# USMLE STEP 3 DRUG MOA PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

## STUDY GUIDE



## SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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# Table of Contents


Copyright ..... 1

Table of Contents ..... 2

Introduction ..... 3

How to Use This Guide ..... 4

Questions ..... 5

Answers ..... 8

Explanations ..... 10

Next Steps ..... 16


SAMPLE

# 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. How does fluorouracil work as a chemotherapy agent?**

A. It induces apoptosis in tumor cells
B. It inhibits thymidylate synthase, blocking DNA synthesis
C. It enhances tumor immunogenicity
D. It increases metabolic activity in cancer cells

**2. How do proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) exert their effect?**

A. They inhibit H+/K+ ATPase in gastric parietal cells
B. They increase mucosal blood flow
C. They block H2 receptors on parietal cells
D. They neutralize gastric acid after secretion

**3. What type of antagonists are carvedilol and labetalol?**

A. Selective beta-1 antagonists
B. Non-selective beta antagonists
C. Non-selective alpha and beta antagonists
D. Beta-1 specific agonists

**4. At what dose does dopamine exhibit β1 and β2 agonist activity?**

A. High dose
B. Medium dose
C. Low dose
D. All doses

**5. What effect does atropine have on the heart?**

A. Decreases heart rate
B. Increases heart rate
C. Increases secretions
D. Blocks beta-adrenergic receptors

**6. In what type of cancer is trastuzumab particularly effective?**

A. Lung cancer
B. HER2-positive breast cancer
C. Pancreatic cancer
D. Prostate cancer

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**7. What is the primary mechanism by which clopidogrel exerts its antiplatelet effect?**

A. Inhibiting thromboxane A2 production

B. Irriversibly inhibiting the P2Y12 receptor

C. Preventing glycoprotein IIb/IIIa activation

D. Activating nitric oxide pathways

**8. What effect does spironolactone have on sodium in the kidneys?**

A. Increases sodium retention

B. Promotes sodium excretion

C. Inhibits sodium production

D. Stimulates sodium absorption

**9. How do thiazide diuretics such as hydrochlorothiazide function?**

A. Inhibit Na+/Cl- co-transporter in the distal convoluted tubule

B. Block Na+/Ca2+ exchange in the proximal tubule

C. Inhibit aldosterone receptor in the collecting duct

D. Inhibit carbonic anhydrase in the proximal tubule

**10. What additional effect can cholecystokinin have besides stimulating digestion?**

A. Enhances gastric acid secretion

B. Reduces hunger feelings

C. Increases appetite

D. Stimulates insulin release

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# Answers

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

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# Explanations

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## 1. How does fluorouracil work as a chemotherapy agent?

A. It induces apoptosis in tumor cells

B. It inhibits thymidylate synthase, blocking DNA synthesis

C. It enhances tumor immunogenicity

D. It increases metabolic activity in cancer cells

*Fluorouracil is primarily recognized for its mechanism of action as an antineoplastic agent, specifically through the inhibition of thymidylate synthase. Thymidylate synthase is an enzyme crucial for the synthesis of thymidine monophosphate (dTMP), which is a necessary precursor for DNA synthesis. By inhibiting this enzyme, fluorouracil effectively reduces the availability of dTMP, leading to a disruption in DNA synthesis and ultimately impairing the ability of rapidly dividing tumor cells to proliferate. This mechanism of action is particularly significant because it specifically targets tumor cells that are highly reliant on rapid DNA synthesis for growth and division. Fluorouracil's effectiveness in blocking DNA synthesis is one of the reasons it is utilized in the treatment of various cancers, including colorectal and breast cancer. In the context of the other options, apoptosis induction is a separate mechanism that can occur through various agents, but it is not the primary action of fluorouracil. Enhancing tumor immunogenicity refers to assuring that the immune system can better recognize and attack the tumor, which is not directly relevant to fluorouracil's mechanism. Additionally, increasing metabolic activity in cancer cells would typically suggest promoting growth rather than inhibiting*

## 2. How do proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) exert their effect?

A. They inhibit H+/K+ ATPase in gastric parietal cells

B. They increase mucosal blood flow

C. They block H2 receptors on parietal cells

D. They neutralize gastric acid after secretion

*Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) specifically target and inhibit the H+/K+ ATPase enzyme located in the gastric parietal cells. This enzyme is crucial for the final step in gastric acid production; it is responsible for the exchange of hydrogen ions (H+) with potassium ions (K+) across the plasma membrane of these cells. By inhibiting this pump, PPIs effectively reduce the secretion of gastric acid into the lumen of the stomach. The clinical significance of this mechanism leads to a decrease in gastric acidity, which can help manage conditions like gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), peptic ulcers, and Zollinger-Ellison syndrome. The reduction in acidity also promotes healing of the gastric and esophageal mucosa. In contrast, the other options represent different mechanisms or actions that do not correspond to the action of PPIs. For instance, increasing mucosal blood flow, blocking H2 receptors, or neutralizing gastric acid are not the primary actions of PPIs. Instead, they either reflect the action of other classes of drugs or are indirect effects that do not directly inhibit gastric acid secretion at the level of the proton pump.*

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## 3. What type of antagonists are carvedilol and labetalol?

