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A new initiative to monitor proficiency in medical English: sTANDEM

EASE is proud to be involved in this project to develop a Standardised Language Certification System for Medical Purposes (sTANDEM). This system is intended to promote, assess and certify the command of professional English among healthcare professionals and researchers worldwide. EASE endorses both standardisation of scientific (including medical) terminology and the use of clear language by all authors of scientific publications in English.

Development of examination materials

The certification will comprise tests for listening comprehension, reading comprehension, speaking and writing. Test materials have been developed at three levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): B1 (threshold or lower intermediate), B2 (vantage or upper intermediate) and C1 (effective operational proficiency or advanced). In addition, three groups of medical professionals are distinguished: physicians, nurses and pharmacists.

First sTANDEM exam session

The first sTANDEM exam session was held on 22 March 2014 at four exam centers in Austria (Innsbruck Medical University), Hungary (University of Pécs, Faculty of General Medicine), Poland (Jagiellonian University Medical College, Kraków) and Romania (University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Târgu-Mures). Altogether 80 candidates took the sTANDEM exams at CEFR levels B2 and C1. Most candidates took both the oral and written tests. The success rate was very high in both exam parts.

Editor welcome

There is a need for a copy editor of the examination texts, preferably a native speaker with a medical background. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance. This will be an unpaid task, at least in the short term. Information is available from the EASE representative, Arjan Polderman (a.k.s.polderman@pw.nl).

Publicity and dissemination

A major task for EASE in the sTANDEM project is to gain the support of the editorial community in promoting English language proficiency among authors who do not have English as their mother tongue. Publicising the sTANDEM project among the editorial community requires that we have the addresses of editors who can inform authors (and researchers in general) about the existence of this initiative to promote, assess and certify the command of professional English. EASE has compiled such a list of editors, which comprises well over 4000 addresses.

All persons and institutions interested in the sTANDEM initiative are welcome to learn more about the project at www.standem.eu.

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