

EMERGENCY GENERAL ANAESTHETIC SETUP IN DELIVERY SUITE

A team-based approach

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INTRODUCTION

An emergency general anaesthetic (GA) on delivery suite is one of the more stressful situations an anaesthetist can face. Out-of-hours, our unit is staffed by one anaesthetic registrar and one nurse who have to carry out many time critical steps to safely set up for an emergency GA. In the Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital, midwives have less exposure to emergency GA for Caesarean section as this procedure is becoming less common¹. We have introduced teaching and an aide-mémoire for our midwives to promote a safer, quicker team based approach for an emergency GA set up.

METHOD

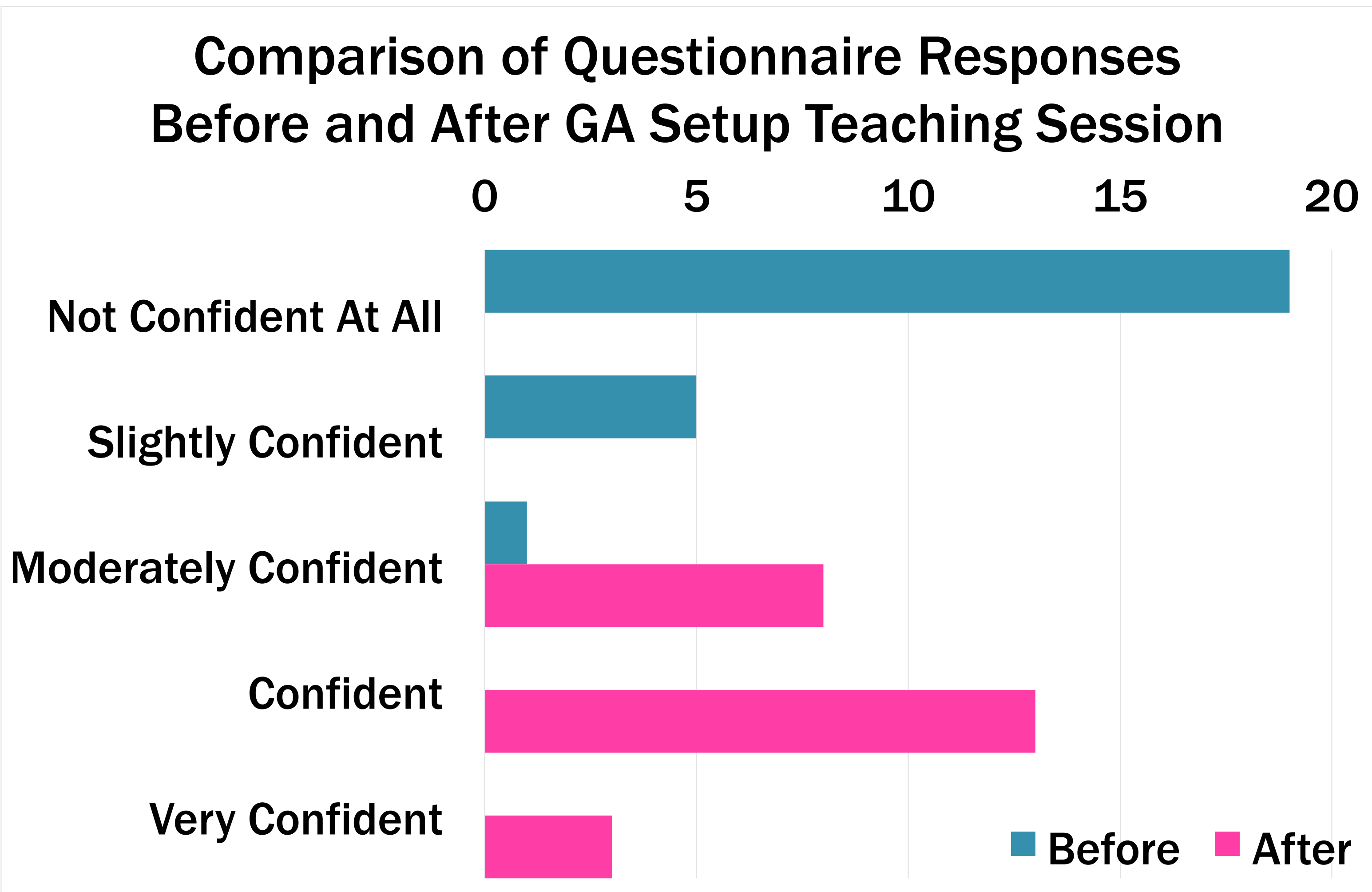
Midwifery staff (N=25) were invited to ‘tea trolley teaching’ with tea and cake provided in an empty theatre. We discussed the challenges of setting up for an emergency GA and the assistance that was required. The informal session allowed staff to ask questions and become more familiar with the anaesthetic monitoring system and operating table. The ‘Pink Poster’; was introduced displaying six specific achievable actions for staff to complete during a GA set up (see image top right). Prior to commencing the session, midwives were asked to complete a survey asking three questions: ‘how confident are you to set up for an emergency GA on a scale of 1 (not confident at all) to 5 (very confident)?’, ‘how many steps are involved setting up for a safe GA?’ and ‘can you name any steps that are mandatory before GA?’. The survey was repeated after the session.

REFERENCES

1. Delgado, Ring, Mushambi (2020) BJA Education, 20 (6), P201-207

RESULTS

Our survey showed that after teaching, staff were more confident in their ability to help set up for an emergency GA, had greater awareness of the risks associated with induction, and could identify achievable steps and use the Pink Poster to assist the anaesthetist.



DISCUSSION

During emergency GA for a category 1 Caesarean Section, non-technical skills are vital and we should all be aware of the priorities of other team members. Midwives are highly skilled team members, but it is not appropriate to train these staff members in anaesthetic specific tasks. However the six elements on the Pink Poster are well within the midwives’ scope of practise, and is a helpful visual aide-mémoire in theatre. These sessions helped staff to feel more confident during an emergency GA setup and familiar with using the anaesthetic monitor. Positive comments have included ‘thank you for showing us that we can use your anaesthetic monitor!’ The assistance of midwifery staff during the set up for an emergency GA is important especially out-of-hours to ensure timely delivery and safe care for women and their babies.

