client with right-sided heart failure, which assessment findings are key features?

A. Collapsed neck veins

B. Distended abdomen

C. Urinating at night

D. All of the above

3. Which of the following is a common side effect of digoxin?

A. Hypokalemia

B. Hyperkalemia

C. Hypotension

D. Hyperglycemia

4. What happens to the heart rate during physical exercise?

A. The heart rate decreases significantly

B. The heart rate remains constant

C. The heart rate increases

D. The heart rate becomes irregular

5. Which is a common symptom of myocardial ischemia?

A. Palpitations

B. Chest pain

C. Shortness of breath

D. All of the above

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6. What is the priority nursing intervention for a client after a cardiac catheterization via the brachial artery?

A. Monitor the vital signs every 15 minutes

B. Maintain the client in the supine position

C. Keep the client's lower extremities in extension

D. Administer the prescribed oxygen at 4 L/min via nasal cannula

7. What is the normal range for blood pressure in adults?

A. 110/70 mmHg

B. 120/80 mmHg

C. 130/90 mmHg

D. 140/90 mmHg

8. What is the purpose of an ECG?

A. To visualize the heart's physical structure

B. To assess the electrical activity of the heart

C. To measure heart size

D. To evaluate blood flow

9. What might an increase in P-R intervals signal during an ECG assessment?

A. Possible arrhythmia

B. Normal conduction

C. Increased heart rhythm

D. Reduced cardiac strain

10. Which electrocardiogram finding is a protective mechanism during a myocardial infarction?

A. U wave presence

B. Prolonged QT interval

C. ST segment elevation

D. QRS complex resolution

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Answers

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1. B
2. D
3. A
4. C
5. D
6. B
7. B
8. B
9. A
10. C

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Explanations

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1. What does the ejection fraction indicate?

A. The overall heart size

B. The percentage of blood pumped out of the ventricles with each heartbeat

C. The amount of blood returning to the heart

D. The frequency of heartbeats per minute

Ejection fraction is a critical measurement used to evaluate the efficiency and performance of the heart, particularly the ventricles. It is defined as the percentage of blood that is pumped out of the ventricles with each contraction. This percentage reflects the heart's ability to effectively pump blood throughout the body, which is essential for maintaining adequate circulation and oxygen delivery to tissues. A healthy heart typically has an ejection fraction ranging from 55% to 70%, indicating that a significant portion of the blood within the ventricles is being utilized with each heartbeat. If the ejection fraction is lower than normal, it may suggest heart dysfunction, heart failure, or other cardiac issues, as the heart is not pumping effectively. In contrast, options related to heart size, blood return to the heart, or heart rate do not convey the same specific insight into pumping efficiency as the ejection fraction does. Thus, "the percentage of blood pumped out of the ventricles with each heartbeat" accurately describes the significance and implications of the ejection fraction in cardiology.

2. In a client with right-sided heart failure, which assessment findings are key features?

A. Collapsed neck veins

B. Distended abdomen

C. Urinating at night

D. All of the above

In the context of right-sided heart failure, several assessment findings are commonly observed that reflect the body's response to increased pressure in the venous system and the resulting fluid overload. When right-sided heart failure occurs, the heart struggles to pump blood effectively to the lungs. This leads to a backlog of blood in the systemic circulation, which can cause various manifestations. One key feature of right-sided heart failure is fluid accumulation in the body, particularly in the abdomen (known as ascites) and in the peripheral tissues, which results in distended abdominal findings. This is due to fluid leaking from capillaries into the abdominal cavity, creating a sense of fullness and discomfort. Additionally, collapsed neck veins would not align with the typical findings of right-sided heart failure. Instead, distended neck veins are more common, as the increased venous pressure causes the jugular veins to be engorged. Nighttime urination, or nocturia, can also occur but is more closely associated with fluid retention and the body's attempt to manage fluid balance. Patients might experience increased urination at night as excess fluid shifts back to the bloodstream when lying down, which can then be processed by the kidneys during sleep. In summary, the correct answer encapsulates the spectrum of effects seen

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3. Which of the following is a common side effect of digoxin?

