EUROPEAN RESUSCITATION COUNCIL

Advanced Life Support (ALS)

Course Syllabus

Objective

The ALS course has been designed to reflect changes in resuscitation education.

The focus for learning is based on adult learning principles; the role of the lecture has been de-emphasised and the use of small group teaching has been increased.

This course will prepare senior members of a multi-disciplinary team to manage periarrest situations and to treat the patient until transfer to a critical care area. The complexity and management of cardiac arrest situations, including decision making and effective communication with the team and the patient's relatives, is included.

Who the course is suitable for

This course is designed for healthcare professionals who would be expected to apply the skills taught as part of their clinical duties, or to teach them on a regular basis.

Appropriate participants include doctors and nurses working in critical care areas (e.g. A&E, CCU, ICU, HDU, operating theatres, medical admissions units) or on the cardiac arrest / medical emergency team and paramedics. All applicants should hold a current clinical appointment and professional healthcare qualification. The revised curriculum reflects contemporary practice, and builds on the content of the Immediate Life Support Course.

Pre-course preparation

The course comprises lectures, discussion, practical skill stations, workshops and assessments. The manual is sent to the candidate one month before the course date and the candidate is strongly advised to study this thoroughly before completing a pre-course multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ). This MCQ must be handed in, with the question paper, on arrival at the course centre. This pre-course assessment provides a baseline measure upon which new learning can be evaluated and it should be completed without reference to the manual.

It is expected that all candidates are competent in CPR and this must be achieved prior to attending the ALS course.

Lectures

- Advanced Life Support in Perspective
- Causes and Prevention of Cardiac Arrest
- Acute Coronary Syndromes
- ALS Treatment Algorithm
- Post Resuscitation Care

Discussion

- Decisions relating to resuscitation

Skill stations and Workshops

- Airway management
- Monitoring, Rhythm Recognition and 12-lead ECG
- Initial Assessment and Resuscitation
- Tachycardias and Bradycardias
- Blood Gases
- Cardiac Arrest Management (CASTeach)
- Cardiac Arrest in Special Circumstances (Asthma, Anaphylaxis, Hypovolaemia Pregnancy, Poisoning, Electrolyte Disorders)

Demonstration

An experienced faculty will give a teaching demonstration. This introduces the concept of role-play and simulated cardiac arrest management, assessment of the critically ill patient, shockable / non-shockable algorithms, positive critiquing, and team leadership skills.

Assessments

Assessments are based on clinical scenarios that allow the candidate to effectively demonstrate the core competencies that have been taught on the course. A multiple choice question paper is taken on the last day.