

# Demystifying and Dominating The Oral Boards for a Second Year

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## Background

The American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ABOG) subspecialty certifying examination in the subspecialties are considered one of the most stressful professional accomplishments in a young physician's life.

In 2022 Society for Gynecologic Oncology (SGO) membership identified that certifying (oral) exam pass rates were lower than that of other subspecialties and formed a Task Force for the 2023 Annual Meeting to assist candidates in preparing. This resulted in improved pass rates compared to historical cohorts and non-participants.

Due to the success in 2023 session proposals were accepted to have ongoing efforts at the 2024 SGO Annual Meeting.

## Objectives

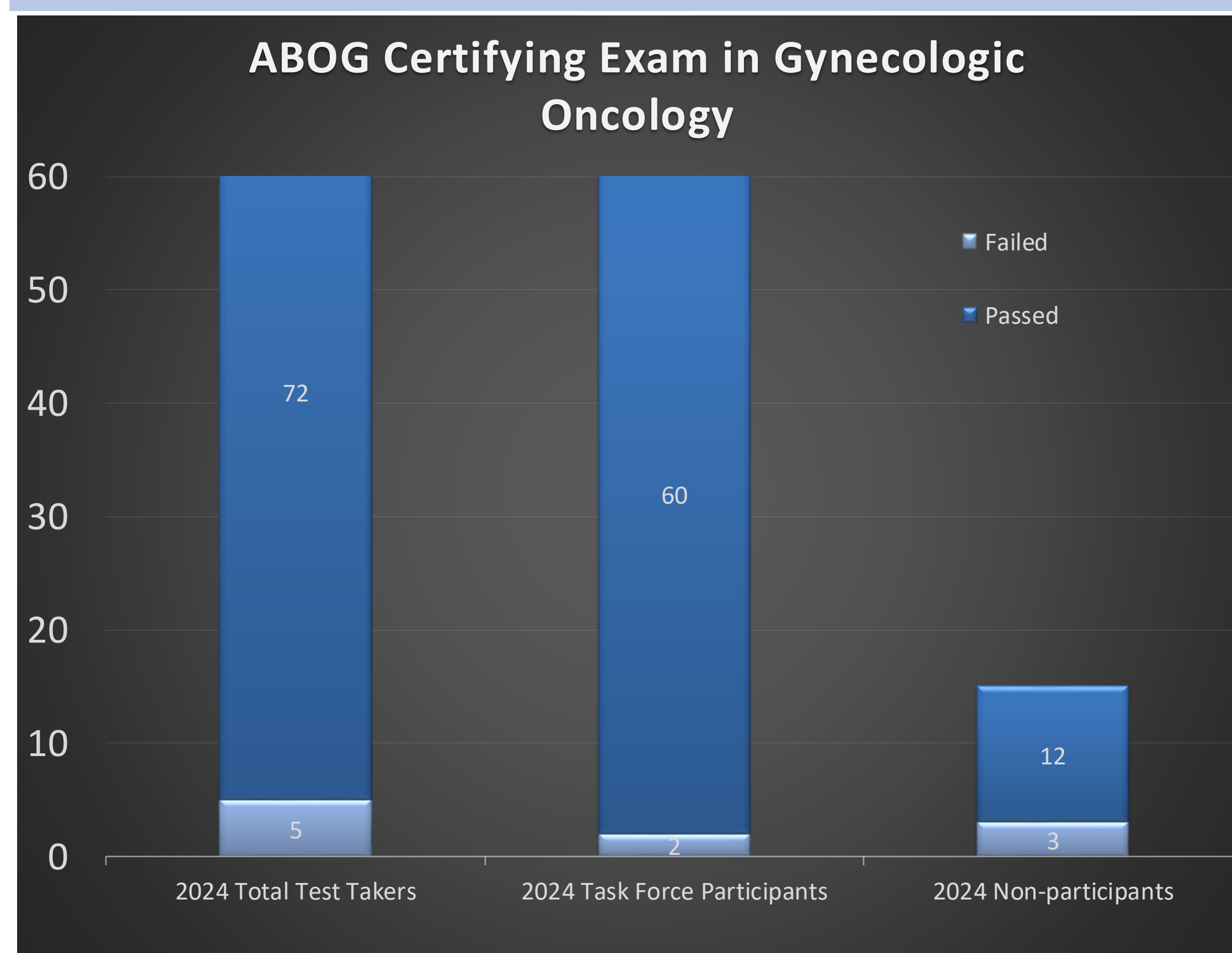
To support its junior members preparing for their certifying exam and build on the success of 2023 Annual Meeting events, a group of Board-Certified Gynecologic Oncologists within the SGO sought to continue Taskforce for Board Certification Support events. This taskforce had the following objectives:

1. Create a forum to partner with ABOG for candidates to review certifying exam delivery, assessment processes, and scoring.
2. Provide an ongoing venue for certifying candidates to get reliable education increasing equity among our membership.
3. Assist candidates in identifying content that is addressed on the certifying exam.