A. Hypokalemia

B. Hyperkalemia

C. Hypotension

D. Hyperglycemia

Digoxin is a cardiac glycoside widely used to treat conditions like heart failure and atrial fibrillation. One important aspect to understand regarding digoxin is its effect on potassium levels. It increases the sodium-potassium ATPase activity, which can lead to potassium depletion in the body, resulting in hypokalemia. This is especially critical because low potassium levels can enhance digoxin's effects, increasing the risk of toxicity. When patients on digoxin experience hypokalemia, they are at a higher risk for developing arrhythmias, as the relationship between potassium and cardiac action potentials is significant. Therefore, monitoring potassium levels is essential for patients receiving digoxin therapy. Recognizing that hypokalemia is a common side effect helps healthcare providers proactively manage and prevent potential complications associated with digoxin treatment. This understanding is crucial in both clinical practice and for exam preparation, as it highlights the importance of electrolytes in managing patients on digoxin.

4. What happens to the heart rate during physical exercise?

A. The heart rate decreases significantly

B. The heart rate remains constant

C. The heart rate increases

D. The heart rate becomes irregular

During physical exercise, the heart rate increases as the body demands more oxygen-rich blood to support the working muscles. This increase is mediated by the autonomic nervous system, specifically through sympathetic stimulation, which enhances heart rate and contractility. The physiological response involves several mechanisms: the body's metabolic demands rise, requiring enhanced delivery of oxygen and nutrients. To accommodate this, the heart pumps faster (increased heart rate) and often harder (increased stroke volume) to meet the heightened circulatory needs. As activity levels increase, so do the levels of circulating catecholamines (such as adrenaline), which further facilitate increased heart rate. This response is essential for maintaining physical performance and ensuring that the body's metabolic processes can be sustained during exercise. In contrast to the other listed options, which suggest a decrease in heart rate, constancy, or irregularity, the typical and expected outcome during exercise is a clear, measurable increase in heart rate.

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5. Which is a common symptom of myocardial ischemia?

A. Palpitations

B. Chest pain

C. Shortness of breath

D. All of the above

Myocardial ischemia occurs when the blood flow to the heart muscle is reduced, leading to a deficiency in oxygen supply which can result in several symptoms. Among these, chest pain is often the most characteristic and recognized symptom, commonly referred to as angina. This pain can manifest as a feeling of pressure, squeezing, or fullness in the chest. In addition to chest pain, individuals may experience palpitations, which can occur when the heart responds to stress or decreased oxygen supply by beating irregularly or more forcefully. This sensation can cause anxiety and further affect the heart's function. Shortness of breath is also a prevalent symptom associated with myocardial ischemia. When the heart is compromised, it may not pump effectively, leading to fluid accumulation in the lungs or increased respiratory demand, triggering a feeling of breathlessness. Given that all three symptoms (palpitations, chest pain, and shortness of breath) are commonly associated with myocardial ischemia, noting that any or all of these can be present helps clinicians recognize and diagnose this condition effectively. Thus, the answer encompassing all symptoms acknowledges the broad spectrum of clinical presentations related to myocardial ischemia.

6. What is the priority nursing intervention for a client after a cardiac catheterization via the brachial artery?

A. Monitor the vital signs every 15 minutes

B. Maintain the client in the supine position

C. Keep the client's lower extremities in extension

D. Administer the prescribed oxygen at 4 L/min via nasal cannula

After a cardiac catheterization via the brachial artery, maintaining the client in the supine position is crucial for several reasons. This position helps reduce the risk of bleeding from the catheter insertion site and promotes circulation by alleviating pressure on the access area. By keeping the client supine, it minimizes movements that could disrupt the site and helps ensure that any potential hematoma formation is less likely to occur. Additionally, this position supports adequate perfusion and allows for easier monitoring of the client's vital signs, including heart rate and blood pressure, which are essential in assessing any complications that may arise post-procedure. While monitoring vital signs and ensuring oxygen supply are important aspects of post-catheterization care, priority is given to stabilizing the access site, which is best achieved by positioning the client supine.

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7. What is the normal range for blood pressure in adults?

