

Multiple system atrophy healthcare professional training programme

5 modular on-demand education

Module 1: MSA pathway and core principles

Overview:

This introductory module provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding multiple system atrophy (MSA), from diagnosis through to holistic care. Designed for all healthcare professionals involved in MSA management, it introduces the core principles that underpin high-quality, person-centred support throughout the MSA pathway.

Part 1: Diagnosis and key facts

Explores what MSA is, who it affects, how it is diagnosed, and its natural history. This section outlines current diagnostic criteria and introduces emerging areas of MSA research.

Part 2: Management of MSA

Covers the multidisciplinary management of MSA, including parkinsonian, cerebellar and autonomic symptoms. It discusses symptom burden, pain management, and the importance of early palliative care and advance care planning.

Part 3: Psychosocial needs

Focuses on the wider impact of MSA, including emotional wellbeing, mental health, and the challenges faced by carers. It highlights financial, social and psychological support, and signposts to MSA Trust resources and services.

Learning objectives:

- Understand what MSA is, who it affects, and how it is diagnosed.
- Recognise the principles of multidisciplinary management across the disease pathway.
- Appreciate the psychosocial impact of MSA on people and their families.
- Identify where to access further education and specialist support from the MSA Trust.

Module 2 – Bladder, bowel and sexual dysfunction TBC

Overview:

Explores the assessment and management of urinary and bowel issues in MSA, and sexual dysfunction. Emphasis on practical, multidisciplinary approaches and symptom control.

Learning objectives:

- Recognise and assess these common symptoms in MSA, their patterns and progression.
- Apply non-pharmacological and pharmacological management strategies including addressing complications.
- Determine when to involve specialist services, collaborating to ensure best practice is met.

Expected Launch: September 2026

Module 3 – Motor and balance TBC

Overview:

Focus on motor, balance and blood pressure difficulties for people living with MSA. Covers rehabilitation strategies, falls prevention, and multidisciplinary interventions to maintain function and safety.

Learning objectives:

- Differentiate MSA motor presentations and adapt rehab strategies accordingly.
- Manage falls risk, mobility and one of the most troublesome symptoms of MSA – postural hypotension.
- Promote coordinated MDT rehabilitation approaches.

Expected Launch: March 2027

Module 4 – Communication and swallowing TBC

Overview:

Introduces an overview of how MSA can affect speech, communication and swallowing. It will also cover current guidance on how you can support people living with MSA in terms of their nutrition.

Learning objectives:

- Gain knowledge on high and low-tech communication options for people living with MSA.
- Understand difficulties around swallowing, eating and diet and how this may change as MSA progresses.
- Manage these complex symptoms collaboratively across the MDT.

Expected Launch: September 2027

Module 5 – Sleep and respiratory TBC

Overview:

Summarises current understanding about how MSA affects sleep, how sleep studies are conducted and what respiratory issues may arise.

Learning objectives:

- Recognise respiratory difficulties in MSA, the causes and how this may be treated.
- Understand how sleep affects MSA, including the effects on caregivers, and current management techniques.
- Identify supporting roles across the MDT.

Expected Launch: March 2028