ALERT Lymphoedema Accreditation Course

Dear Health Practitioner,

The Lymphoedema Accreditation Course offered by the ALERT Education at Macquarie University is open to health professionals who would like to become qualified lymphoedema practitioners.

The Australasian Lymphology Association (ALA) is the peak professional body for Lymphoedema in Australia and New Zealand. ALERT’s Lymphoedema Accreditation Course is ALA endorsed and meets the ALA’s course guidelines requirements as listed in Appendix 7 of the National Lymphoedema Practitioner Registers (NLPR) Guidelines document.¹

Only practitioners who complete one of these courses and meet the rigorous standards to become an ALA Accredited Practitioner are eligible to receive the ALA’s tick of approval.

The focus of the course is primary and/or secondary lymphoedema of the limbs however skills can be translated to all forms of oedema management, such as venous disease (i.e. venous insufficiency and lower limb venous ulcer management), orthopaedics (i.e. post-surgical swelling), neurological (i.e. dependant oedema) and traumatic (i.e. post amputee care of oedema).

The Revised Starling’s principle highlights why this course is applicable to any health professional that treats clients with oedema.² It is the lymphatic system that is responsible for the transportation of tissue oedema and therefore any health professional that manages person’s with oedema will benefit from this course.

Course inclusions:

The course content through online learning and nine practical days includes the following components:

- Comprehensive online learning package of 35 hours of learning
- Comprehensive 9 day face to face course
- Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea
- Comprehensive lectures and practical sessions
- Patients sharing their stories for contextualisation of theory to clinical practice

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¹ Australian Lymphoedema Education, Research and Treatment (ALERT)
² w: mqhealth.org.au/alert
e: alerteducation@mq.edu.au
Course objectives:

Lymphatic anatomy

- Describe the key features of lymphoedema
- Describe the stages of lymphoedema
- Describe the functions of the lymphatic system
- Describe the components of the lymphatic system
- Describe the difference between superficial, deep and visceral lymphatic drainage
- Describe how lymphatic fluid flows through lymphatic vessels and nodes to be returned to the venous system
- Describe the key features of lymphatic territories
- Describe the relationship between lymphosomes and superficial skin/tissue areas of lymphatic drainage
- Describe the key features of watersheds
- Demonstrate competency in visually identifying the approximate location of watersheds in a variety of persons

Lymphatic physiology

- Describe active and passive forces that impact lymphatic pumping
- Describe the main components that affect total lymphatic flow
- Describe the effect of inflammation on lymphatic flow
- Demonstrate competency in describing the key features of microvascular fluid exchange and how this relates to oedema formation and lymphoedema
- Describe the key features of the Revised Starling’s principle
- Describe active and passive hyperaemia
- Describe factors influencing lymph load
- Describe lymph time volume
- Describe factors influence lymph transport capacity
- Describe high and low output failure
Complex Lymphoedema Therapy (CLT)

- Describe the key components of complex lymphatic therapy (CLT)
- Describe some of the landmark historical events influencing an understanding of the human lymphatic system
- Describe what the term “best practice” refers to in the context of CLT
- Describe how professional scope of practice, codes of conduct and professional indemnity insurance requirements may impact treatments performed as part of CLT
- Describe phase one and two of CLT
- Describe the key features of skin care in lymphoedema
- Describe how skin may become changed in lymphoedema
- Describe the key features of cellulitis
- Interpret history and examination findings to determine if a patient is likely to have acute cellulitis
- Describe the appropriate management of acute and recurrent cellulitis
- Describe the key features that differentiate manual lymphatic drainage from other forms of massage
- Describe the contraindications and precautions of manual lymphatic drainage
- Describe hand techniques involved the delivery of manual lymphatic drainage
- Describe how to perform upper limb manual lymphatic drainage for a patient with unilateral arm lymphoedema with no trunk involvement
- Describe how to perform upper limb manual lymphatic drainage for a patient with bilateral arm lymphoedema with no trunk involvement
- Describe how to perform upper limb manual lymphatic drainage for a patient with unilateral arm lymphoedema with trunk involvement
- Describe how to perform upper limb manual lymphatic drainage for a patient with bilateral arm lymphoedema with trunk involvement
- Describe how to perform breast lymphatic drainage for a patient with unilateral breast lymphoedema
- Describe how to perform breast lymphatic drainage for a patient with bilateral breast lymphoedema
- Describe how to perform lower limb manual lymphatic drainage for a patient with unilateral leg lymphoedema with no trunk involvement
- Describe how to perform lower limb manual lymphatic drainage for a patient with bilateral leg lymphoedema with no trunk involvement
- Describe how to perform lower limb manual lymphatic drainage for a patient with unilateral leg lymphoedema with trunk involvement
- Describe how to perform lower limb manual lymphatic drainage for a patient with bilateral leg lymphoedema with trunk involvement
- Describe how to perform abdominal lymphatic drainage
- Interpret history and lymphoedema assessment findings to plan manual lymphatic drainage
• Demonstrate competency in delivering manual lymphatic drainage based on the descriptors above
• Describe contraindications and precautions for manual lymphatic drainage
• Describe the key features of multilayer lymphoedema bandaging (MLLB)
• Describe the technique involved with the application of MLLB
• Describe factors influencing resting and working sub bandage pressure with MLLB
• Describe what technology can be utilised to measure sub bandage pressure
• Describe the key features of LaPlace’s
• Relate theories of LaPlace’s law to the practical application of MLLB
• Describe the key features of alternative bandaging systems
• Describe the technique involved with the application of alternative bandaging systems
• Describe factors influencing resting and working sub bandage pressure with alternative bandaging systems
• Describe contraindications and precautions for bandaging
• Demonstrate competency in applying MLLB and alternative bandaging systems
• Interpret history and lymphoedema assessment findings to plan bandaging
• Interpret history and lymphoedema assessment findings to create a CLT management plan
• Describe how CLT may vary based on patient history and examination findings

