

# NCCAOM Foundations Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



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**SAMPLE**

## **Questions**

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- 1. When considering tastes and their associated organs, what does the bitter taste primarily affect?**
  - A. Kidney**
  - B. Lung**
  - C. Heart**
  - D. Spleen**
- 2. What does a robust Yang Qi condition tend to show in terms of pulse quality?**
  - A. Weak and large pulse**
  - B. Thin and rapid pulse**
  - C. Deep and forceful pulse**
  - D. Superficial and thready pulse**
- 3. What specific emotion is linked with the spirit 'Yi' of the spleen?**
  - A. Joy**
  - B. Anger**
  - C. Worry**
  - D. Sadness**
- 4. What is the only organ that ascends?**
  - A. KD**
  - B. SP**
  - C. LV**
  - D. GB**
- 5. Where does the PC divergent channel emerge?**
  - A. Under the jaw**
  - B. Behind the ear**
  - C. At the forehead**
  - D. Above the eye**

- 6. Which organ is responsible for the descending of Qi in Traditional Chinese Medicine?**
- A. Heart**
  - B. Spleen**
  - C. Stomach**
  - D. Kidney**
- 7. Which organ is NOT directly involved in the making of blood?**
- A. Spleen**
  - B. Kidney**
  - C. Liver**
  - D. Gallbladder**
- 8. What does the UB (Urinary Bladder) primarily store?**
- A. Blood and Water**
  - B. Excess Qi**
  - C. Urine**
  - D. Food essence**
- 9. At which body part does the ST divergent begin?**
- A. Abdomen**
  - B. Ant thigh**
  - C. Neck**
  - D. Shoulder**
- 10. Which organ is primarily involved in the smooth flow of Qi and blood storage?**
- A. Heart**
  - B. Spleen**
  - C. Liver**
  - D. Kidney**

## **Answers**

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1. C
2. C
3. C
4. B
5. B
6. C
7. D
8. C
9. B
10. C

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## **Explanations**

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**1. When considering tastes and their associated organs, what does the bitter taste primarily affect?**

- A. Kidney**
- B. Lung**
- C. Heart**
- D. Spleen**

The bitter taste is primarily associated with the heart in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). It is believed that the bitter flavor has an affinity for the heart organ, influencing its functions and overall health. In TCM, each taste corresponds to specific organs and their related emotional and physiological aspects. The association of the bitter taste with the heart is significant as it is thought to clear heat, alleviate excess, and help regulate the heart's activities. Bitter foods and herbs are often considered beneficial for promoting heart health, cooling excessive heat, and providing a calming effect, which can be particularly useful for addressing conditions like anxiety or agitation tied to heart imbalance. Understanding these associations helps in the practice of TCM, as practitioners utilize flavors when recommending dietary and herbal therapies tailored to an individual's organ health. This knowledge is key for effectively integrating taste into a holistic wellness plan.

**2. What does a robust Yang Qi condition tend to show in terms of pulse quality?**

- A. Weak and large pulse**
- B. Thin and rapid pulse**
- C. Deep and forceful pulse**
- D. Superficial and thready pulse**

A robust Yang Qi condition typically indicates a strong, vibrant energy within the body. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Yang Qi is associated with warmth, activity, and energy. This manifests in various physiological signs, including the quality of the pulse. When Yang Qi is robust, the pulse is often described as deep and forceful. A deep pulse suggests fullness and a good connection to the body's core energy, indicative of vitality and strength. A forceful pulse indicates that the Yang energy is abundant and effectively circulating throughout the body. This combination is crucial in TCM diagnostics, as it reflects not only the presence of adequate Yang Qi but also the body's overall health and proper functioning. In contrast, other pulse qualities indicate different conditions. A weak and large pulse suggests a deficiency rather than abundance, while a thin and rapid pulse can indicate heat or excess Yang without adequate foundation. A superficial and thready pulse typically shows a lack of strength, suggesting weakness or deficiency. Therefore, the deep and forceful pulse is aligned with a robust Yang Qi condition, marking it as the correct choice.

