

Regional survey on Prescribing for perinatal mental health

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Introduction

- Good management of perinatal mental health illness is crucial to safe maternity care.
- We sought to understand views of Obstetric doctors in relation to initiating antidepressants.

Method

- Our anonymous online survey was sent to all Yorkshire and Humber Deanery Obstetrics and Gynaecology Trainees in year three and above.
- The survey ran between the 21st September and 21st October 2021.

Results

- 81 responses were received. The survey response rate was 27%.
- 21% of respondents initiated anti-depressants in the preceding year.
- 64% of our respondents were not comfortable prescribing psychotropic medication.
- Most respondents did not initiate antidepressants as they felt it was not their remit as Obstetricians (Figure 1).
- Only 3% of respondents had recent teaching on prescribing for perinatal mental health (Figure 2).

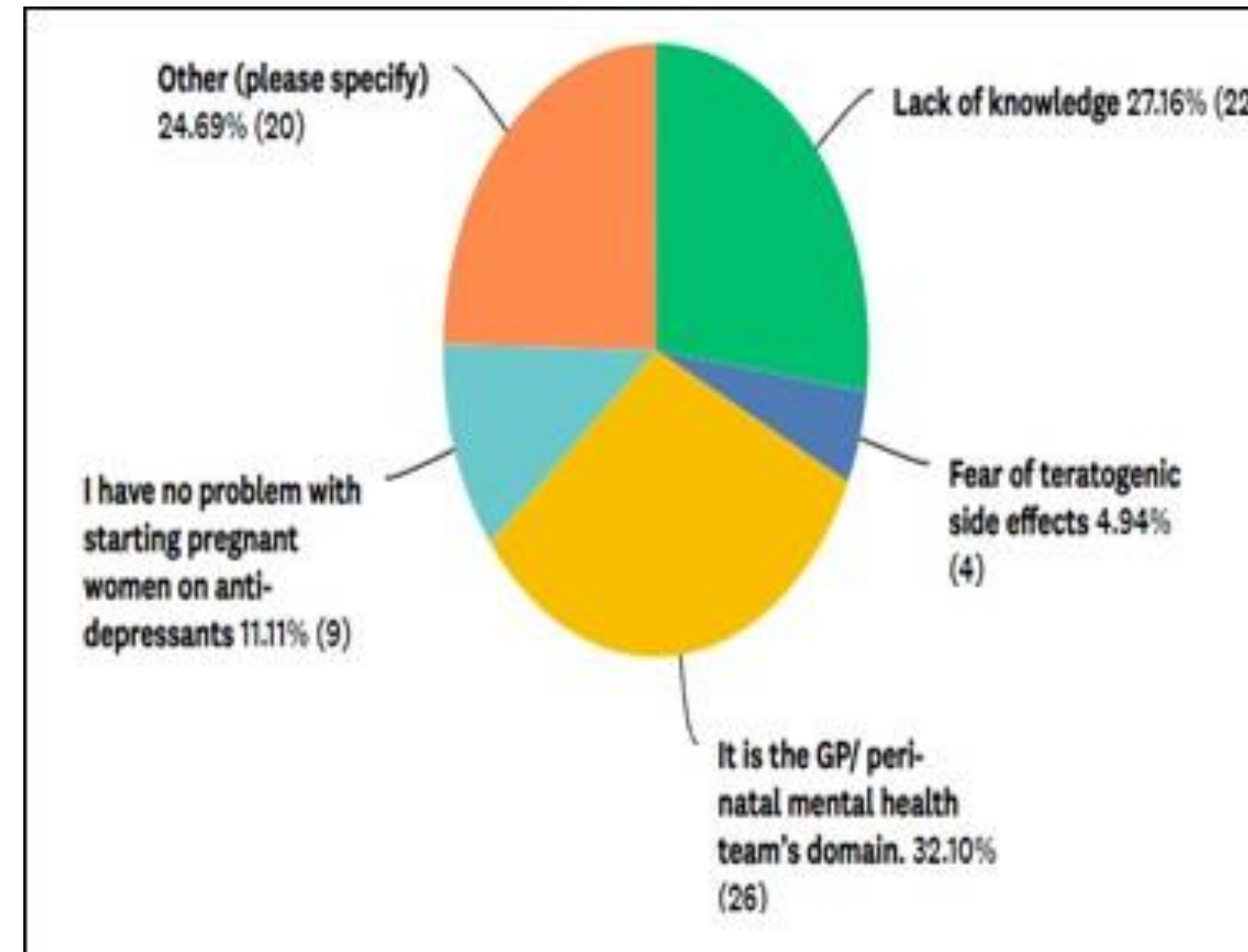