Exercise

• Describe individual lymphoedema patient factors that may affect exercise prescription and participation
• Describe some highly evidence based concepts that support exercise for lymphoedema
• Describe areas where further research is required for exercise in lymphoedema
• Describe some assessment tools available for analysing the effect of an exercise program on a patient with lymphoedema
• Demonstrate competency in relating the theories of lymphatic anatomy and physiology to common questions lymphoedema patients may have about exercise
• Interpret history and examination findings to identify red flags that may impact exercise prescription
• Create a basic exercise program for a patient with lymphoedema
• Describe some available resources to assist with the creation of an exercise program for a patient with lymphoedema
Assessment

• Describe the components of a subjective and objective lymphoedema assessment
• Describe medico-legal documentation requirements for recording lymphoedema assessments
• Interpret referral and medical history information to create an appropriate lymphoedema assessment
• Demonstrate competency in using lymphoedema assessment forms to conduct a basic lymphoedema assessment
• Describe the active decision making process that occurs during a lymphoedema assessment including differential diagnosis of the type of lymphoedema
• Demonstrate competency in conducting circumferential limb measurement
• Interpret circumferential limb measurement findings against normative limb circumference data

Early detection

• Describe the physical, functional, psychological and economical effects of breast cancer related lymphoedema
• Describe evidence-based risk factors for the development of breast cancer related lymphoedema
• Interpret history and physical examination findings to inform early warning signs of breast cancer related lymphoedema
• Demonstrate competency in the design of risk minimisation education and treatment plans
• Describe the components of a prospective surveillance and early intervention model of care for lymphoedema
• Describe some of the advantages of a prospective surveillance and early intervention model of care for lymphoedema
• Describe some of the clinical and governance literature that support a prospective surveillance and early intervention model of care for lymphoedema
• Describe the range of assessments available for the measurement of breast cancer related lymphoedema
• Describe how bioimpedance spectroscopy can aid in the early detection of breast cancer related lymphoedema
• Describe the range of conservative treatment options for breast cancer related lymphoedema
• Describe treatment strategies appropriate for early intervention strategies for breast cancer related lymphoedema
• Interpret history and physical examination findings to design individualised risk minimisation education and treatment plans
Breast cancer rehabilitation

- Describe some of the “survivorship” issues face post breast cancer
- Describe key features of shoulder care post breast cancer treatments
- Describe some of the soft tissue techniques available to address scar tissue post breast cancer treatment
- Describe principles of exercise prescription for breast cancer rehabilitation
- Describe the management of axillary web syndrome (cording)
- Describe some management strategies for breast oedema and lymphoedema
- Describe how nutrition may impact breast cancer rehabilitation
- Describe some of the surgical options available for the treatment of lymphoedema

Surgery

- Describe the rationale behind liposuction, lymph node transfer and lymphovenous anastomoses
- Describe the inclusion criteria for liposuction
- Describe the inclusion criteria for lymph node transfer
- Describe the inclusion criteria for lymphovenous anastomoses

Garment prescription

- Describe the key components of garment prescription
- Describe best practice documents informing lymphoedema garment prescription
- Describe the contraindications and precautions that impact garment prescription
- Describe how fabric type influences garment prescription including working and resting pressure
- Describe how the style of the garment influences garment prescription
- Describe how the pressure of a lymphoedema garment is determined
- Describe factors that influence garment wear and compliance
- Describe alternative methods to traditional lymphoedema garments
- Create a lymphoedema management plan, based on patient history and assessment findings, that considers the method for limb volume reduction and the type of garment that will be prescribed
- Describe how the type of lymphoedema garment that will be prescribed influences the creation of a lymphoedema management plan
- Demonstrate competency in measuring for ready to wear upper limb and lower limb lymphoedema garments
- Demonstrate competency in measuring for custom made upper limb and lower limb lymphoedema garments
Differential diagnosis

- Describe why the differential diagnosis of different types of oedema is required
- Describe the concept of a “red flag”
- Describe some red flag conditions that may present with upper and lower limb oedema
- Describe how lipoedema differs to lymphoedema

Service delivery

- Describe practice documents influencing public lymphoedema services
- Describe your vision for your local lymphoedema service
- Describe one main area whereby lymphoedema services could be improved within your workplace
- Create a business plan for lymphoedema services in your local area health district or hospital

References:

1 Australasian Lymphology Association (ALA) website. Available via [www.ala.org.au](http://www.ala.org.au)