

**POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO**

**POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE EXAMINATION**  
**NOVEMBER 2021**

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021

Time: 1.00 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.

**STRUCTURED ESSAY QUESTION PAPER**

Answer **all five (05)** questions.

Answer each question in a separate book.

1. A 71-year-old patient with advanced chronic obstructive pulmonary disease was admitted with severe shortness of breath. He was very anxious and developed panic attacks at home.

He was on home oxygen and physically as well as psychologically dependent on oxygen.

He has had 4 episodes of hospital admissions with episodes of exacerbation of shortness of breath during last 6 months.

- 1.1. List the problems you identify in this patient. (20 marks)
- 1.2. List pharmacological and non-pharmacological measures used in the management of his panic attacks. (20 marks)

One month later he presented with exacerbation of breathlessness and fever. He was restless and confused. Blood pressure was 80/50Hgmm. His urine output was 10ml over the last 6 hours. On direct questioning, he has been very weak over the last 2 weeks refusing food.

- 1.3. Explain his current clinical condition. (20 marks)

His son who has come from abroad asks you about his father's condition.

- 1.4. Describe how and what information would you divulge to the son. (40 marks)

Contd...../2-

2. An 80-year-old female with progressive forgetfulness, misplacing objects and gradually progressive cognitive impairment, lives in daughter's house. She is dependent on a care giver for daily living activities. She has the history of frequent hospital admissions for dehydration and aspiration pneumonia.

- 2.1. What is the most probable cause of aspiration pneumonia?  
(5 marks)
- 2.2. Briefly discuss the place of tube feeding in this patient. (30 marks)
- 2.3. List three (3) indicators that can be used to monitor hydration in this patient. (15 marks)
- 2.4. List four (4) behavioral and psychological disturbances of dementia (BPSD). (20 marks)
- 2.5. List three (3) non-pharmacological methods used in the management of problems listed in 2.4. (15 marks)
- 2.6. List three (3) medications that can be given to treat BPSD symptoms. (15 marks)

3. Mr. A, 65-year-old, retired engineer was diagnosed with a carcinoma in the right colon two years ago.

He underwent right hemicolectomy, adjuvant chemotherapy and radiotherapy. One month back he complained of lower backache and further investigations revealed multiple metastases in the lumbar spine, liver and lungs.

- 3.1. List five (5) possible pathophysiological mechanisms of his back pain. (20 marks)
- 3.2. List five (5) physical symptoms helpful to differentiate whether his pain is nociceptive or neuropathic. (20 marks)
- 3.3. If his pain is diagnosed as **acute severe nociceptive pain due to spinal metastases**, outline the pharmacological management. (40 marks)

After two weeks he was brought to the palliative clinic complaining of nausea and vomiting.

- 3.4. List five (5) causes for nausea and vomiting in this patient. (20 marks)

4.

- 4.1. A 45-year-old man with a history of heavy smoking, is diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer. His condition is complicated with liver, spine and brain metastases. Patient is managed at palliative care unit and oncology clinic, National cancer institute over last 6 months.

You receive a call from his wife saying that he is having urinary incontinence.

On further questioning you found out that he is bed ridden and is having faecal incontinence and has lost 10 kg weight over last month. He is non-responding and sleeping most of time.

His short of breath on exertion worsened over last week and he is breathless even on sitting up on bed and most of the time prefers to lie on bed. His wife also told that he refuses feeds and takes only sips of liquids since last 2 days.

- 4.1.1. What is your probable diagnosis? (10 marks)
- 4.1.2. What other information you would like to gather from his clinic records? (20 marks)
- 4.1.3. After reviewing history and clinic records what is your next step of management? (20 marks)

- 4.2. Patient is brought to the emergency department by the patients' son without discussing with mother. Following his assessment, patient is found to be drowsy, cachectic, body mass index (BMI) 14, Paraplegia and poor performance status. He is diagnosed with acute renal failure, spinal cord compression at D6 level and hypercalcemia.

- 4.2.1. Outline your management plan. (50 marks)

5. You see a 5-year-old child who has been diagnosed with severe cerebral palsy and poorly controlled seizure disorder while on two anti-convulsive medications. His developmental age is about 3-6 months in all domains. Mother says that he has been vomiting whatever is given via percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube last 24 hours. His weight was 15kg few days earlier.
- 5.1. How would you assess the degree of dehydration to plan the treatment?  
(15 marks)
- 5.2. If this child is moderately dehydrated, mention three clinical factors you would consider before planning the hydration in the context of palliative care?  
(15 marks)
- 5.3. If this child is in his terminal phase and agitated, outline briefly the practical approach to manage moderate dehydration of this child.  
(20 marks)
- 5.4. Name three (3) emotions mother may be undergoing. (15 marks)
- 5.5. Name three (3) mal-adaptive coping methods mother might use to overcome her emotions. (15 marks)
- 5.6. Name three (3) adaptive coping methods mother can use to reduce her emotions. (15 marks)
- 5.7. Name one (1) technique you can use to help the mother to decide on key management decisions. (5 marks)