A. Selective beta-1 antagonists

B. Non-selective beta antagonists

C. Non-selective alpha and beta antagonists

D. Beta-1 specific agonists

*Carvedilol and labetalol are classified as non-selective alpha and beta antagonists. This means that they block both alpha-adrenergic receptors, which can lead to vasodilation and reduced peripheral resistance, as well as beta-adrenergic receptors, which can lower heart rate and myocardial contractility. The dual mechanism of these drugs allows for their effective use in managing conditions like hypertension and heart failure. The non-selective action on both receptor types contributes to a reduction in blood pressure and improvement in cardiac function, which is beneficial in these clinical scenarios. Selective beta-1 antagonists, on the other hand, primarily target the heart and can reduce heart rate and myocardial oxygen demand, but they do not have the vasodilatory effects seen with the alpha blockade present in carvedilol and labetalol. Beta-1 specific agonists would activate beta-1 receptors to increase heart rate and myocardial contractility, which is not consistent with the actions of carvedilol and labetalol. Thus, these drugs' unique properties as non-selective antagonists are key to their therapeutic effects.*

## 4. At what dose does dopamine exhibit β1 and β2 agonist activity?

A. High dose

B. Medium dose

C. Low dose

D. All doses

*Dopamine exhibits β1 and β2 agonist activity at medium doses, which are typically in the range of 5 to 10 micrograms per kilogram per minute. At this dosage, dopamine stimulates β1 adrenergic receptors, leading to increased heart rate and contractility, which is particularly useful in treating conditions such as heart failure. Additionally, β2 agonist activity can contribute to vasodilation, affecting peripheral circulation. At lower doses (generally less than 5 micrograms per kilogram per minute), dopamine primarily acts on renal dopaminergic receptors, promoting renal blood flow and diuresis rather than significant cardiac stimulation. Conversely, at higher doses (above 10 micrograms per kilogram per minute), dopamine begins to exhibit α-adrenergic effects, resulting in vasoconstriction rather than β mediated effects. Understanding the dose-dependent action of dopamine is crucial, especially in critical care settings where precise dosing can significantly influence hemodynamic outcomes.*

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## 5. What effect does atropine have on the heart?

A. Decreases heart rate

B. Increases heart rate

C. Increases secretions

D. Blocks beta-adrenergic receptors

*Atropine is an anticholinergic medication that primarily works by blocking the action of acetylcholine on muscarinic receptors in the heart and other tissues. Specifically, in the context of heart function, atropine inhibits the parasympathetic influence exerted by the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve typically acts to decrease heart rate by releasing acetylcholine, which, through muscarinic receptors, slows down the heart rate and reduces conduction velocity through the atrioventricular (AV) node. When atropine is administered, it competes with acetylcholine and effectively reduces the parasympathetic tone on the heart. As a result, the heart rate increases due to the unopposed influence of the sympathetic nervous system. This increase in heart rate can be beneficial in situations of bradycardia (abnormally slow heart rate), as atropine can help restore a more normal heart rhythm. In summary, atropine's mechanism of action leads to a significant increase in heart rate by blocking parasympathetic activity mediated by acetylcholine, making the correct answer directly reflect this pharmacological effect.*

## 6. In what type of cancer is trastuzumab particularly effective?

A. Lung cancer

B. HER2-positive breast cancer

C. Pancreatic cancer

D. Prostate cancer

*Trastuzumab is a monoclonal antibody that specifically targets the human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2) protein, which is overexpressed in a subset of breast cancers. Its mechanism of action involves binding to the HER2 receptor, inhibiting the proliferation of tumor cells that express this protein, and flagging them for destruction by the immune system. HER2-positive breast cancer is characterized by the overexpression of the HER2 gene, leading to more aggressive tumor growth. Trastuzumab is particularly effective in treating this specific subtype of breast cancer because it both interferes with the signaling pathways that promote cell division and enhances the immune response against the cancer cells. In contrast to other types of cancer mentioned, such as lung, pancreatic, or prostate cancer, trastuzumab lacks efficacy against tumors that do not exhibit HER2 overexpression. This specificity makes trastuzumab a targeted therapy, distinguishing it as a significant treatment option for patients with HER2-positive breast cancer.*

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## 7. What is the primary mechanism by which clopidogrel exerts its antiplatelet effect?

