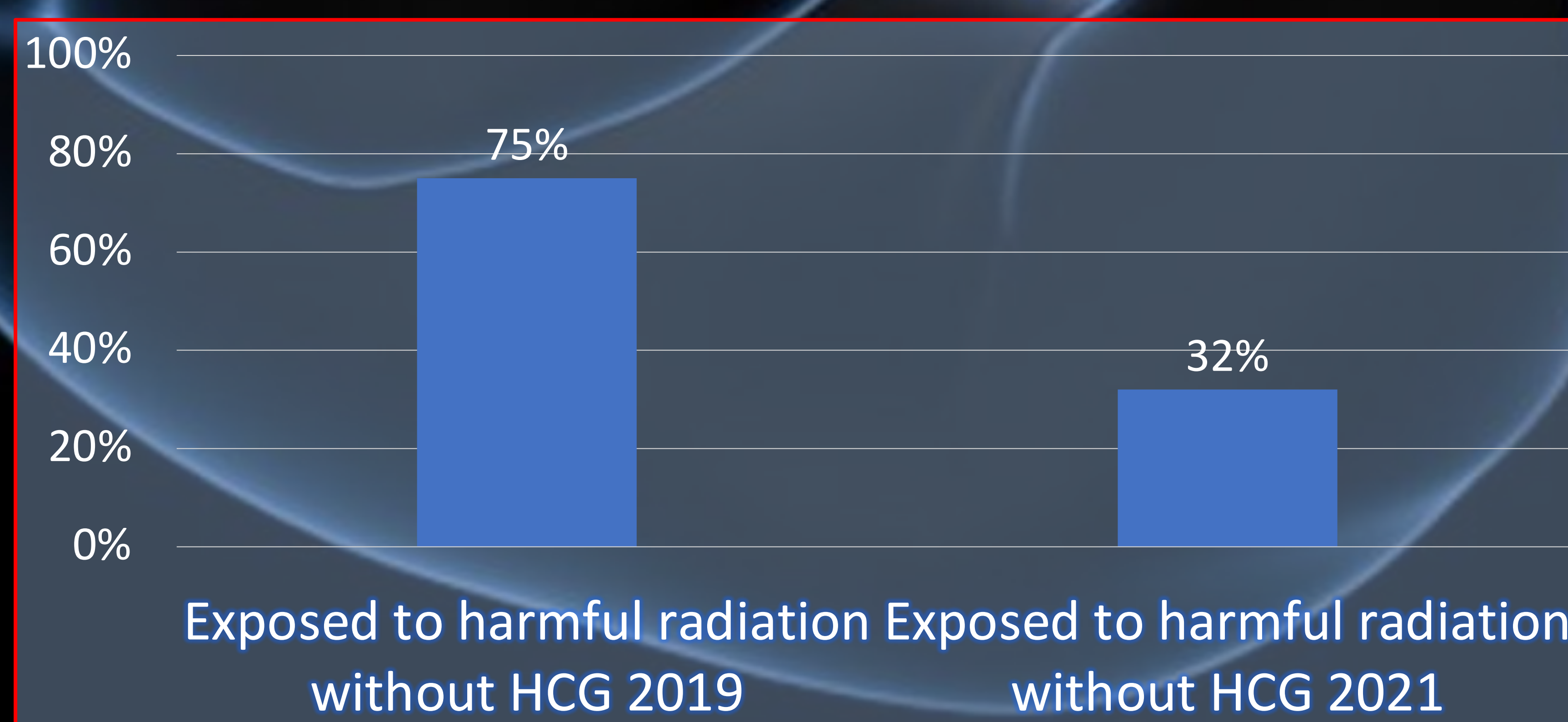
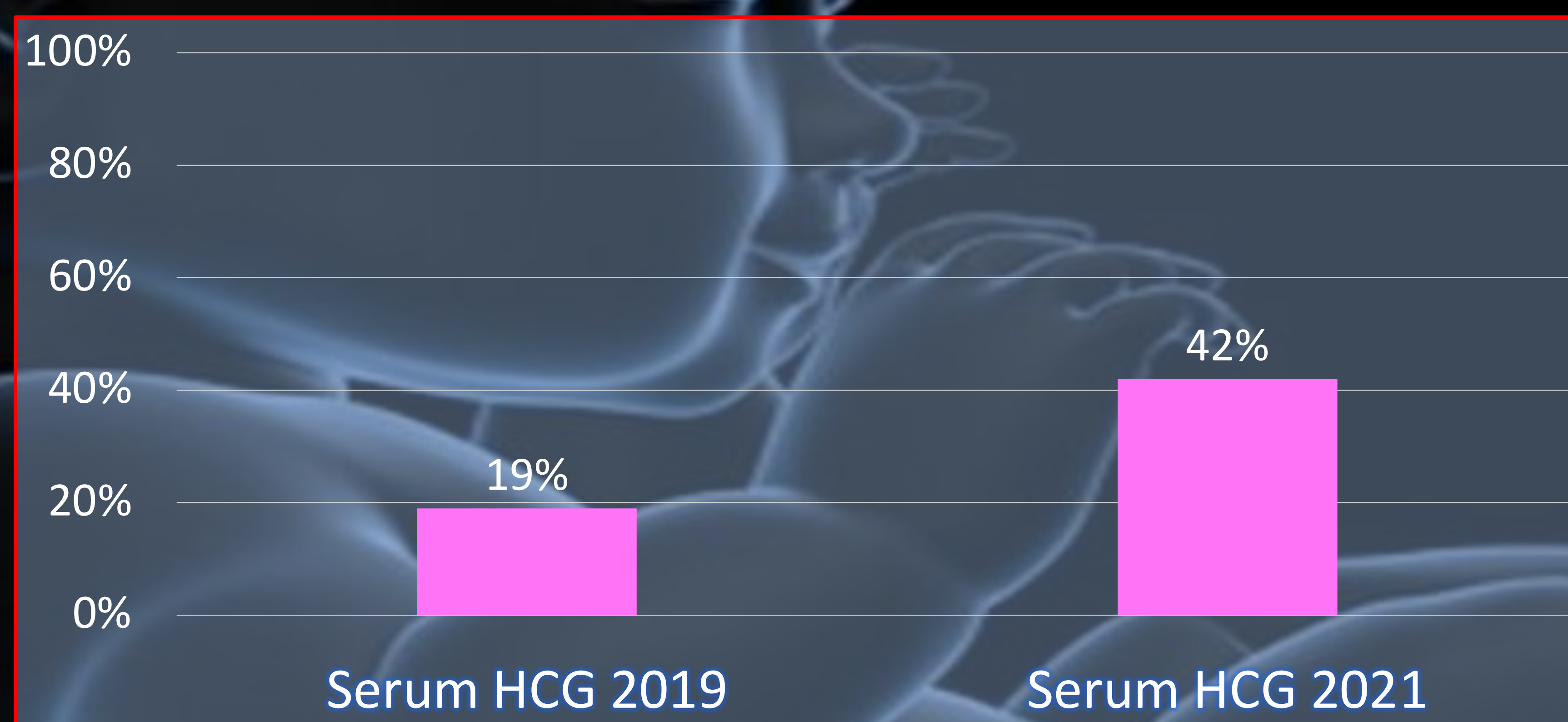
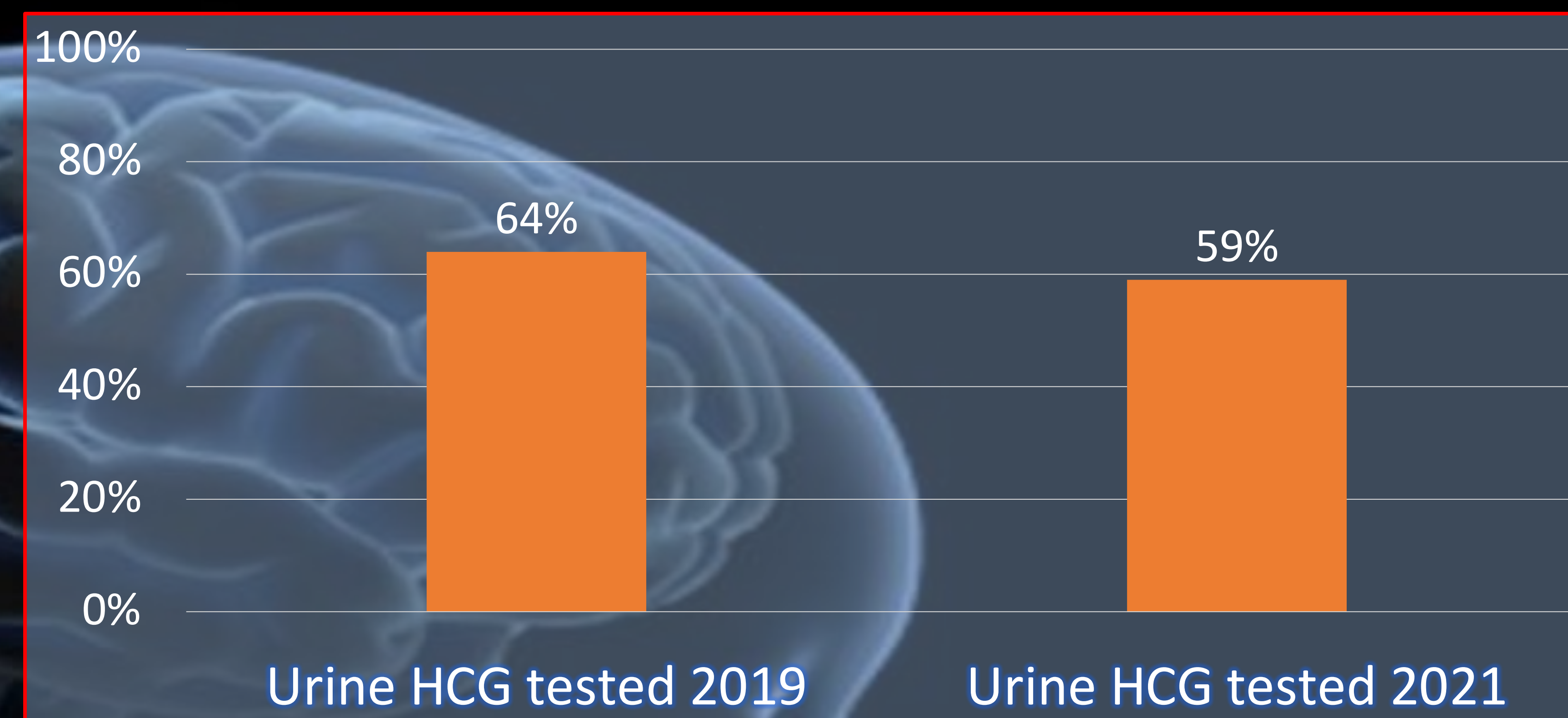
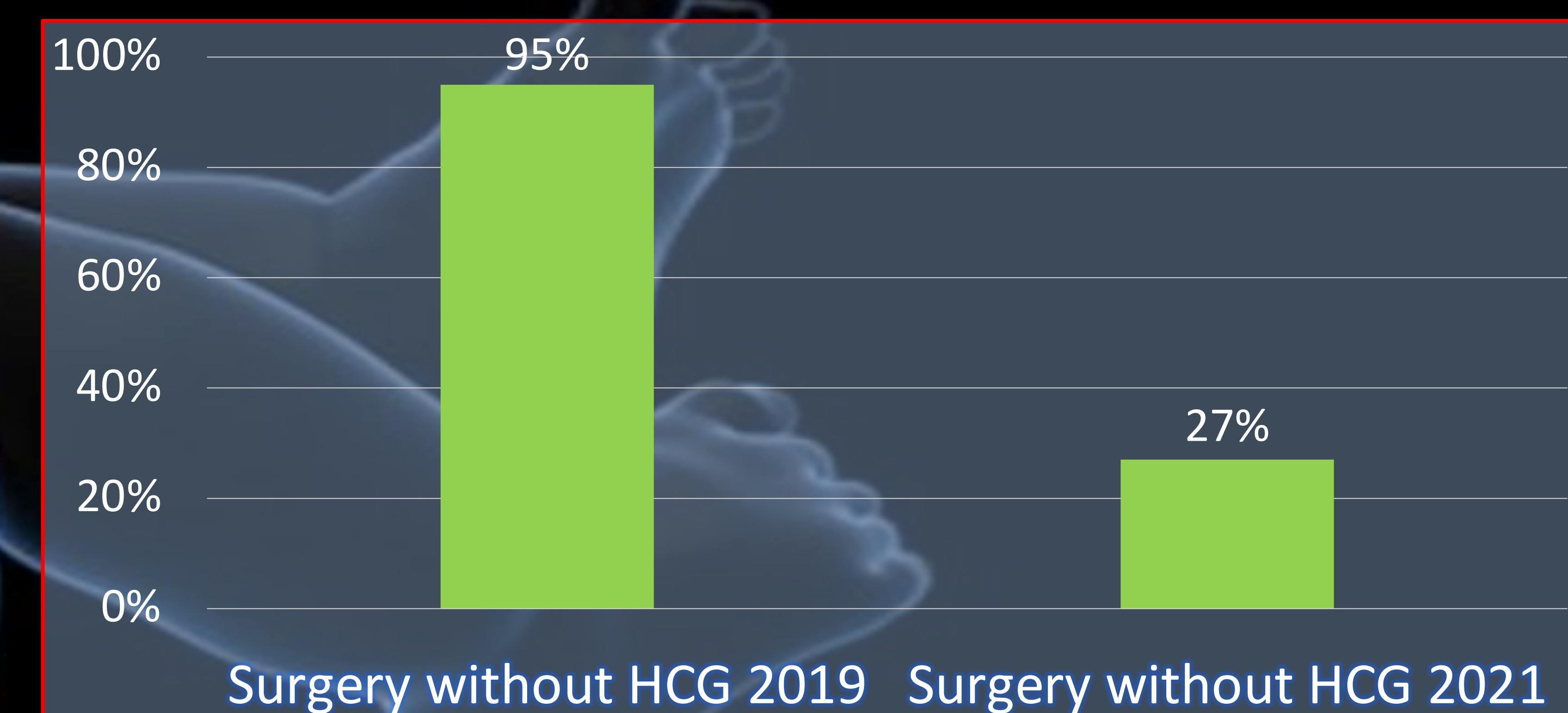


The Hidden Foetus



Method:
A total of 159 case notes were reviewed . In the baseline survey, 86 case notes were screened for pregnancy tests and whether the findings were documented . After the introduction of pregnancy kits, the survey was repeated involving 73 women . The mean age was 32 with a range from 17 to 52 years of age .

Results:
Obtained retrospectively using the hospital patient information system screening for pregnancy tests (urine /serum β -HCG), any radiation exposure and surgical intervention . In 2021, prior to intervention, 75% of fecund patients were exposed to radiation and 95% underwent surgery without pregnancy testing . In 2021 the rates dropped to 32% for radiation exposure and surgery without pregnancy testing to 27% . Overall pregnancy testing in fecund women for surgical admission improved to 60% .



Conclusions:
The intervention increased the pregnancy screening to 60% . The remaining 40% could be captured by using a computer based admission protocol which prompts the health care staff to undertake a pregnancy test .

Objective:
Identify whether fecund women were having procedures without having a pregnancy test . This patient safety issue was further highlighted by an anecdotal story when a surgical procedure was performed and mid surgery a pregnancy was identified . In this patient group, routine pregnancy tests are often omitted and related documentation is missing . Prior to our intervention, simple point of care testing was limited to the emergency department . At ward level, pregnancy tests could only be performed using blood serum .

Design:
We reviewed whether all female surgical admissions of childbearing age underwent pregnancy testing . A baseline audit highlighted the need to introduce point of care pregnancy kits on the surgical ward . The initial audit was presented to surgical and anaesthetic departments . In collaboration with management, funding was secured to provide pregnancy kits for the surgical wards and the admission protocol was changed accordingly .