Chelsea and Westminster Hospital
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The confidence and competency of general Accident and Emergency doctors in approaching eye-related emergency conditions

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Introduction

Ophthalmic-related conditions present 1.5%-6% of general ED attendance according to the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, 2020. Therefore, it's essential for ED doctors to have the basic sufficient skills to approach ocular emergencies. This study aims to evaluate how confident are the ED physicians in assessing emergency eye conditions.

Methods

A prospective online survey using a previously published questionnaire comprised of 8 questions was performed and distributed to local doctors working in ED department. Participants in the questionnaire were junior doctors, senior clinical fellows and consultants. The data was then collected and analysed.

Results

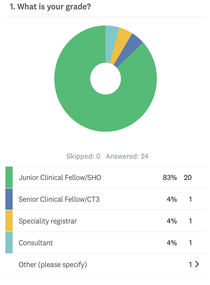
A total of 24 doctors working in A&E have completed the survey which consists of 8 questions, amongst which 83% were junior doctors, 8% were more senior doctors, and the remaining 4% were consultants. A total of 84% of participants have either below average or no confidence at all with assessing and managing emergency eye conditions. An average of 50% and 62% of A&E doctors don't have any confidence using ophthalmoscope and slit lamp, respectively.

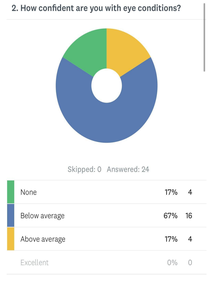
Discussion

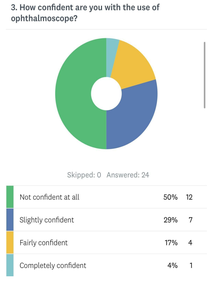
There has been a considerable reduction in the level of training that FY2s receive in the management of eye emergencies in the last 10 years with only less than half receiving some form of training during their time in A&E. Also, the drastic drop in confidence in the management of eye emergencies is alarming with more than 84% of FY2s reporting little or no confidence.

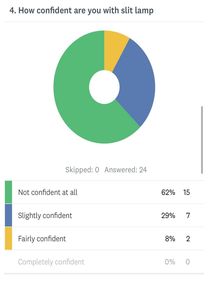
An important factor at a local level is undoubtedly the lack of exposure in medical school. Multiple studies have shown that medical students in the UK receive inadequate ophthalmic training, most of which does not meet the recommended International Council of Ophthalmologists standard. In addition, there is no clear definition of the basic ophthalmic competencies required of FY2s in foundation training.

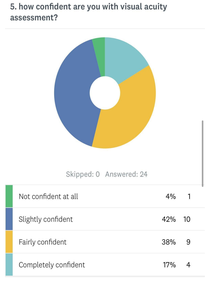
A continuation of this decline among A&E FY2s in ophthalmic training will have major implications for both general and ophthalmic A&E departments and may exacerbate the decrease in training efforts and under-confidence in managing patients with ophthalmic emergencies

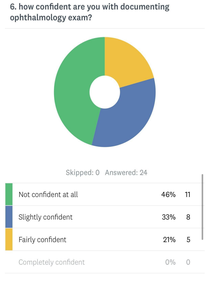


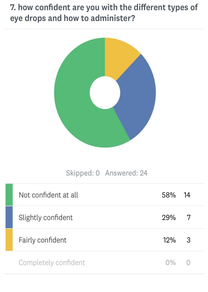


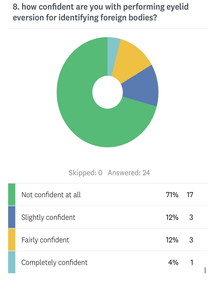












Conclusion

This study demonstrates that most of A&E doctors lack the confidence of approaching and managing ocular emergencies as well as using the basic ophthalmic equipment in ED.

More attention should be focused on providing basic training and education to general A&E doctors to help them being more comfortable using the ophthalmic devices and having the basic fundamental knowledge in dealing with common eye-related casualties, which eventually will reflect on the level of care provided to our patients.

References

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