A. Inhibiting thromboxane A2 production

B. Irriversibly inhibiting the P2Y12 receptor

C. Preventing glycoprotein IIb/IIIa activation

D. Activating nitric oxide pathways

*Clopidogrel primarily exerts its antiplatelet effect by irreversibly inhibiting the P2Y12 receptor, which is a subtype of the adenosine diphosphate (ADP) receptor found on the surface of platelets. The binding of ADP to the P2Y12 receptor is critical for platelet activation and aggregation. When clopidogrel binds to this receptor, it prevents ADP from activating it. This blockade inhibits the downstream signaling pathways necessary for platelet activation, leading to reduced platelet aggregation. The irreversible nature of clopidogrel's action means that the platelets remain inhibited for their entire lifespan (about 7-10 days), until new platelets are produced. This is particularly beneficial in preventing thrombotic cardiovascular events, such as those that can occur in patients with a history of myocardial infarction or stroke. Other antiplatelet mechanisms and agents exist, but clopidogrel's specific action on the P2Y12 receptor is what defines its role as an antiplatelet medication. In contrast, other choices reflect different mechanisms that do not relate to the direct action of clopidogrel. For example, inhibiting thromboxane A2 production and preventing glycoprote*

## 8. What effect does spironolactone have on sodium in the kidneys?

A. Increases sodium retention

B. Promotes sodium excretion

C. Inhibits sodium production

D. Stimulates sodium absorption

*Spironolactone is a potassium-sparing diuretic that primarily acts on the distal convoluted tubules and collecting ducts of the kidneys. Its primary mechanism of action involves antagonism of the mineralocorticoid receptor, which is stimulated by aldosterone. In cases of aldosterone activity, sodium is reabsorbed back into the bloodstream, leading to sodium retention. However, when spironolactone inhibits the effects of aldosterone, it reduces this sodium reabsorption, promoting the excretion of sodium in the urine. This mechanism not only aids in reducing fluid overload by allowing the kidneys to excrete more sodium and subsequently more water, but it also helps maintain potassium levels by preventing its excretion. Therefore, the correct answer is that spironolactone promotes sodium excretion in the kidneys.*

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## 9. How do thiazide diuretics such as hydrochlorothiazide function?

A. Inhibit Na+/Cl- co-transporter in the distal convoluted tubule

B. Block Na+/Ca2+ exchange in the proximal tubule

C. Inhibit aldosterone receptor in the collecting duct

D. Inhibit carbonic anhydrase in the proximal tubule

*Thiazide diuretics, such as hydrochlorothiazide, primarily function by inhibiting the sodium-chloride (Na+/Cl-) co-transporter in the distal convoluted tubule of the nephron. This inhibition results in decreased reabsorption of sodium and chloride ions, leading to an increase in the excretion of water, sodium, and chloride. The primary mechanism of action focuses on the distal convoluted tubule, making these diuretics effective for reducing blood volume and subsequently lowering blood pressure. The inhibition of the Na+/Cl- co-transporter also indirectly promotes the retention of potassium and calcium. As sodium is not reabsorbed effectively, it stays in the tubular fluid, which leads to osmotic diuresis. The diuretic effect, alongside the antihypertensive benefits, stems from the unique position of this transporter within the nephron and its role in fluid volume regulation. Other mechanisms described in the options, such as blocking Na+/Ca2+ exchange or inhibiting aldosterone receptors, pertain to different classes of diuretics or pharmacological agents. Each of those mechanisms, while relevant to renal physiology and the effects of other drugs, does not apply to the thiazide class of diuret*

## 10. What additional effect can cholecystokinin have besides stimulating digestion?

A. Enhances gastric acid secretion

B. Reduces hunger feelings

C. Increases appetite

D. Stimulates insulin release

*Cholecystokinin (CCK) is a peptide hormone produced by the cells in the duodenum in response to the presence of fats and proteins. One of its key functions is to stimulate digestion by promoting the release of digestive enzymes from the pancreas and bile from the gallbladder. In addition to these digestive roles, CCK also plays a critical role in satiety – the feeling of fullness after eating. CCK influences the central nervous system to reduce feelings of hunger, primarily by acting on the hypothalamus, which regulates appetite. This signaling contributes to the sensation of satiety after meals, helping to control food intake and body weight. This function is critical in the overall regulation of energy balance in the body. Conversely, CCK does not enhance gastric acid secretion, nor does it increase appetite or stimulate insulin release as primary functions. While it may have minor interactions with insulin regulation, its stronger influence is related to promoting satiety and reducing hunger. Hence, recognizing CCK's role in appetite regulation highlights its importance beyond merely facilitating digestion.*

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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://usmlestep3drugmoa.examzify.com

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

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