

SPECIALIST ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

MEDICAL

TRAINING PROGRAMME

OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

Approved by the Specialist Accreditation Committee - 21st February 2008.

The Post-Graduate Training Programme for Obstetrics & Gynaecology in Malta

This programme has been set up by the Malta College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (**MCOG**) in accordance with the recommendations of the European Board and College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (**EBCOG**) of June 2000.

Definition of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

The specialty of Obstetrics and Gynaecology involves the supervision of and appropriate intervention during normal and complicated pregnancy and delivery, as well as the recognition, prevention, management and surveillance of diseases of reproductive organs and factors influencing female reproductive health.

Entry requirements

To join the post-graduate programme the following entry criteria must be met:

- The candidate must possess a primary medical qualification recognised by the Medical Council of Malta , and be post-registration.
- There must be a recognized substantive training post available, recognized for the purpose by the Specialist Accreditation Committee, following the appropriate selection process of trainees.

Further details:

1. An adequately remunerated post in a recognized training programme is a basic condition. Each trainee must have a tutor appointed at the beginning of training to provide guidance and advice. A trainee has to be supervised by a minimum of two trainers throughout the length of the training period. A trainer can not have more than two trainees concurrently.
2. The number of training posts should reflect the national need for specialists in Obstetrics and Gynaecology as well as the facilities and finance available for specialist training.
3. Trainees must participate in all hospital activities such as the care of out-patients and in-patients, on-call duties both during the day and night, perform deliveries and gynaecological operations and participate in educational activities, including the teaching of other health professionals. Participation in audit and clinical or basic research is also recommended.
4. Arrangements for post-graduate training must be compatible with national employment legislation in relation to remuneration, hours of work and rights of employees in such matters as sick leave and maternity leave.
5. Duration of training
 - A minimum of five years full time or pro-rata equivalent in an approved training programme.
 - Not more than one of these years may be spent in relevant research or in another specialty such as:
 - Abdominal surgery
 - Anaesthetics
 - Endocrinology
 - Urology
 - Basic science eg.physiology, anatomy
 - Imaging
 - Neonatal medicine
 - Human genetics
 - Pathology
6. Training should be structured throughout with clearly defined targets to be met after specified intervals. An educational plan should be drawn up by the specialist responsible for the overall training in the department and by the tutor in consultation with the trainee at the beginning of each attachment. Progress should be monitored regularly by a formal annual assessment carried out by the Speciality Training Committee.

7. Part of the training that amounts to a maximum of 1 year can be spent in a recognized hospital in another European country.
8. The conditions in the SAC document “Framework Specialist Training Programme” also apply.

Educational Objectives of Training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

1. Aims

1. To ensure that at the time of appointment to a specialist post Obstetricians and Gynaecologists have attained standards of knowledge and specialist skills adequate to permit them to undertake fully independent clinical practice.
2. To encourage the acquisition, assessment and application of information and techniques in order to improve standards of practice.
3. To encourage the updating of knowledge and skills acquired as a result of such education and training.

Relating to Aim 1

1. To define the content of the training in a syllabus that is reviewed regularly (Appendix 1).
2. To define the clinical abilities which should be acquired by a specialist Obstetrician and Gynaecologist
3. To define the personal and professional attributes which are desirable in a specialist.
4. To organize assessment throughout the training period.
5. To ensure that individual post-graduate training programmes and assessments are supervised by a designated consultant in each training unit.

Relating to Aim 2

1. To ensure that clinical practice is based upon sound scientific principles.
2. To ensure that access to facilities for postgraduate training is provided for all trainees.
3. To ensure that assessment of training reflects new developments in the specialty.
4. To provide opportunities for recruitment into and progress within the specialty of junior doctors of high calibre.

Relating to Aim 3

1. To arrange regular meetings for critical review of new clinical and scientific developments.
2. To publicise new developments in the specialty.

2. Assessment of Training

2.1. Approval of training and trainers will be the responsibility of the SAC, which has the power to withdraw recognition if necessary.

2.2. Approval of the institution as a training center takes into account the following:

- Annual statistics
- Internal quality control and audit
- Protocols of clinical management
- Individual tutors appointed for the trainees
- Trainee's educational plan
- Supervision of training
- Formal and clinical teaching sessions

2.3. Assessment of trainees

All trainees will be formally evaluated on an annual basis. Progress during training should be recorded in a log-book, listing procedures performed and participation in teaching programmes. The College provides a log-book for this purpose.

