



## The ALERT™ Course for Obstetric Patients



The one-day ALERT™ Course for Obstetric Patients is a multi-professional course created to teach clinical staff a structured and prioritised approach to the assessment and management of the acutely ill patient.

The original ALERT™ Course for Adult patients was developed in 1999 by Professor Gary Smith, and colleagues at Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust. In the last few years, there has been call to build on this and introduce a course with the same basic principles into obstetric practice. The aims are simple; to identify organ failure at an early stage, to initiate simple treatments and to improve the communication skills of those involved to facilitate the escalation of care. Whilst the principles were founded in adult practice many of these are still relevant to the obstetric patient.

There is a body of evidence showing that recognition of the deteriorating patient by clinical staff is often delayed and/or not escalated to the appropriate person.

In the UK, national bodies have responded by recommending:

Staff caring for patients in acute hospital settings should have competencies in monitoring, measurement, interpretation and prompt response to the acutely ill patient appropriate to the level of care they are providing. Education and training should be provided to ensure staff have these competencies, and they should be assessed to ensure they can demonstrate them.

NICE clinical guideline 50 – Acutely ill patients in hospital (July 2007) [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

There is a strong body of evidence showing that delays in recognising deterioration or inappropriate management can result in late treatment, avoidable admissions to intensive care and in some cases, unnecessary deaths. Studies show that Hospital staff may not understand the disturbances in physiology affecting the sick patient; frequently ignore signs of clinical deterioration...

Competencies for Recognising and Responding to Acutely Ill Patients in Hospital, UK Department of Health Guidelines March 2009 [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

People who use services can be confident that:

Staff will quickly recognise when a person who uses services becomes seriously ill, physically and/or mentally, and requires treatment, and immediately respond to meet their needs.

Outcome 4C Care Quality Commission's Essential standards of quality and safety (March 2010) [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

Care before the cardiac arrest.

Where patients continue to deteriorate after non consultant review there should be escalation of patient care to a more senior doctor. If this is not done, the reasons for non-escalation must be documented clearly in the case notes.

NCEPOD. Cardiac Arrest Procedures – Time to Intervene report. June 2012. [www.ncepod.org.uk/cap](http://www.ncepod.org.uk/cap)

The recent MBBRACE-UK Saving Lives, Improving Mothers' Care Report in Dec 2014 states "The reviews clearly illustrate that timely recognition of risk, the severity of the condition, accurate diagnosis, involvement of the correct senior staff from multiple disciplines, escalation and prompt treatment and action can make the difference between life and death." [www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/mbrance-uk](http://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/mbrance-uk)

**The ALERT™ Obstetric Course objectives are:**

- To teach healthcare professionals a structured and systematic approach to the assessment and management of patients;
- By using a structured and systematic approach deteriorating patients will be identified earlier and care will be escalated to others when appropriate. This approach can reduce avoidable in-hospital deaths and cardiac arrests;
- To teach healthcare professionals that involving expert senior help early, such as Critical Care, will enable appropriate and timely intensive care unit admissions;
- To introduce tools to healthcare professionals which will improve team working and communication.

**The ALERT™ Obstetric Course incorporates:**

- A comprehensive reference manual which the candidates receive pre-course.
- Interactive presentations which are adapted to meet local policies and procedures.
- Practical demonstrations.
- Role-play of clinical patient based scenarios during which the candidates are encouraged to reflect on their actions and to consider 'What would I do next?'

**The ALERT™ Obstetric Course has:**

- A blended, flexible, learning approach.
- A proven track record of delivery of more than 15 years in adult patients.
- A multi-professional candidate applicability.
- A candidate course certificate that is recognised by deanery's, acute trusts and professional bodies in the UK and abroad.
- A straightforward programme to organise and deliver with minimal equipment required.

**It is expected that the introduction of the ALERT™ Obstetric Course will result in specific improvements in quality indicators including:**

- Improvement in the general care of the obstetric patient, from the first trimester to post delivery
- Earlier referrals to the intensive care unit
- Learning from previous national ; lower mortality and morbidity of the obstetric patient
- Improved multi-professional teamwork
- Improved communication, and
- Fewer complaints from patients and their relatives

**Requirements to deliver the course**

- Signing of an EULA and purchase of an annual license fee to deliver the ALERT™ suite of courses
- Purchase of the relevant course manuals from Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust for each candidate.
- Adherence to the course regulations which can be found on [www.alert-course.com](http://www.alert-course.com).
- Courses would be delivered locally by appropriately trained staff from your organisation.

