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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:

- Austria, Innsbruck Medical University
- Hungary, University of Pécs, Faculty of General Medicine
- Poland, Kraków, Jagiellonian University Medical College
- Romania, University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Târgu-Mures

The first sTANDEM exams were offered at two CEFR levels: B2 and C1. The exams were divided into two parts which could be taken separately: Oral exam testing listening comprehension and speaking skills and Written exam testing reading comprehension and writing skills.

Altogether 80 candidates took the sTANDEM exams at level B2 and C1. Most of candidates took both the Oral and Written tests. The success rate was very high in both exam parts.

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. Publicizing the sTANDEM project among the editorial community requires that we have 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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