

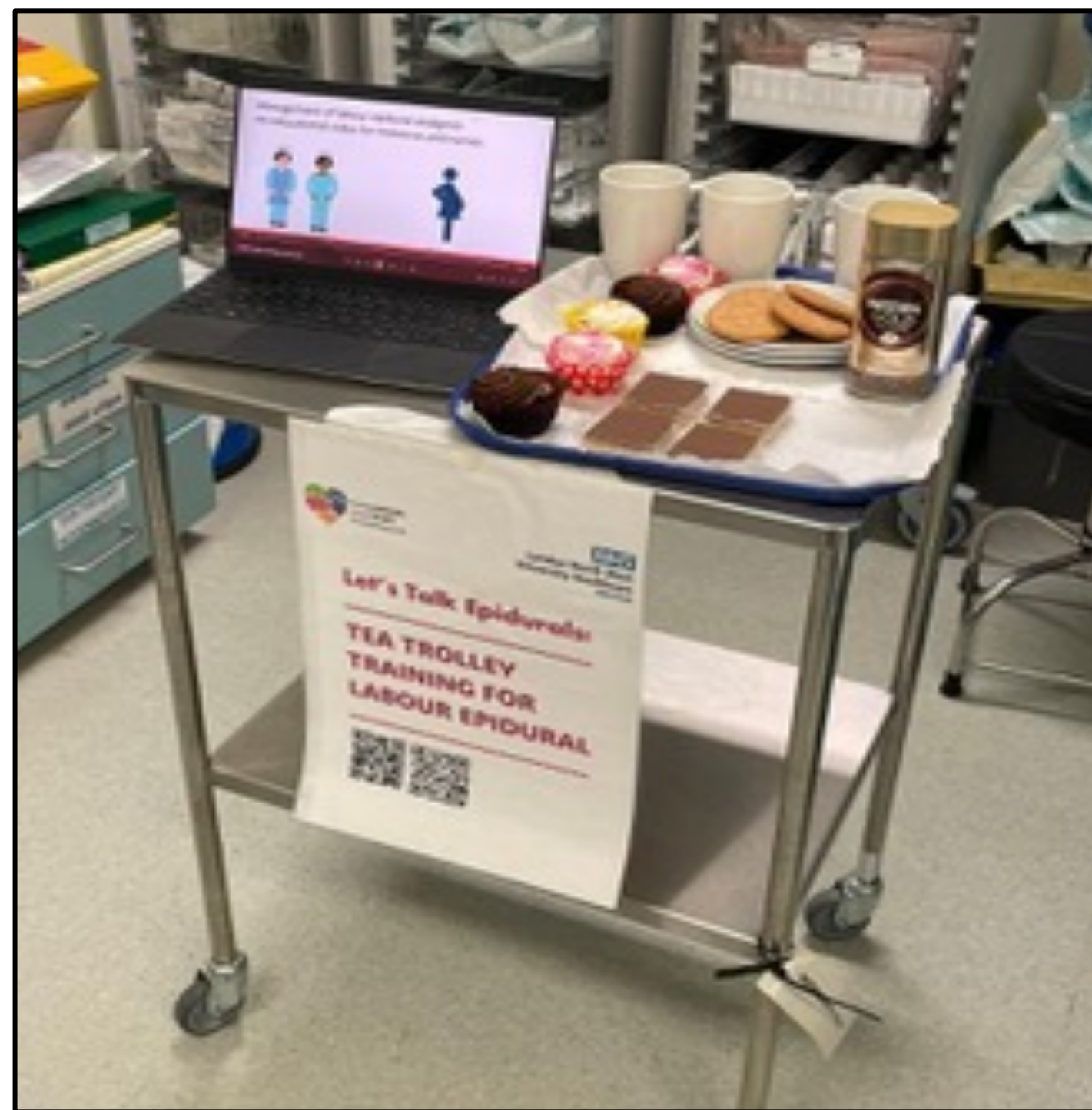
LET’S TALK EPIDURALS - TEA TROLLEY TRAINING FOR MIDWIVES

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INTRODUCTION

- Epidural analgesia stands as the gold standard for pain management during labour.
- Whilst epidurals are inserted by an anaesthetist, their optimal and safe use relies not solely on their initial placement but also on subsequent management, including top-ups and vigilant monitoring.
- In this continuum of care, midwives assume a pivotal role, by overseeing and administering epidural analgesia top-ups, ensuring the ongoing efficacy of epidurals and promptly identifying any complications or concerns that may arise.
- Recognising the critical importance of maintaining proficiency in epidural management among midwives, regular and comprehensive multidisciplinary education is indispensable.
- Such education serves not only to uphold the highest standards of patient care but also to mitigate the risks associated with epidural administration, preventing potentially catastrophic adverse events [1].
- By fostering a culture of continuous learning and refinement, the multidisciplinary labour ward team can ensure that epidural analgesia remains a safe and reliable option for labouring women.
- Inspired by the innovative 'Tea Trolley Training' methodology, initially conceived in Bath for airway teaching [2], we were curious to see if this approach would work on Labour Ward to provide midwives with targeted refresher training on epidurals.
- Tea Trolley Training is characterised by its accessibility and informality and brings education directly to the clinical setting.