Assessment during training will be of three types:

1. Self-assessment

Trainees should record in the log -book their confidence in performing recommended procedures, and their opinion of their interaction with their trainers.

2. Formative assessment

Trainers should, at regular intervals, record in the log-book their assessment of the trainee's competence in performing clinical tasks. The trainee's interactions with patients and colleagues should also be noted.

3. Summative assessment

It is mandatory that an intermediate assessment by the tutor should be carried out after one year in order to identify shortcomings needing corrective action or, if necessary, to recommend a change of specialty.

4. The trainee will be required to submit to assessment by examination as advised by the MCOG. Such exam may be subcontracted to a body recognised by the EBCOG/UEMS and may be held at any stage during the training.

5. Long Commentary Book

At the end of the training period, the candidate will be expected to present a Long Commentary Book. The aim of this work will be to encourage the trainee to explore in-depth research and audit-related activities in the speciality of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Original and well-conducted research work will be encouraged to be presented as oral or poster presentations and possibly as peer-reviewed publications.

The above work will include two long commentaries, one related to Obstetrics and one concerning gynaecology. The length of these commentaries will be expected to be between 15,000 and 20,000 words excluding bibliography.

The work involved in compiling the long commentaries may take the form of a critical literature review or preferably the presentation of ongoing obstetrics and gynaecology research in which the candidate is actively participating. A trainer supervising the research work and the compilation of the Long Commentary Book will be appointed at an early stage of the trainee's training programme.

Trainees who are following a postgraduate course at MSc level or higher in the speciality may be considered for exemption from this requirement.

6. The Speciality Training Committee in Obstetrics and Gynaecology will be responsible for implementation of the Training Programme. It will be composed of the Training Co-ordinator, the Clinical Chairman and members as nominated by the MCOG.

7. The evaluation of the training programme will be undertaken by the Malta College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists, under the auspices of the SAC. Emphasis will be given to evaluation during training rather than at the end.

3. Training Requirements

During training, it is essential to participate in a full range of clinical activities involving out-patient and in-patient management as well as emergency care. The amount of experience required in individual areas of training indicated by the numbers of procedures recommended should not be regarded as mandatory but simply as guidelines. In addition when training in certain of these techniques is not possible in an individual training centre, it is acceptable to substitute some for others or to arrange a component of training in another recognized centre.

Obstetrics

- Antenatal ultrasound examination (normal and abnormal anatomy of the fetus and high risk pregnancies): 200 abdominal examinations
- Normal labour and delivery: 100
- Assisted vaginal delivery (forceps, vacuum extractor, breech): 40
- Caesarean section: 40

Diagnostic procedures

- Colposcopy: 50
- Hysteroscopy: 25
- Gynaecological ultrasound examination and early pregnancy problems (principally by trans-vaginal ultrasound but trans-abdominal experience also required): 100

Gynaecological surgery

- Diagnostic laparoscopy or sterilisation: 40
- Minor laparoscopic surgery (ectopic pregnancy, ovarian cyst): 20
- Hysterectomy 45 (abdominal 25 minimum ; vaginal :15 minimum)

Scientific communications

It is recommended that, by the end of training, each trainee will have presented at least one communication or poster at a scientific meeting and published at least one scientific paper in a peer review.

Organisation of Training

1. Post-graduate Courses

Theoretical teaching at post-graduate level will not consist entirely of a series of lectures since meetings devoted to review and discussion of research cover only part of the theoretical syllabus. Group sessions (national or international) led by a trainer with prepared contributions from trainees are valuable and will be organized so as to cover the required syllabus. Furthermore, the training center will hold regular meetings for discussion of cases and review of morbidity and mortality, recognising that these meetings alone cannot fulfil the needs for theoretical teaching. Trainees will be entitled to have leave for attendance to approved courses and meetings, for research work and for private study.

2. Duties of Trainers

Post-graduate training will encompass all of the contents of the training syllabus (Appendix 1). Trainees will be properly supervised in their clinical practice, all the specialists of the department will be involved in the supervision of training and teaching, which is one of the duties of all clinicians working in a training hospital. Two fundamental elements will be established and will take additional responsibilities for the training program:

a. A Specialist - who is responsible for the organisation of training in the Department – the Training Co-ordinator.