A. 110/70 mmHg

B. 120/80 mmHg

C. 130/90 mmHg

D. 140/90 mmHg

The normal range for blood pressure in adults is defined as being around 120/80 mmHg. This value is often cited as the standard for optimal health and is used by healthcare providers to assess an individual's cardiovascular risk. Systolic pressure, the top number (120 mmHg in this case), represents the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats and pumps blood. Diastolic pressure, the bottom number (80 mmHg), indicates the pressure in the arteries when the heart rests between beats. When both numbers fall within this range, it suggests that the cardiovascular system is functioning well and that there is a lower risk for heart disease and stroke. When blood pressure readings are lower, such as 110/70 mmHg, while still generally acceptable, they can be on the lower end of the spectrum, suggesting a need for monitoring, particularly if accompanied by symptoms of hypotension like dizziness or fatigue. Higher readings, like 130/90 mmHg or 140/90 mmHg, indicate stages of elevated blood pressure and may classify as hypertension, requiring lifestyle changes or management to prevent health complications.

8. What is the purpose of an ECG?

A. To visualize the heart's physical structure

B. To assess the electrical activity of the heart

C. To measure heart size

D. To evaluate blood flow

The purpose of an ECG, or electrocardiogram, is to assess the electrical activity of the heart. It records the electrical impulses that trigger each heartbeat, producing a visual representation of the heart's rhythm and activity over time. This provides crucial information about the heart's function, including the rate of beats, the presence of abnormal rhythms, and signs of ischemia or damage to heart tissue. An ECG is particularly valuable in diagnosing conditions such as arrhythmias, myocardial infarction (heart attack), and other heart-related issues that may not be detectable through imaging alone. By focusing on the electrical aspects of heart function, healthcare providers can gain insights into how well the heart is operating and identify potential problems. In contrast, visualizing the heart's physical structure pertains more to imaging techniques like echocardiography or MRI, measuring heart size can be done through imaging methods as well, and evaluating blood flow typically involves other tests like Doppler ultrasound or angiography. Thus, the primary function of an ECG is to provide information about the electrical activity of the heart, which is essential for assessing its performance and detecting abnormalities.

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9. What might an increase in P-R intervals signal during an ECG assessment?

A. Possible arrhythmia

B. Normal conduction

C. Increased heart rhythm

D. Reduced cardiac strain

An increase in P-R intervals during an ECG assessment can indicate a possible arrhythmia, specifically a condition known as first-degree heart block. The P-R interval represents the time it takes for electrical impulses to travel from the atria through the atrioventricular (AV) node before reaching the ventricles. When this interval is prolonged, it suggests a delay in conduction through the AV node, which is a hallmark of arrhythmias. In this case, the heart's electrical conduction system is not operating efficiently, leading to the potential for more serious rhythm disturbances. While variations in the P-R interval can be seen in healthy individuals, a consistent increase typically warrants further investigation for underlying issues affecting the heart's electrical pathways. Understanding this context helps differentiate normal conduction and heart strain measures, where a normal P-R interval indicates effective conduction, and no direct correlation exists between increased P-R intervals and reduced cardiac strain.

10. Which electrocardiogram finding is a protective mechanism during a myocardial infarction?

A. U wave presence

B. Prolonged QT interval

C. ST segment elevation

D. QRS complex resolution

During a myocardial infarction, ST segment elevation is a critical electrocardiogram finding that indicates the presence of acute injury to the myocardium. This elevation occurs due to the disruption of the normal electrical activity in the heart, specifically in the area that is ischemic or infarcted. ST segment elevation is an important protective mechanism because it signifies that there is ongoing myocardial damage and that immediate intervention is necessary. It is often associated with ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), which requires prompt treatment to restore blood flow to the affected area of the heart. Rapid recognition through this electrocardiographic change allows healthcare providers to initiate appropriate therapies, such as medication to dissolve clots or procedures like angioplasty, thereby improving the chances of survival and reducing the extent of heart damage. The presence of ST segment elevation serves as a visual cue on the ECG that critical medical intervention is needed, emphasizing its protective role during an acute myocardial infarction. Understanding this finding can lead to timely actions that can save myocardium and potentially the patient's life.

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Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

https://hesicardiology.examzify.com

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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