### 3. What specific emotion is linked with the spirit 'Yi' of the spleen?

- A. Joy
- B. Anger
- C. Worry**
- D. Sadness

The correct answer is linked to the concept of 'Yi,' which is associated with the spleen in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). 'Yi' translates to "intellect" or "thought," and it plays a crucial role in cognitive functions, including memory and thought processes. The emotion that is primarily connected with 'Yi' is worry or overthinking. In TCM, excessive worrying can weaken the spleen, leading to various health issues such as digestive problems, fatigue, and emotional disturbances. Understanding the connection between 'Yi' and worry helps practitioners recognize the negative impact of unresolved mental stress and anxiety on physical health. This awareness is fundamental for diagnosing and treating conditions related to the spleen and the emotions tied to it. By focusing on the importance of managing worry and its effect on the spleen, practitioners can help restore balance and improve both mental and physical health. This foundational knowledge is essential for approaching treatment in a holistic manner, considering the interplay between emotions and physical organs.

### 4. What is the only organ that ascends?

- A. KD
- B. SP**
- C. LV
- D. GB

The spleen (SP) is the only organ among the choices that is considered to have an ascending function in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). This is primarily associated with its role in digestion and the transformation of food substances into qi and blood. The spleen is responsible for the upward movement of qi, which supports the ascension of clear yang energy, crucial for maintaining the body's vitality and overall health. In TCM, the spleen is often described as the organ that governs the production of postnatal qi and blood. It transforms and transports the nutrients derived from food, and it ensures that the essence rises towards the heart and lungs, promoting alertness and well-being. This rising function is vital for supporting the function of the lungs and heart, enhancing the vital activities of the body. In contrast, the kidneys (KD) are associated with a downward movement, as they are linked to storing essence and supporting the body's foundational energy. The liver (LV) also does not have an ascending characteristic as its functions involve moving qi in a widespread and harmonizing manner. The gallbladder (GB) is primarily a storage organ that does not perform an ascendant role. Thus, the spleen's unique function of ascending clearly distinguishes it as

## 5. Where does the PC divergent channel emerge?

- A. Under the jaw
- B. Behind the ear**
- C. At the forehead
- D. Above the eye

The PC (Pericardium) divergent channel emerges behind the ear, which is a critical point in understanding the trajectory of this channel within Traditional Chinese Medicine. Divergent channels are pathways that separate from the primary channels and serve to connect the internal organs with their respective exterior manifestations. In the case of the PC divergent channel, after diverging from the primary channel, it ascends to the region located behind the ear. This position is significant because it is where the channel connects to the heart, symbolizing the integration of emotional and physical health. The locations of divergence in these channels often correlate with their functional roles in the body, and understanding this pathway helps practitioners address deeper systemic imbalances. The other options mentioned do not accurately represent the emergence point of the PC divergent channel, as each serves distinct anatomical or functional roles within the body.

## 6. Which organ is responsible for the descending of Qi in Traditional Chinese Medicine?

- A. Heart
- B. Spleen
- C. Stomach**
- D. Kidney

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the organ primarily responsible for the descending of Qi is the Stomach. The Stomach plays a crucial role in digestion and is viewed as the origin of the post-heaven Qi, which is derived from the food and fluids we consume. Its function facilitates the transformation and transportation of nutrients, ensuring that Qi can descend appropriately. The Stomach's ability to descend Qi is foundational for maintaining the proper flow of energy (Qi) throughout the body. When the Stomach is functioning well, it helps ensure that the Qi descends smoothly and supports the overall balance of the body's energies. If the Stomach is not functioning optimally, it may lead to symptoms such as bloating, nausea, or other digestive issues that indicate an obstruction in Qi flow. The other organs mentioned have different roles or effects in TCM but are not primarily associated with the descending of Qi. For instance, while the Heart is crucial for circulating blood and governing Shen (spirit), the Spleen is primarily involved in the transformation of food into Qi and blood, and the Kidney's role is more aligned with storing essence and governing water metabolism. Therefore, the specific responsibility for Qi descent is distinctly attributed to the Stomach.