## Methods

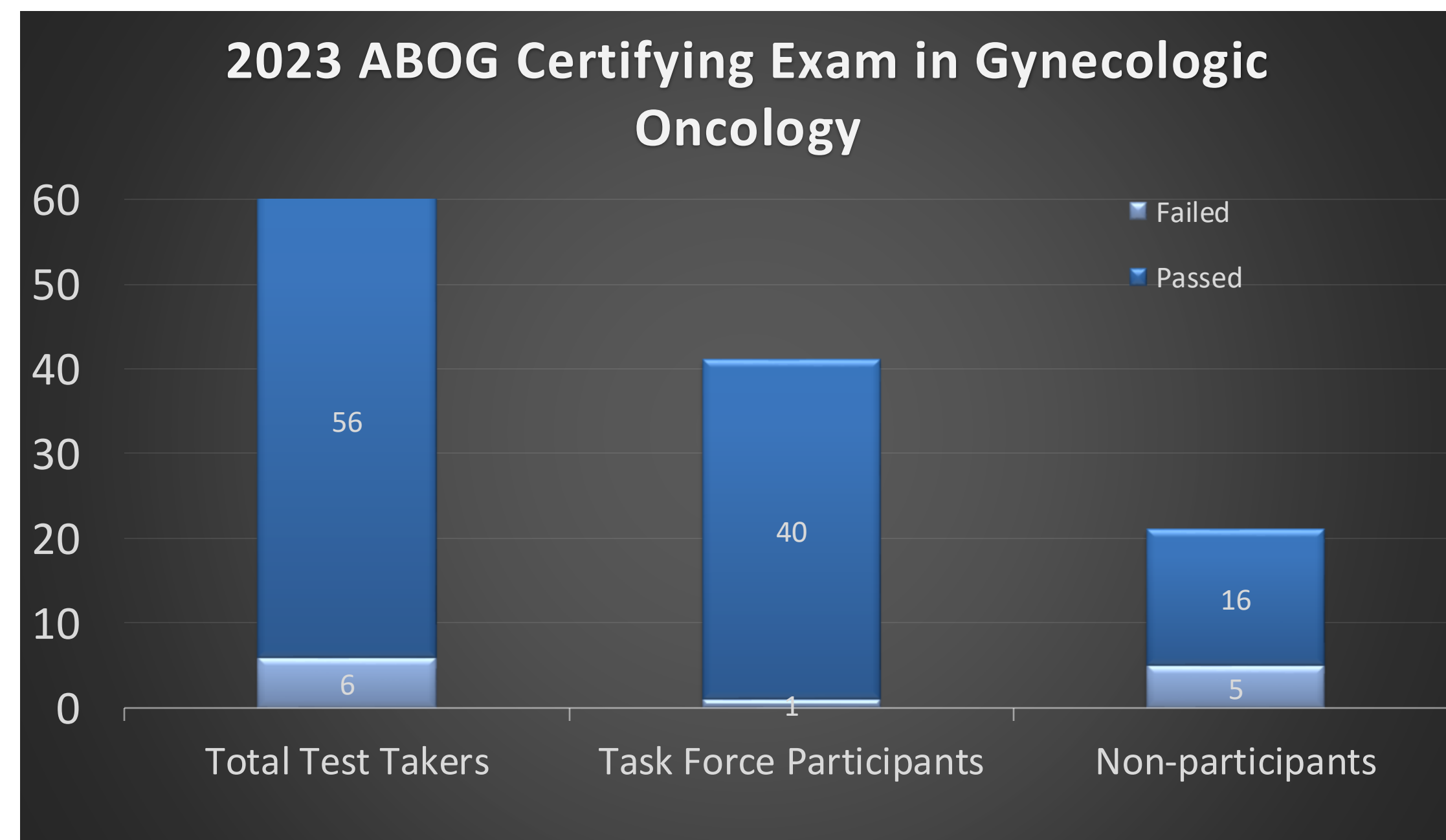
- A taskforce within the SGO Education Committee partnered with ABOG, proposed events at the SGO annual meeting and provided enduring content.
- The new ABOG executive director attended the SGO Annual Meeting for a special session with candidates on the changes to oral boards, scoring processes, and vision of ABOG leadership.
- The taskforce held three hybrid small group sessions that simulated the oral exam process and reviewed content.
- After the exam, pass rates were compared between test takers who utilized the sessions compared to non-participants and historical cohorts published by ABOG.
- Qualitative data was also obtained from participants.

