
Section 4: Correct Answer Explanation Revision

Instruction for Faculty

- 1) Briefly outline the logic steps needed to answer the question. The Intern Editor will restructure the answer explanation. Most questions can be answered with 1-3 logic steps. The table below illustrates the typical logic steps.

Logic Step 1	Logic Step 2	Logic Step 3
Test results	Communication Strategy	Communication Strategy
Diagnosis	Diagnostic testing	Diagnostic testing
	Disease complications	Disease complications
	Disease diagnosis	Disease diagnosis
	Disease mechanism	Disease mechanism
	Disease prognosis	Disease prognosis
	Disease risk factors	Disease risk factors
	Drug adverse effect	Drug adverse effect
	Health maintenance/prevention	Health maintenance/prevention
	History and physical exam	History and physical exam
	Mixed management	Mixed management
	Pharmacotherapy	Pharmacotherapy

Bioethics, biostatistics, and research method questions may not have more than one logic steps.

Example:

Logic Step	Explanation
1) Diagnosis	Cushing syndrome causing 2nd hypertension
2) Diagnostic testing	Midnight salivary cortisol is one of the test to screen for Cushing syndrome
3) N/A	

- 2) Outline why/how the correct answer is correct using the information provided in the stem and any additional information relevant to the lead-in. Focus on **clinical reasoning** and/or **critical thinking** rationale with clinical pearls and pitfalls where relevant.

Example Correct Answer Explanation Outline:

Step 1: Diagnosis

- 1) State the diagnosis and use information in the stem to support why this is the diagnosis.

Outline Example: Cushing syndrome diagnosis supported by: secondary hypertension, weight gain, central obesity, amenorrhea, and easy bruising.

- 2) State the differential diagnoses based on the information provided in the stem.

Outline Example: Other potential causes of secondary hypertension in an obese patient: sleep apnea and hypothyroidism.

3) State why the differential diagnoses is not correct based on the information provided in the stem

Outline Example: Bruising is not a symptom of hypothyroidism and sleep apnea.

4) Explain the correct diagnosis in more detail (if needed)

Outline Example: Secondary hypertension = blood pressure remains above 140/90 mm Hg despite adequate doses of 3 or more classes of antihypertensive medications. The mnemonic CHAPS for causes of secondary hypertension: Cushing syndrome, Hyperaldosteronism, Aortic coarctation, Pheochromocytoma, and Stenosis of the renal artery.

Adrenal tumors secreting mineral corticoid and cortisol can both cause secondary hypertension. In this case, the patient most likely has a cortisol tumor given her presentation. If these signs and symptoms were not present, she would have been evaluated for primary hyperaldosteronism as a cause for the secondary hypertension.

Step 2: Diagnostic testing

1) Diagnostic tests for Cushing syndrome: Elevated Midnight salivary cortisol, elevated 24-hour urine cortisol, and no suppression of cortisol after low-dose dexamethasone administration. Need 2 out of 3 tests.

2) ACTH levels differentiate hypercortisolism is primary to the adrenal (low ACTH) or secondary to the pituitary or an ectopic tumor (high ACTH).