MERCK FOUNDATION NATIONWIDE DIABETES BLUE POINT PROGRAM

Postgraduate Diploma in Obesity and Weight Management

The Postgraduate Diploma in Obesity and Weight Management aims to impart medical knowledge of obesity and facilitate the enhancement of patient care, while acknowledging the high prevalence of obesity, its complex etiology, the associated co-morbidities, and the treatment options available. After successfully completing this program, students would be equipped with in-depth and current knowledge of the science of obesity, weight management, and research methods; demonstrate awareness of the complex problem of obesity; and deliver evidence-based care to patients.

This program specifically focuses on the following topics:

- Adipose Tissue and Energy Balance
- Obesity: Obesity Epidemiology and Population health
- Obesity in Relation to Disease, Genetics and Environmental Factors
- Personalised Weight Management (1): Nutrition, Physical Activity and Behavioural Interventions
- Personalised Weight Management (2): Medical Treatments and Emerging Therapies
- Personalised Weight Management (3): Surgical Interventions

Postgraduate Diploma in Obesity and Weight Management, University from UK	
Duration	1 Year online learning platform

Eligibility:

- Bachelor's degree in Medicine and Surgery (Primary Medical Qualification) (e.g.: MBBS or MBChB)
- Candidates working within a public sector clinical setting (Preferably)
- Recommendation from the Ministry of Health or Office of The First Lady (For Asian Countries- Recommendation letter from The Ministry of Health or Vice Chancellor/Dean/Rector of the Medical University or President of respective Society or Medical Association)
- Proof of English language proficiency (details provded below)
- Accessibility to stable Internet connection

Course Structure

The online course lasts one calendar year and is a part time distance learning course. It consists of 6 modules per year, each of 6 weeks duration.

MODULE 1 – Adipose Tissue and Energy Balance

Aim of the module

This module aims to develop a critical understanding and knowledge of adipose tissue, fat deposition and storage, and human energy balance.

Synopsis of the module content

- Histology and physiology of the adipocyte and adipose tissue. Regional distribution of body fat: sex-specific characteristics of subcutaneous, visceral and gluteo-femoral adiposity. The role of adipose tissue as an endocrine organ and its role in health and disease.

- Adipose tissue and inter-organ communication. Appetite regulation and the role of adipose tissue, the brain, gastrointestinal tract and other organs and tissues in the complex neuro-endocrine regulation of food intake, energy expenditure and body composition.



Module 2 – Obesity: Obesity Epidemiology and Population health

Aim of the module

This module aims to critically explore obesity as a chronic disease, the global burden of obesity, and obesity-related comorbidities in populations.

Synopsis of the module content

- The strengths and limitations of body mass index, justification for classifying obesity as a disease. Obesity phenotypes: overall, central and peripheral obesity.
- Abdominal obesity, metabolic syndrome and comorbidity, including obesity and cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and ectopic lipid.
- Obesity assessment in children and adults. The primary prevention of obesity and the complex systems approach.

Module 3 – Obesity in Relation to Disease, Genetics and Environmental Factors

Aim of the module

This module aims to develop a critical understanding of the medical, genetic, and environmental factors that can cause weight gain and obesity.

Synopsis of the module content

- Genes and genetic conditions associated with obesity and obesity phenotypes.
- Endocrine disorders and other conditions predisposing to weight gain and obesity.
- Drugs and their association with weight gain, including glucocorticoids, oral contraceptives and psychotropic agents.
- Environmental endocrine disruptors and other biological agents and obesity.

Module 4 – Personalised Weight Management (1): Nutrition, Physical Activity and Behavioural Interventions

Aim of the module

This module aims to enhance the knowledge and clinical skills required to effectively evaluate and treat obesity with emphasis on personalised care, nutrition, physical activity and behavioural modification.

Synopsis of the module content

- Psychological strategies to promote behaviour change, including cognitive behavioural therapy and motivational interviewing and analysis of specific obesity treatment guidelines.
- Hydration and obesity, nutritional interventions in personalised weight management and their application in clinical practice.
- Appraisal of physical activity interventions and increased energy expenditure in the personalised management of obesity, including the effect of different exercise programmes.

Module 5 – Personalised Weight Management (2): Medical Treatments and Emerging Therapies

Aim of the module

This module aims to enhance the knowledge and clinical skills required to effectively evaluate and treat obesity with emphasis on personalised care, pharmacotherapy and new and emerging therapies.

Synopsis of the module content

- The role and clinical applicability of medical therapies in weight management, Analysis of specific guidelines for obesity pharmacotherapy.
- The role of emerging therapies in weight management with emphasis upon the physiological basis for potential therapies.

Module 6 – Personalised Weight Management (3): Surgical Interventions

Aim of the module

This module aims to enhance the knowledge and clinical skills required to effectively evaluate and treat obesity with personalised care and surgery, and to manage the post-bariatric surgery patient.

Synopsis of the module content

- Identification of patients for bariatric procedures and the role of the multi-disciplinary team in the management of the patient with obesity before and after bariatric surgery, including the management of post-operative nutrition and physical activity.
- Understanding and appreciation of the need for the reversal of certain bariatric procedures. An appreciation of the health economics of bariatric procedures as well as medical therapies.

Assessment

Assessments are done using clinical scenarios to enhance problem-solving, critical analysis and evidence-based care. Each of the 6 modules has the same assessment format. Due to the online nature of the course, students are expected to login and participate in the course regularly throughout the module.

- Academic Forum - 40%
- Reflective Journal - 10%
- Module Assignments - 20%
- Case-Based Examination - 30%

Eligibility Criteria

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- Proof of English language proficiency
  - o Proficiency in the English language is essential to completing courses. If English is NOT your first language, proof of competency during the application process is to be submitted.
  - o An IELTS overall score of 6.0 (with a minimum of 5.5 for each band) or an equivalent qualification is required as proof of English Language Proficiency.
- Accessibility to stable Internet connection

Applicants should submit copies of the following with their application:

- A copy of your updated CV including your address and date of birth.
- Copy of qualification certificates.
- English language qualification.
- Personal statement.
- Recommendation from the Ministry of Health or Office of The First Lady (For Asian Countries- Recommendation letter from The Ministry of Health or Vice Chancellor/Dean/Rector of the Medical University or President of respective Society or Medical Association)
- Income proof (one month Salary/Pay slip or Salary Statement or 3 months bank statement)