## Results



In 2024, a total of 77 candidates took the ABOG gynecologic oncology certifying exam in 2024 with 72 passing (94% pass rate). Sixty-two of these candidates participated in the SGO taskforce sessions, with a 97% pass rate (n=60). For the 15 candidates who did not participate, 12 passed (80% pass rate). Similar to what was seen in 2023, when comparing 2024 cohorts the candidates who participated in these sessions had a **significantly higher pass rate (p=0.0178) compared to non-participants**. When comparing to the historical cohort available (10 years), the **2024 candidates again had a significantly higher pass rate (p=0.0385)**.

This data builds on the 2023 efforts when total of 62 candidates took the ABOG gynecologic oncology certifying exam with 56 passing (90% pass rate). Forty-one of these candidates participated in the SGO taskforce sessions, with a **97.6% pass rate (n=40)**. For the 21 candidates who did not participate, 16 passed (76.1% pass rate). When comparing cohorts, the candidates who participated in these sessions had a **significantly higher pass rate (p=0.007)**. When comparing to the historical cohort, the candidates again had a **significantly higher pass rate (p=0.046)**.



## Results

Qualitative survey data overwhelmingly confirmed candidates found the taskforce supported their efforts in obtaining board certification.

Sample Comments include:

- This was amazing and all people taking boards should do this
- This has been incredible for decreasing my anxiety but also pointing out things I still need to review. Thank you to the committee for all the hard work and thank you to the SGO and ABOG for supporting it.
- Mock orals with different moderators each day was VERY helpful
- Multiple days allowed for the review to be helpful without being overwhelming. Different moderators give you different perspectives. I liked one moderator per group. Group size was perfect. Would not have wanted any more or any less in my group.
- Please keep doing this! Would love more sessions
- This was amazing and the most helpful contribution to my exam studying I have had thus far. Would love more sessions!!
- The moderators were so helpful and amazing
- Loved the useful examples of questions for preparation. Practice articulating answers out loud.
- Reviewing Types/style of questions was very helpful.
- Sample cases, insight regarding type of questions from moderators, test taking strategies were all great
- Moderators were great with feedback on detail of answers, moving on when answer incorrectly
- It was great. Thank you!!!
- I found practice verbalizing and watching others do the same extremely helpful. Real time low pressure feedback and tips
- Best part was talking to other candidates, learning from moderators
- Helpful to have rapid fire cases for practice of test taking strategy
- Longer sessions would be amazing! This was so helpful
- Would love more review before if possible
- It was so needed and I am so grateful
- Really awesome. I appreciate the volunteers doing this.
- Great sessions. Would strongly recommend to future candidates. Consider option for individual mocks but realize that would be quite challenging.
- I'd love to do this as a moderator next year (if I pass!)
- Would prefer if we can still work in site specific reviews/summaries of trials
- It would be helpful for SGO to hold sessions for board preparation throughout the year and not just at annual meeting
- These sessions were extremely helpful. The cases were excellent. Helped identify areas to review and great environment to practice verbalizing responses.
- Love it. Never stop
- Everything was incredibly helpful, would not take anything away
- Great. Session. Wish they were longer. Appreciate the time sacrifice from moderators!
- My only wish is that these sessions were twice as long!

## Conclusions

The development of materials to assist candidates in passing the ABOG subspecialty certifying examination by the SGO taskforce was successful in producing higher pass rates among participants when compared to non-participants and historical cohorts for two consecutive years.

## Future Directions

- The taskforce has been permanently incorporated into the Education Committee Career Development Subcommittee with session proposal submitted for ongoing events at the 2025 Annual Meeting.
- In order to better support these efforts and candidates SGO leadership is upscaling these events to include further enduring educational materials, live streamed review sessions, and mock oral exams.