A national Obstetrics and Gynaecology-themed mentorship scheme for Foundation Year trainees

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Aims of the scheme

The aim of this national scheme was to **pair Foundation Doctors** with current **trainees in Obstetrics & Gynaecology** (O&G) to provide **custom-tailored guidance** for junior doctors considering **O&G as a future career choice**, including help with:

(a) Speciality training application process
(b) Portfolio building
(c) Clinical exposure, including on-call sessions, taster weeks and shadowing in theatres
(d) O&G-related research, audits and QiP projects

Methods

The pilot edition of the scheme lasted for **12 months**. The **objectives** of the scheme were **discussed with RCOG representatives** at the planning stage. Junior Doctors and O&G Speciality Trainees were recruited through trainee mailing lists, social media and personal contacts.

Pairs were **allocated** based on **geographical proximity** whenever possible. All scheme participants have received a **Mentorship Scheme information booklet** outlining scheme aims and scope. Three questionnaires went sent to evaluate scheme progres.

To receive **Scheme Completion Certificates**, Mentor and Mentee pairs had to :

1) **Conduct three** in person/on-line **meetings** between February 2021 and February 2022
2) **Return three crib sheets** outlining content of each meeting by February 2022.

Results

PRE-MENTORSHIP DATA

145 Mentor-Mentee **pairs** were **allocated. 65%** were **allocated mentors within the same deanery,** facilitating local training experience and in-person shadowing opportunities.

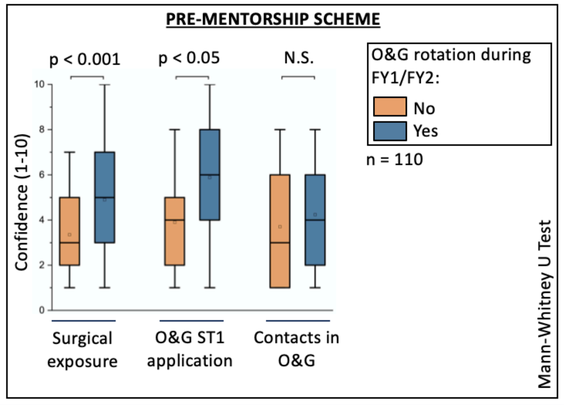
79% of Mentees completed the **Pre-Mentorship Questionnaire**, which revealed that the cohort has a **strong pre-existing interest** in O&G:

- **72%** chose an **O&G rotation** during Foundation Training
- **24%** had an **intercalated degree** in **Women's Health/O&G**

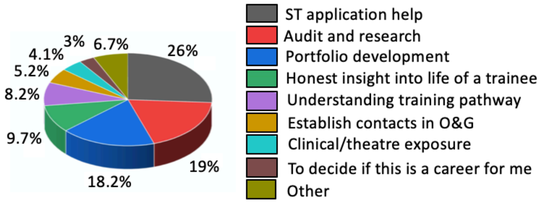
Despite this, **most felt** that they **need further career guidance** as evident from:

- Only **28% having a mentor** in O&G **prior** to enrolling for the scheme
- Subjective **understanding** of O&G speciality training **application proces**: **6/10** (IQR: 4 – 7)

The results indicated that having had an **O&G rotation** during FY training was **not linked** to increased **mentorship opportunities**:

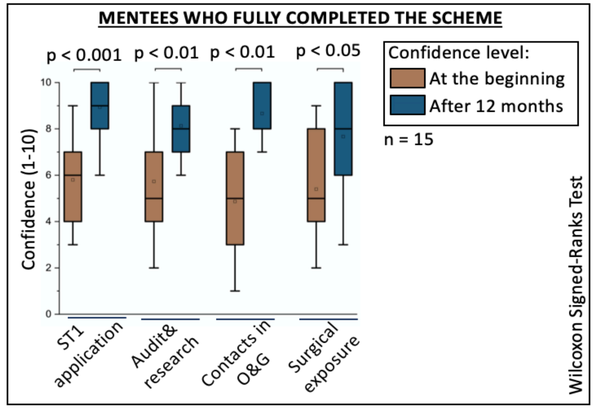


MENTEES' GOALS AT THE ONSET OF THE SCHEME:



POST-SCHEME EVALUATION:

- **49%** of the allocated pairs **showed engagement** with the scheme
- **15%** of pairs **returned all documentation** and received Scheme **Completion Certificates** (22/145)
- **Mentees** who **completed** the scheme showed a **significant increase in confidence** in **all domains tested.**



KEY ISSUES FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES

- Lack of opportunities to engage **in person**
- Lack of overall **mentee engagement**
- **Lack of time** for mentorship
- Perceived lack of guidance on how to organise in-person opportunities such as theatre days, audits and research projects

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Provision of **more support for mentors on engaging mentees**
- **Pairing mentors with multiple mentees** to fill in for those who are less engaged
- In person social **meet ups**
- **Training session** for all mentors and mentees at the start of the scheme
- Highlighting crib sheet as a resource as opposed to a mandatory form (feedback highlighted that crib sheet was restrictive at times)

Mentor quotes:

"Real life advice not just how to get a number but how to survive the first year of training."

"It's [a] very good connection between new generations and how to be up to date with changes in educational techniques and opportunities."

Mentee quotes:

"Very approachable and passionate whilst being encouraging and sympathetic to difficulties with the application process. A highly valued listening ear and always happy to chat and offer excellent advice."

"She was friendly and easy and to contact and was always happy to answer my questions. She was an absolute pleasure to be paired up with for a year."

Conclusions

UK Foundation trainees interested in O&G report **poor exposure** to the speciality and **low confidence** with regards to **speciality training application**. Thus, there is a clear **unmet need** to **encourage and guide** the **future cohort** of O&G doctors. Adjustments suggested by both Mentors and Mentees that make the scheme more user friendly will likely lead to increased participant retention and higher completion rate.