

Update on the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination

The following information is related to the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE):

1. The Dental Hygiene examination is a criterion-referenced examination. That is to say, the minimum passing score and the remaining score scale are determined by the judgments of experts through standard-setting activities.
2. The content specifications are based on validity studies, including practice analyses.
 - a. Practice analysis activities involve a survey of recently licensed dental hygienists who were required to rate the importance for patient care of each of the 56 competencies based upon the Accreditation Standards published by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association and the *Competencies for Entry into the Profession of Dental Hygiene* promulgated by the American Dental Education Association.
 - b. These importance ratings were used to determine the content of the examination that is needed to support the successful acquisition of the competencies.

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3. The case-based component enhances the validity and fidelity of the examination.
 - a. Validity refers to the degree to which logic and evidence support the interpretation and use of scores achieved on the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination for making pass/fail licensing decisions by state boards.
 - b. Fidelity is the extent to which the content structure, and format of the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination conforms to the actual practice of dental hygiene.
4. Details regarding the NBDHE program can be found in the Technical Report , which can be accessed at (http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/nbdhe/nbdhe_technical_complete.pdf).

Figure 1. Trend in the Failure Rates for the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination

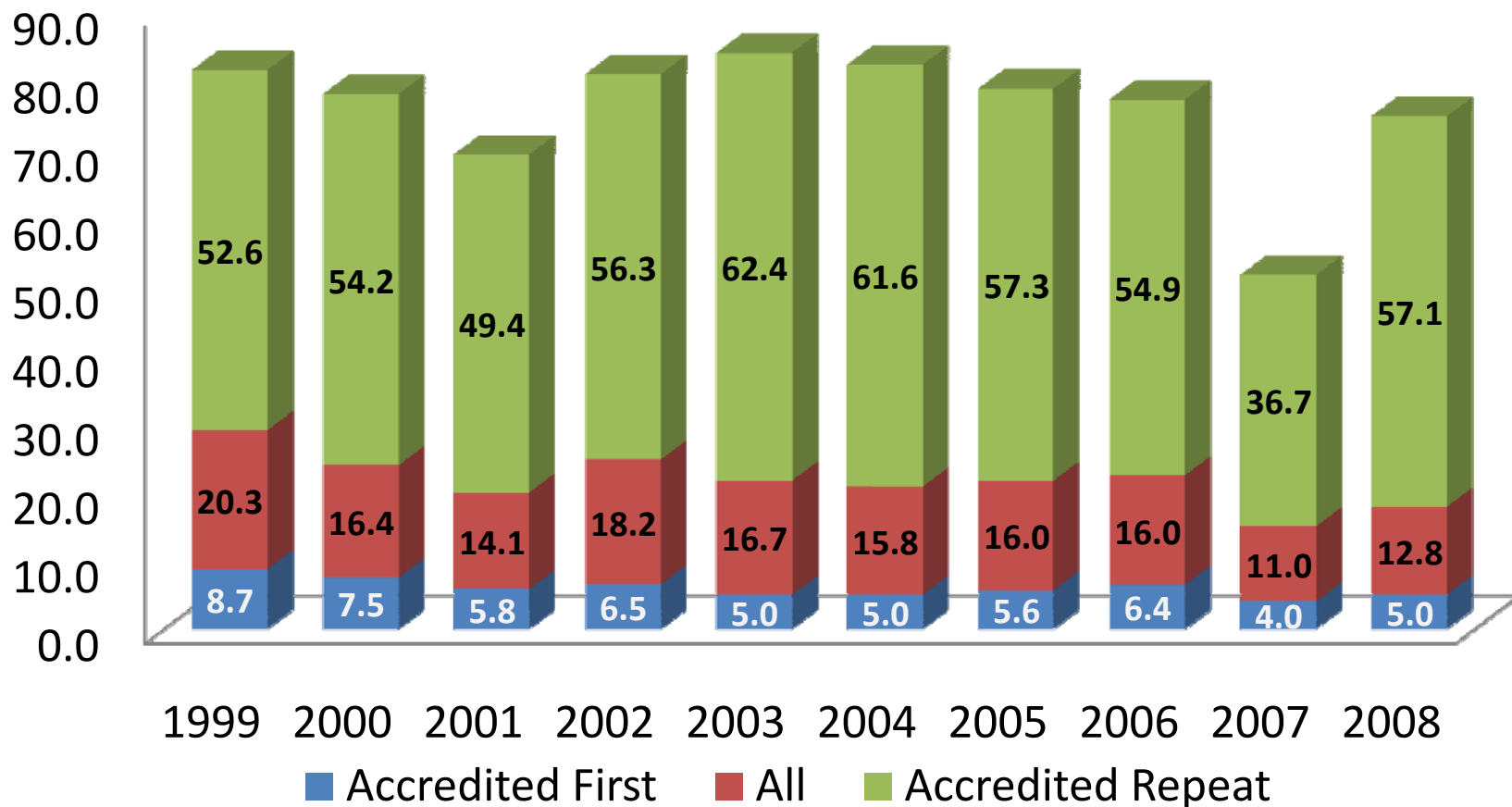


Figure 2. Failure Rates for the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination, January to December 2008