AIM

- To introduce and evaluate the effectiveness of ‘Tea Trolley Training’ as a tool to deliver an educational programme to enhance midwives’ confidence and competence in epidural analgesia management.

METHODS

- Anaesthetic trainees circulated the labour ward and offered short, focussed teaching sessions to midwives alongside light refreshments over the course of 3 weekdays.
- Midwives completed a pre-training survey exploring their confidence and knowledge managing labour epidural analgesia.
- They then watched a short educational video created by our department.
- The midwives were provided an opportunity to discuss the content of the video as well ask questions.
- A post-session survey was conducted to determine whether the session was perceived to be useful.

Examples of questions in pre/post-training survey assessing midwives’ knowledge of epidural red flags

Q7. In which of the following situations would you be worried after an epidural top-up? (Select all that apply) *

- ☐ The patient has heavy legs.
- ☐ The patient’s blood pressure has fallen from 110/65 to 90/50 mmHg.
- ☐ The patient still has pain.
- ☐ The patient complains of feeling short of breath.
- ☐ The patient complains of arm weakness.
- ☐ The patient’s heart rate is 80 bpm.
- ☐ The patient is feeling nauseated or vomits.

Q8. What might be the problem? *

Your answer

Q9. What will you do next? (Select all that apply) *

- ☐ Observe only.
- ☐ Pull the emergency buzzer.
- ☐ Give 100% oxygen via a non-rebreathing mask at 15L/min.
- ☐ Give an IV fluid bolus.
- ☐ Do observations every 5 minutes.
- ☐ Do not give any further epidural top-ups.