This person will:

- Be designated in agreement with the Head of Department following an open call for applications and an interview.
- Be responsible for the educational plan and co-ordination of all postgraduate training activities of the Department.
- Follow and participate in the assessment of trainees provide guidance on research projects.
- Provide up to date protocols of clinical management for the trainee at the start of the training attachment.
- Provide guidance on research projects.
- Publish annual statistics and the results of internal audit and make these available for trainees.
- Arrange regular staff meetings and multidisciplinary discussions in which trainees can participate actively.

b. A Tutor - who will:

- Be responsible for the individual trainee.
- Supervise the trainee, co-ordinate his/her activities and progress, detect difficulties and promote corrections.
- Ensure that trainee is regularly assessed (please refer to Educational Objectives section above).

c. Rights of Trainers:

If trainers are to be able to meet the educational needs of trainees, their own rights should be considered.

These will include:

- Adequate remunerated time for undertaking their training responsibilities.
- Trainers should expect to spend 10 to 20% of their time on teaching and related activities.
This time will be defended against the demands of clinical work.
- Adequate remunerated time for their own continuing education.
- Training in educational methods by such means as attendance at national or European courses for medical trainers.

SUMMARY

1. Trainees will have an adequately remunerated hospital post and participate in all activities of the training department.
2. The number of training posts will reflect the country's need for specialists as well as the country's capacity to train.
3. The minimum duration of postgraduate training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology is five years, at least four of which must be spent in a Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. It is recommended that part of the training (6 months or one year) should take place in another European country.
4. The Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training will be granted at the end of the 5 years of training after assessment of the trainee's theoretical knowledge and practical skills.
5. The training syllabus will be regularly updated in accordance to recommendations by EBCOG (Training and assessment Working party).

Appendix I.

Syllabus

Definitions:

- **Knowledge:** basic understanding of topics not commonly used in the clinical practice of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.
- **Detailed knowledge:** Understanding of important aspects of topics which may be more comprehensively understood by a specialist in other discipline (e.g. geneticist, pediatrician).
- **Comprehensive knowledge:** Complete understanding of topics which are important in the clinical practice of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

1-BASIC SCIENCES

1-1 Anatomy

Comprehensive knowledge of the regional anatomy of the pelvis, abdomen, thorax, breast, thigh, endocrine glands, particularly in relation to surgical procedures undertaken by the Obstetrician and Gynaecologist. Detailed knowledge of relevant bones, joints, muscles, blood vessels, lymphatics, nerve supply and histology. Knowledge of cell structure.

1-2 Physiology and Endocrinology

Comprehensive knowledge of human physiology and reproductive endocrinology with particular reference to the male and female reproductive systems, pregnancy, the fetus and the neonate. Knowledge of common physiological activities, including principles of nutrition water, electrolytes and acid-base balance, and cell biology.

1-3 Genetics

Detailed knowledge of common inherited disorders.

Knowledge of the principles of inheritance of chromosomal and genetic disorders.

1-4 Embryology

Comprehensive knowledge of gametogenesis and fertilization, of organogenesis and the development of the embryo in all body systems, of the development of the placenta, membranes and amniotic fluid, and of structural changes in the newborn.

Detailed knowledge of common fetal malformations.

1-5 Pathology

Detailed knowledge of the cytology and histology of common conditions in relations to Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

1-6 Statistics and Epidemiology

Knowledge: how to apply statistical analysis and how to collect data. Knowledge of setting up of clinical trials and the ability to interpret data.

1-7 Microbiology

Comprehensive knowledge of infective agents, infectious diseases and complications encountered in the practice of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

1-8 Biochemistry

Knowledge of the metabolism of carbohydrates, lipids, proteins and nucleic acids, of the role of the vitamins, minerals, and enzymes and of the composition and regulation of intracellular and extra cellular fluids.

1-9 Biophysics

Knowledge of the physical principles and biological effects of heat, sound and electromagnetic radiation. Understanding of the principles of laser, electrocardiography, isotopes, X rays, ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging.

1-10 Immunology

Knowledge of immune mechanisms, and of the principles of reproductive immunology.

1-11 Pharmacology

Comprehensive knowledge of the properties, pharmacodynamics, actions, interactions and hazards of pharmacological agents which are used in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and particularly the principles of teratogenicity and of prescribing during pregnancy and lactation.