**7. Which organ is NOT directly involved in the making of blood?**

- A. Spleen**
- B. Kidney**
- C. Liver**

**D. Gallbladder**

The gallbladder is not directly involved in the making of blood. Its primary function is to store and concentrate bile, which is produced by the liver and released into the digestive system to aid in the digestion and absorption of fats. Blood formation, or hematopoiesis, primarily occurs in the bone marrow, where red and white blood cells are produced, as well as in the spleen and liver, which also have roles in filtering blood and recycling components. In contrast, the spleen plays a significant role in the production and storage of blood cells, particularly in filtering old red blood cells and contributing to immune responses. The kidneys are involved in the regulation of various blood components, including the production of erythropoietin, a hormone that stimulates the production of red blood cells in the bone marrow. The liver, while primarily known for its metabolic functions, is also involved in the synthesis of various proteins that are crucial to blood function, such as clotting factors and albumin. Thus, while the spleen, kidneys, and liver have direct roles in aspects of blood production and metabolism, the gallbladder does not participate in these processes, making it the correct answer to the question.

**8. What does the UB (Urinary Bladder) primarily store?**

- A. Blood and Water**
- B. Excess Qi**
- C. Urine**
- D. Food essence**

The Urinary Bladder (UB) primarily functions as a storage organ specifically for urine. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the bladder's main role is to collect and store the urine produced by the kidneys after the filtering process. This process is crucial in maintaining fluid balance in the body, allowing for the excretion of waste while retaining essential nutrients. In TCM, the kidneys are considered to be the source of water metabolism, which includes the production of urine. The bladder then serves as the reservoir that holds this fluid until it is ready to be expelled from the body. Understanding this function offers insight into how practitioners approach issues related to the urinary system, such as incontinence or urinary retention, where the normal storage and expulsion process may be disrupted.

**9. At which body part does the ST divergent begin?**

- A. Abdomen
- B. Ant thigh**
- C. Neck
- D. Shoulder

The ST divergent channel begins at the anterior thigh. This channel is part of the larger system of divergent channels that branch off from the primary meridians to help connect different aspects of the body and promote the flow of Qi and blood. The divergence of the ST channel at this location is significant as it allows for the communication between the stomach and other organs or areas of the body, particularly in relation to the legs and lower body. Understanding the starting point of the ST divergent channel is essential for practitioners of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine, as this knowledge helps in diagnosing and treating conditions associated with the stomach and associated pathways. The anterior thigh is particularly relevant for conditions involving the lower abdomen and gastrointestinal issues, as well as issues related to the legs. Thus, knowing that the ST divergent begins in this region allows for targeted therapeutic strategies.

**10. Which organ is primarily involved in the smooth flow of Qi and blood storage?**

- A. Heart
- B. Spleen
- C. Liver**
- D. Kidney

The liver plays a crucial role in the smooth flow of Qi and the storage of blood within the context of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). It is said to regulate the flow of Qi throughout the body, ensuring that energy moves freely and without obstruction. This proper flow is essential for maintaining balance and preventing stagnation, which can lead to emotional and physical symptoms. Additionally, the liver is responsible for storing blood during times of rest and releasing it during periods of exertion. This function is particularly important as it helps sustain energy levels, supports healthy menstruation in women, and ensures that the body is nourished and able to respond to various physical demands. In TCM, it is frequently observed that when liver Qi is stagnant, it can lead to a range of issues, including irritability, stress, and digestive problems. Therefore, understanding the liver's role in Qi and blood management is vital in addressing health concerns holistically. The other organs mentioned in the options have their specific roles—like the heart for blood circulation and the spleen for digestion and production of Qi—but the liver specifically encapsulates these dual functions of Qi flow and blood storage.