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United States Medical Licensing Step 1

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**QUESTION 1**

A 34-year-old woman who has been taking oral contraceptives for many years presents with acute abdominal pain and fullness. Paracentesis harvests 200 mL of bloody fluid. Imaging studies show a 6- cm mass in the liver that is subsequently resected. Histological examination of this specimen would most likely reveal this to be which of the following?

- A. angiosarcoma
- B. cholangiosarcoma
- C. focal nodular hyperplasia
- D. hepatocellular carcinoma
- E. liver cell adenoma

Correct Answer: E

Section: Pathology and Path physiology Liver cell adenomas may occur after several years of taking oral contraceptives but the actual mechanism of tumor formation is unknown. The clinical presentation is often acute abdominal pain due to necrosis of the tumor and hemorrhage. Given the patient's history, liver cell adenoma is by far the most likely choice. Angiosarcomas of the liver (choice A) are very rare tumors associated with exposure to vinyl chloride (used in the manufacture of the plastic polyvinyl chloride). Cholangiosarcomas (choice B) are rare tumors that arise in the intrahepatic bile ducts. However, they are more common in the Far East, where there is an association with the liver fluke, *Clonorchis sinensis*. Focal nodular hyperplasia (choice C) is a tumor-like lesion that occurs more frequently in women. It has a weak association with oral contraceptive use. On cut section, it typically has a central stellate scar. It is usually asymptomatic and is only resected in the symptomatic patient. Hepatocellular carcinoma (choice D) in the United States usually arises in a background of cirrhosis due either to alcoholism or HBV infection. However, worldwide, hepatitis B is the major etiologic factor and up to 50% of patients with hepatocellular carcinoma may be noncirrhotic.

QUESTION 2

It is known that stretch receptors contained in the walls of the atria convey nerve impulses to the brainstem via the vagus nerve. Under normal conditions, these nerve impulses are most likely to occur during ventricular systole. What information is communicated to the brain by these nerve impulses?

- A. arterial muscle contraction
- B. diastolic arterial pressure
- C. filling of the atrium by venous pressure
- D. filling of the ventricle
- E. systolic arterial pressure

Correct Answer: C

Section: Physiology

The atrial stretch receptors are depolarized by stretch of the atria proportional to the magnitude of venous-



filling pressure. The frequency of action potentials rises to a maximum at the peak of the atrial "v" wave, which signals maximum atrial filling during ventricular contraction. Although the remaining choices (A, B, D, and E) may be influenced by the filling of the heart by venous pressure, the information conveyed to the brain via the atrial stretch receptors relates directly to the filling pressure of the atria themselves.

QUESTION 3

In cleaning the teeth in a patient, a dental hygienist accidentally cuts the gums of the posterior two molar teeth in the lower jaw on the lateral side. The pain of this injury is registered by which of the following nerves?

- A. anterior, middle, and posterior superior alveolar nerves
- B. buccal nerve
- C. greater palatine nerve
- D. lingual nerve
- E. nasopalatine nerve

Correct Answer: B

Section: Anatomy The gums on the lateral side of the mandibular molar teeth are innervated by the buccal nerve (long buccal nerve). All three superior alveolar nerves (choice A) supply the gums lateral to all maxillary teeth. The greater palatine nerve (choice C) innervates the gums medial to the maxillary premolar and molar teeth. The lingual nerve (choice D) supplies the gums medial to all mandibular teeth. The nasopalatine nerve (choice E) innervates the gums posterior to the maxillary incisors.

QUESTION 4

A patient has been severely injured in the back of the head during a mugging attempt and imaging studies reveal possible fracture of the skull along with the C1 (atlas) vertebra. The patient is also hemorrhaging from the vertebral artery in this location, and the attending surgeon will attempt to stop the bleeding by access through the suboccipital triangle. Which of the following muscles attaches from the transverse process of C1 to the occipital bone and forms the lateral border of the suboccipital triangle?

- A. obliquus capitis inferior
- B. obliquus capitis superior
- C. rectus capitis posterior major
- D. rectus capitis posterior minor
- E. semispinalis cervicis

Correct Answer: B

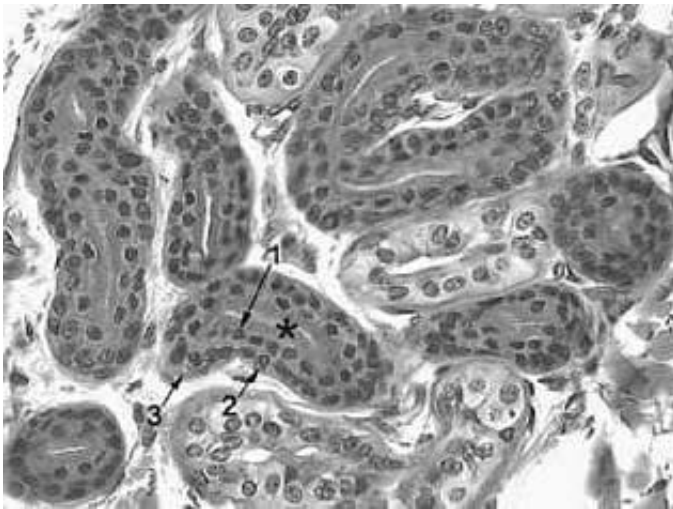
Section: Anatomy The obliquus capitis superior, attached between the transverse process of C1 and the suboccipital bone between the nuchal lines. It forms the lateral border of the suboccipital triangle. The obliquus capitis inferior



(choice A) is the inferior border of the triangle, attaching from the spinous process of C2 to the transverse process of C1. The rectus capitis posterior major (choice C) inserts from the spinous process of C2 into the inferior nuchal line on the occipital bone; it forms the medial border of the suboccipital triangle. The rectus capitis posterior minor (choice D) lies medial to the rectus capitis posterior major. The semispinalis cervicis (choice E) does not participate in the formation of the suboccipital triangle.

QUESTION 5

The histological structure marked by the asterisk in Fig. 1-4 is which of the following structures from the integumentary system?



- A. apocrine sweat gland
- B. dermal papilla
- C. eccrine sweat gland
- D. hair follicle
- E. sebaceous gland

Correct Answer: C

Section: Anatomy This is the secretory portion of the eccrine sweat gland, recognizable by its three cell types. The apical dark cells (arrow 1) are closest to the lumen. The clear or basal cells (arrow 2) and the myoepithelial cells (arrow 3) are located against the basal lamina. Characteristically, these cells are large and the lumen is small. The apocrine sweat gland (choice A) is lined with simple cuboidal epithelium and thus has a large lumen. The dermal papilla (choice B) is formed by fibroblasts, not epithelia. The hair follicle (choice D) is formed by three concentric zones of keratinized cells and does not have a lumen. The sebaceous glands (choice E) are appendages of the hair follicle and their lumen is lined by stratified squamous epithelium.

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