2-CLINICAL SCIENCES

2-1 FETAL MEDICINE

2-1-1 Normal pregnancy

Comprehensive knowledge of maternal and fetal physiology including placental function and materno-fetal interactions.

Comprehensive knowledge of ante-natal, intra-partum and post-natal care, including psychological guidance, obstetric analgesia and anaesthesia.

2-1-2 Abnormal pregnancy

Comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of abnormality of pregnancy , labour and puerperium together with their management.

Knowledge of fetal and neonatal diseases, neonatal resuscitation and of the principles of neonatal management.

2-1-3 Maternal and perinatal mortality

Knowledge of the relevant definitions statistics and concepts as well as of their significance.

2-1-4 Genetics

Detailed knowledge of screening for and diagnosis and management of fetal abnormality. Knowledge of normal and abnormal karyotypes, the genetic causes of infertility and early abortion, as well as the ability to transmit this knowledge to patients, and discuss its implications.

2-1-5 Ultrasound

Detailed knowledge of:

- Normal and abnormal anatomy of the fetus, placenta and amniotic fluid compartment.
- Fetal biometry.
- Estimation of gestational age.
- Assessment of fetal growth and behaviour.
- Evaluation of fetal and utero-placental blood flow.
- Knowledge of invasive diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.

2-1-6 Fetal monitoring

Detailed knowledge and experience of the principle and practice of all recognised methods of evaluating the conditions of the fetus before and during labour.

2-2 GYNAECOLOGY

2-2-1 General Gynaecology

Comprehensive knowledge of aetiology, pathogenesis, patho-physiology, symptomatology, diagnosis and differential diagnosis of somatic and psychosomatic gynaecological diseases.

2-2-2 Gynaecological surgery

Comprehensive knowledge of all basic gynaecological procedures. Comprehensive knowledge of the complications of surgery and of the principles of post-operative care. Knowledge of more complicated procedures eg. Uro-gynaecology and infertility. Knowledge of the applications, techniques and complications of anaesthesia and expertise in the practice of adult resuscitation.

2-2-3 Urogynaecology

Detailed knowledge of the aetiology and presentation of disorders of the female lower urinary tract. Knowledge of the principles of investigation and of non surgical, surgical and post-operative management.

2-2-4 Endocrinology

Comprehensive knowledge of gynaecological endocrinology and its clinical applications to the reproductive system.

2-2-5 Paediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology

Detailed knowledge of normal and abnormal sexual development and of specific gynaecological disorders affecting young girls and adolescents.

2-2-6 Disorders of menstruation

Comprehensive knowledge of normal menstruation and of the patho-physiology of menstrual disorders, their investigation and management.

2-2-7 Climacteric and post menopausal problems

Detailed knowledge of patho-physiology, psychological disturbances in the climacteric and post climacteric including prevention, diagnosis and management.

2-2-8 Sexually transmitted disease

Detailed knowledge of epidemiology, aetiology, pathology and complications of male and female of sexually transmitted diseases.

2-2-9 Infertility

Comprehensive knowledge of causes, investigations and management of female and male infertility. Detailed knowledge of endocrine therapy and of the techniques involved in assisted reproduction.

2-2-10 Family planning

Comprehensive knowledge of all methods of contraception and sterilization.

2-2-11 -Induced abortion

Detailed knowledge of techniques and risks of induced abortion for the purpose of recognizing and treating complications of induced abortions in accordance with Maltese legislation..

2-2-12-Psychosomatic, psychosexual and stress related disorders

Detailed knowledge of the psycho-pathology and management of psychosexual disorders, and the influence of stress on functional disorders such as menstrual and ovarian dysfunction, chronic pelvic pain and stress incontinence.

2-2-13 Ultrasound

Detailed knowledge of ultrasonic aspects of :

- Normal pelvic anatomy
- Gynaecological disease
- Infertility
- Ultrasound guided invasive procedures if needed and in accordance with Maltese legislation

2-3 GYNAECOLOGICAL ONCOLOGY

Comprehensive knowledge of epidemiology , aetiology , prevention , diagnostic techniques , and management staging of gynaecological pre-invasive and invasive carcinomas including primary and secondary prevention and terminal care.

2-4 ETHICS, LAW, RESOURCES

Detailed knowledge of ethical and national legal issues involved in Obstetric and Gynaecological practice in Malta and the resources required to provide for adequate health care in the hospital and community.

