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Evaluation of New Pan-London virtual Epidural Training Course for Midwives

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Introduction

In the UK, midwives play a major role in managing labour epidural analgesia. They are required to achieve competencies and undergo refresher courses[1]. This training course was designed to provide teaching to fulfil the requirements of continuous professional development and improve midwife confidence in epidural management.

Methods

A training course, delivered by anaesthetists, consisting of short PowerPoint presentations and panel-based discussion was devised with reference to the Royal College of Midwives curriculum[2]. Because of restrictions imposed by the SRS-CoV-2 pandemic, the programme was delivered on a virtual platform to midwives who were invited from all London NHS Trusts. A pre-course questionnaire was distrusted focusing particularly on levels of confidence in the following aspects of epidural management: consent, administration of drugs and epidural maintenance, assessment of sensory and motor block and troubleshooting a suboptimal block. Two half-day sessions were delivered and delegates completed a post-course questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness of this teaching programme.

Results

A total of 304 midwives signed up from over 30 London NHS trusts, with 175 delegates able to attend. Delegates comprised of students (14%), band 5 (14%), band 6 (52%) and band 7-8 (20%) midwives. The breadth of experience with epidural anaesthesia ranged from less than 1 year to more than 10 years, with only half of the delegates previously receiving formal training. Improvements in confidence in all four aspects of epidural management are demonstrated in the figure. 97% thought this course was beneficial and 90% agreed that it was well delivered through a virtual platform.

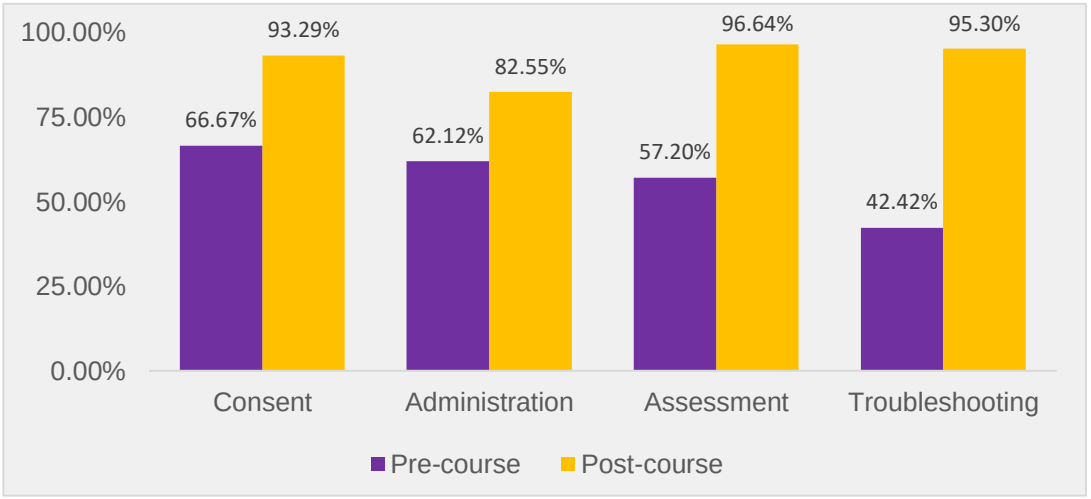


Figure. Percentage of midwives who agreed or strongly agreed they were comfortable with these aspects of epidural management, pre-course (n=264) and post-course (n=149)

Discussion

The pre-course questionnaire demonstrated that midwives had a need for epidural training and the post-course questionnaire has shown that this need was very well met. In addition, the convenience of a virtual course allowed us to reach good numbers of midwives and easily bring together speakers and delegates from across London. We plan to continue running this course virtually into the future.

References

1. Nursing and midwifery council. *Standards of Proficiency for Midwives*.; 2019. www.nmc.org.uk
2. Royal College of Midwives. *RCM Midwifery Blue Top Guidance Midwifery Care in Labour Guidance for All Women in All Settings*.; 2018. www.rcm.org.uk