Figure 1: Key deterrents from initiating anti-depressants in pregnancy

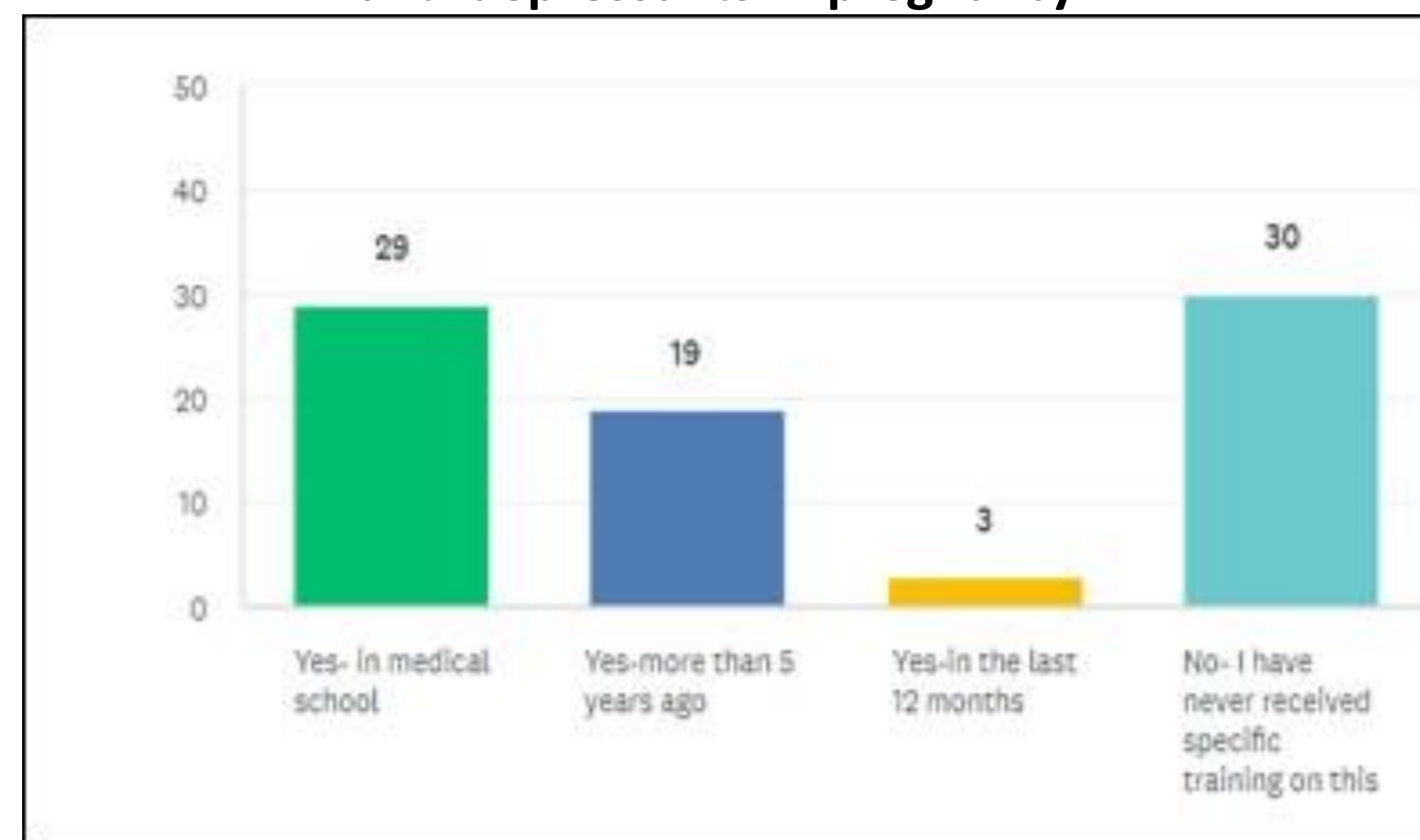


Figure 2: Receipt of perinatal mental health teaching by doctors. (Y axis = number of doctors)

Conclusion

- Our survey highlighted paucity of regular teaching on prescribing for perinatal mental health.
- Knowledge of this is beneficial for:
 1. safely initiating treatment
 2. appropriate counselling of those reluctant to use or prescribe psychotropic drugs.

Recommendations

- Our recommendations are summarised in Figure 3.
- A blame culture deters colleagues from doing anything outside of their practice and stifles improvement.

Change from blame culture.

Regular teaching on prescribing for perinatal mental health

Protocols to ensure uniformity of practice

Figure 3. Recommendations for future practice

References

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- NICE. Antenatal and Postnatal Mental Health: Clinical management and service guidance. 2014 updated 2020