

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE
EXAMINATION – DECEMBER 2023

Date:- 6th December 2023

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 72-year-old smoker diagnosed to have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) 6 years ago. He presented to the emergency department with shortness of breath at rest for last 3 days. His medications were reviewed a week ago by his general practitioner and at present he is on maximum doses of inhalers with good compliance. He follows correct technique of inhalation on inquiry.

This is his 4th admission with exacerbation of COPD over last 6 months.

Few days prior to admission he was able to walk within the house without being short of breath.

On examination his respiratory rate was 24 breaths/minute. SpO₂ 87% on room air. There were rhonchi and crepitations in both lung fields.

- 1.1. List four (04) steps in the emergency management. (20 marks)

Patient improved with the emergency management. His medications were further optimized. However he continued to remain short of breath at 24th hour after admission.

- 1.2. List three (03) important aspects in further assessment of his breathing. (30marks)
- 1.3. Mention one (01) pharmacological agent with dose and frequency to improve the refractory breathlessness. (10 marks)
- 1.4. List four (04) non-pharmacological methods to relieve refractory breathlessness. (40 marks)

Contd..../2-

2. A 65-year-old man with advanced non-small cell lung cancer, presented to the emergency treatment unit at National Cancer Institute of Sri Lanka (NCISL) with progressively worsening difficulty in breathing and swelling of face, neck and arms for last 3 days. He is being followed up at palliative care unit of NCISL.
- 2.1. Mention three (03) symptoms and three (03) signs that you would look for, in this patient. (30 marks)
- 2.2. Mention three (03) investigations you would perform. (15 marks)
- 2.3. What is the most likely diagnosis? (10 marks)
- 2.4. Mention two (02) possible causes for this condition. (10 marks)
- 2.5. State five (05) steps in the initial management of this patient. (25 marks)
- 2.6. Mention two (02) specific oncological management options for this patient. (10 marks)
3. A 9-year-old child with severe quadriplegic cerebral palsy, global developmental delay and epilepsy, is admitted with fever, breathing difficulty and irritability for last 3 days. She has been fed through nasogastric tube for last six months. She is fully dependant on her mother for caring. Developmental age is below 3 months. She has evidence of severe chronic malnutrition. She has contractures and increased tone of all four limbs.
- 3.1. List five (05) reasons for her irritability. (15 marks)
- 3.2. List three (03) causes for her dyspnoea. (15 marks)
- 3.3. Describe five (05) steps in the management of this child within the first 24 hours. (30 marks)
- 3.4. Mention a scale you would use to assess the pain in this child. (10 marks)
- 3.5. List three (03) nutritional issues in this patient. (15 marks)
- 3.6. Mention one (01) step of management for each of the three (03) issues mentioned in 3.5. (15 marks)

4. A 68-year-old man was admitted to preliminary care unit with a ST elevation myocardial infarction and was treated with thrombolytic agent. He went into cardiac arrest for a brief moment and was rushed to coronary care unit. Following day, he was noted to be restless and talking nonsense. He was observed to be fearful and was talking about seeing animals within the coronary care unit.

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

4.2. Name two (02) cardiac related causes for the condition mentioned in 4.1. (30 marks)

4.3. Name two (02) predisposing factors you would look for in this patient. (20 marks)

4.4. Name two (02) investigations to assess non-cardiac precipitants for the condition mentioned in 4.1. (20 marks)

4.5. Name two (02) classes of medications you would use to calm him. (20 marks)

5. A 55-year-old man was presented to the palliative pain clinic complaining of severe back pain radiating along left leg. He is diagnosed and treated for a prostate cancer for 3 years.

Recent MRI revealed metastatic deposits at lumbar vertebrae 3 and 4. His serum creatinine is 5.5 mmol/L and he is on regular dialysis 2 days per week.

5.1. Name three (03) causes for his pain. (30 marks)

5.2. Mention three (03) basic steps in the management of his pain. (15 marks)

5.3. His pain medications were given according to the WHO pain ladder. What are the five (05) criteria (methods) related to WHO pain ladder? (15 marks)

5.4. Mention three (03) medications used in the management of his pain stating an indication for each medication. (15 marks)

5.5.

5.5.1. What is breakthrough pain? (10 marks)

5.5.2. How do you manage it in this patient? (15 marks)