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

**POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE**  
**EXAMINATION – DECEMBER 2022**

**Date:-** 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022

**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 67-year-old man presented with acute shortness breath to the medical casualty ward due exacerbation of heart failure. He is a diagnosed patient with chronic ischaemic cardiomyopathy with ejection fraction 25%. He has 4 hospital admissions over last 6 months. After discharge from the last hospital admission 2 weeks back, he was having shortness of breath even with mild exertion. He needs assistance for most activities at home as he felt breathless even after going to the toilet.  
He lives with his wife who is 61-year-old and healthy. His only child is a nursing officer lives close by.
  - 1.1. Do you think this patient has entered the end of life phase? Give reasons for your answer. (35 marks)
  - 1.2. Explain this patient's prognosis describing the natural history of his cardiac condition. (30 marks)
  - 1.3. How do you communicate with the patient and family? (35 marks)
  
2. Wife of a 62-year-old man who was registered in the palliative care unit of National Cancer Institute Sri Lanka, informed that her husband's face and upper arms are swollen. Swelling started about a week ago and it was progressive. She also complained that he was having shortness of breath even at rest.  
He is a diagnosed patient of advanced lung cancer in right upper lobe with liver metastases. He has completed a course of palliative chemotherapy 10 weeks ago. He defaulted planned radiotherapy treatment.  
They live 30 km away from hospital and has a poor socio-economic background.
  - 2.1. What is the probable diagnosis? (15 marks)
  - 2.2. What advice you would give to the wife of this patient? (10 marks)
  - 2.3. State briefly how you would manage this patient once brought to the hospital if you are the medical officer in the ward? (50 marks)
  - 2.4. What are the specialized options available in the management of this patient? (15 marks)
  - 2.5. What would be the impact of delay in treating this condition? (10 marks)

3.

3.1. A 53-year-old woman with metastatic bowel cancer on ileostomy since 4 months is on fortnightly chemotherapy. She has loss of appetite, change of taste and loss weight.

3.1.1. List five (05) advices you would give on each of the following complains.

(a) Poor appetite (15 marks)

(b) Change of taste (15 marks)

3.1.2. Outline the factors you would consider when planning a meal for this patient. (20 marks)

3.2. A 6-year-old child with severe global developmental delay and seizure disorder was brought to the multi-disciplinary clinic for assessment. Developmentally he has a poor head control and fully dependent on the mother. He has been fed via a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube. Mother mentioned that he has not passed stools for a week and is suffering from constipation.

3.2.1. Outline the clinical assessment of constipation of this patient. (25 marks)

3.2.2. You are planning to make a home visit with a social worker, for need assessment of the home environment.

List five (05) different areas you would consider in need assessment. (25 marks)

4. A 74-year-old woman, who is a known person with dementia and depression is on sertraline 50 mg mane daily. She was seen by her psychiatrist recently and her sertraline dose was increased up to 100 mg daily. One week later she acutely developed lethargy, drowsiness, withdrawal and started staring to space. Her consciousness is fluctuating and she appears fearful. There are no focal neurological signs

4.1. What is the most likely diagnosis? (10 marks)

4.2. Name two (02) possible precipitating factors for her condition. (20 marks)

4.3. Name two (02) possible predisposing factors for her condition. (20 marks)



Five years later she was seen at the medical clinic. Her memory had deteriorated further and she could not attend to her personal hygiene. She was totally dependent on all activities of daily living (ADL). She could not walk without help, she could not recall distant or recent events, she was able to recognize people around her but could not engage in a meaningful conversation. She repeatedly accused the main caregiver for stealing things from her room, at times appeared agitated and she was very aggressive with relatives. She had lost weight significantly during the last 6 months and there has been a marked reduction in the oral intake. She also complained of constipation. She has urine and foecal incontinence recently.

- 4.4. List five (05) factors in the history that suggest this patient has entered the end of life stage. (25 marks)
  - 4.5. List three (03) features to suggest that she has developed behavioural psychological symptoms of dementia. (15 marks)
  - 4.6. List two (02) ways of feeding this person. (10 marks)
5. A 60-year-old woman was diagnosed with a carcinoma of right breast 5 years back. Total mastectomy was performed on her, and chemo-radiotherapy was completed.  
Two months ago, she was referred to the pain clinic complaining of severe backache on her right lumbar region.  
MRI spine showed multiple metastatic deposits from L5 to S1.
- 5.1. Name two (02) initial steps of her pain management. (10 marks)
  - 5.2. What are the possible types of pain in this patient? (15 marks)
  - 5.3. Describe the concept of “total pain”. (30 marks)
  - 5.4. She complains of tingling sensation along her right leg.  
State a suitable adjuvant medication you would prescribe with dose and frequency. (15 marks)
  - 5.5. If her pain is not responding to the oral or intravenous medications, what is the next available technique to control her pain? (10 marks)
  - 5.6. Name two (02) contraindications for the technique you mentioned in 5.5. (20 marks)