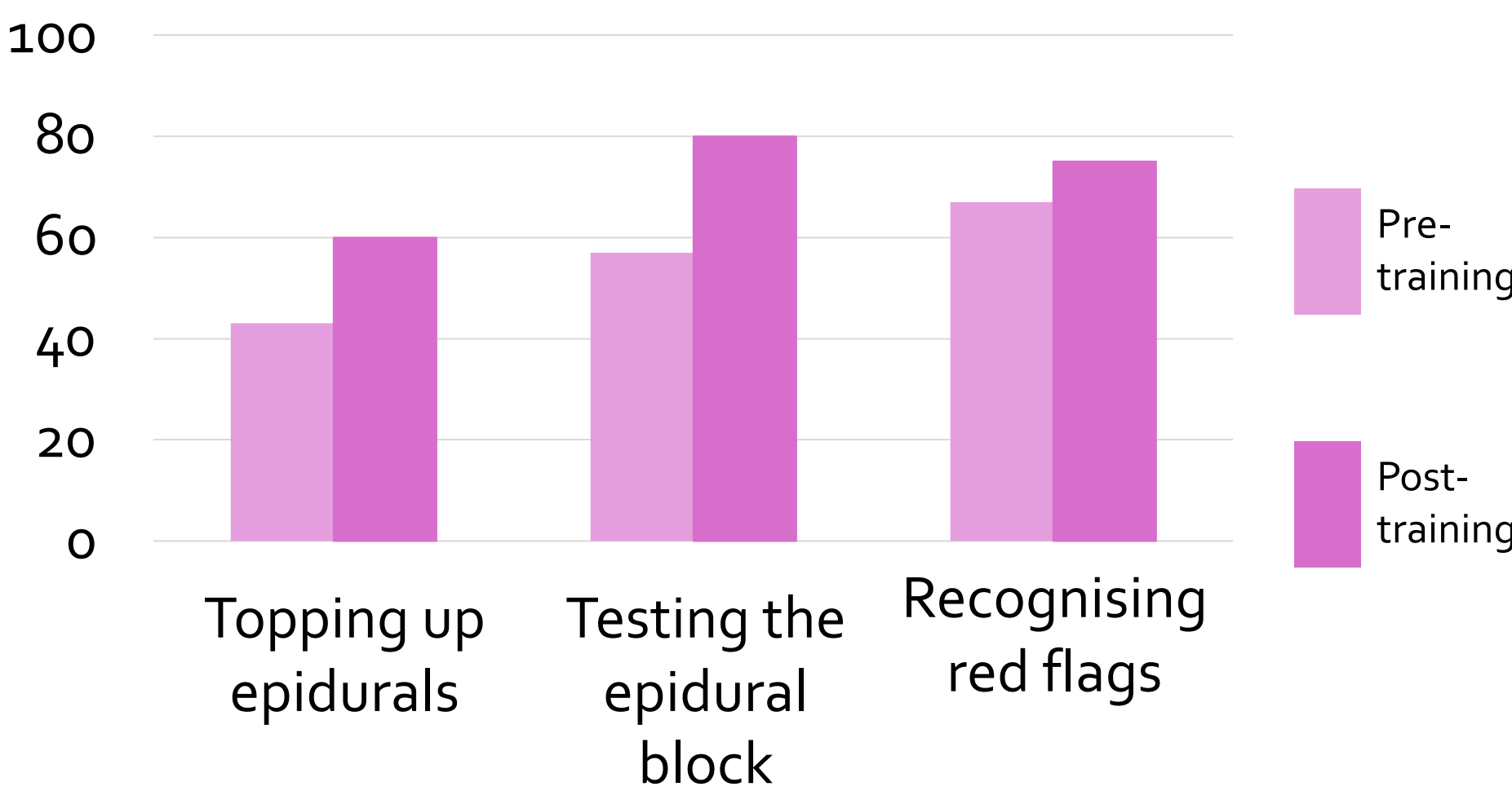
RESULTS

- 20 midwives attended a Tea Trolley Training session and had a a range of clinical experience, with the majority (67%) having 0-3 years of experience.
- Before the session, midwives reported varying levels of confidence and competence in managing epidurals.
- Our midwives reported moderate to high levels of confidence in managing epidurals for labour analgesia after the training.
- Importantly, the majority were correctly able to identify >4 concerning features associated with a high block and inadvertent intrathecal catheter insertion.

Midwives’ responses

Previously received formal training specific to epidurals	29%
Previously received epidural training delivered by an Anaesthetist	19%
Learned something new in the tea trolley training session	85%
Found the tea trolley training session useful	100%

Reported confidence levels in managing epidurals



DISCUSSION

- Despite midwives reporting generally high confidence levels in managing epidurals for labour analgesia, our findings revealed a positive trend where many participants acquired new knowledge.
- This underscores the idea of continuous professional development, where even experienced healthcare professionals can benefit from opportunistic training.
- The observed lack of attendance at formal training sessions in the past suggests that much of the knowledge acquisition regarding epidural management occurs through experiential learning 'on the job'.
- We plan continue offering Epidural Tea Trolley Training to deliver refresher training and reinforce good practice to maintain high standards of care in epidural management on our labour ward.

REFERENCES

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- O'Farrell G, McDonald M, Kelly FE. 'Tea trolley' difficult airway training. Anaesthesia. 2015; 70: 104