

## Background

Third year of undergraduate medicine at Glasgow University is a period of transition, from pre-clinical teaching to full-time clinical placements. This transition can be daunting, especially in the context of reduced clinical exposure throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Reduced time in the clinical environment due to Covid restrictions has been shown to significantly affect student confidence<sup>1,2</sup>. We designed a teaching programme to take place during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year medicine block with the aim to address this, assist transition to clinical life and familiarise students with the initial assessment of an acutely unwell patient.

## Methods

A three week block of tutorials was designed to run throughout the 3<sup>rd</sup> year clinical medicine placement at University Hospital Wishaw. Each tutorial consisted of a patient case, group discussion on one element of the A to E assessment and procedure practice. A continuous patient case was used to scaffold learning through the weekly clinical scenarios. Students completed a pre-course questionnaire rating their confidence in several skills at the start of the block and again at the end of the three weeks.

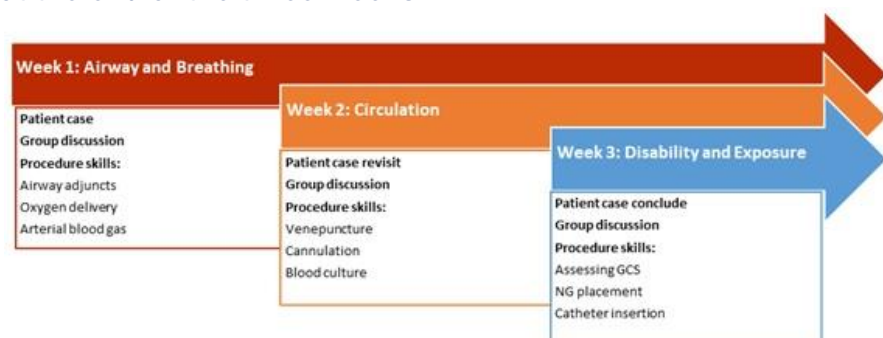


Figure 1 Outline of course structure

## Discussion

While students were aware of the A to E assessment structure, most were not confident at putting this into practice on the ward, under supervision. The majority also did not feel familiar with equipment in an emergency. The Covid-19 pandemic is likely to have exacerbated this skill gap as students have had less in person teaching and limited clinical exposure in the early part of their course. The post-pandemic pressures and reorganisation of NHS services also contributes to ongoing lack of opportunities and the need for innovative teaching methods has been recognised<sup>3</sup>. This teaching programme aimed to address these factors and demonstrated an improvement both in student confidence in clinical procedures and in the assessment of the unwell patient.

### Limitations

Some students were unable to attend every session and data has not been adjusted for this. Students in later blocks had more clinical experience and may have felt more confident independent of any teaching intervention. The small sample size of 18 students means further work is required to demonstrate applicability to other clinical sites.

### References:

- Choi, B., Jegatheeswaran, L., Minocha, A. *et al.* The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on final year medical students in the United Kingdom: a national survey. *BMC Med Educ* 20, 206 (2020).
- Rich A, Viney R, Silken M, *et al.* UK medical students' mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: a qualitative interview study. *BMJ Open* 2023;13:e070528
- Cairney-Hill J, Edwards AE, Jaafar N. *et al.* Challenges and opportunities for undergraduate clinical teaching during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*. 2021;114(3):113-116.

## Results

18 students attended the teaching programme over four blocks. Student self rated confidence increased in both the assessment of the acutely unwell patient and in the identification of emergency medical equipment.

	Number of students (%)	
	Pre-course	Post-course
Confident or extremely confident if asked to begin the initial assessment of an unwell patient.	6	72
Confident or extremely confident if asked to identify a piece of medical equipment used in an emergency.	23	67

Table 1 Student confidence in management of acutely unwell patient pre and post course

Students were asked to rate their confidence in attempting six procedures pre and post-course. An improvement in confidence was noted across all procedures.

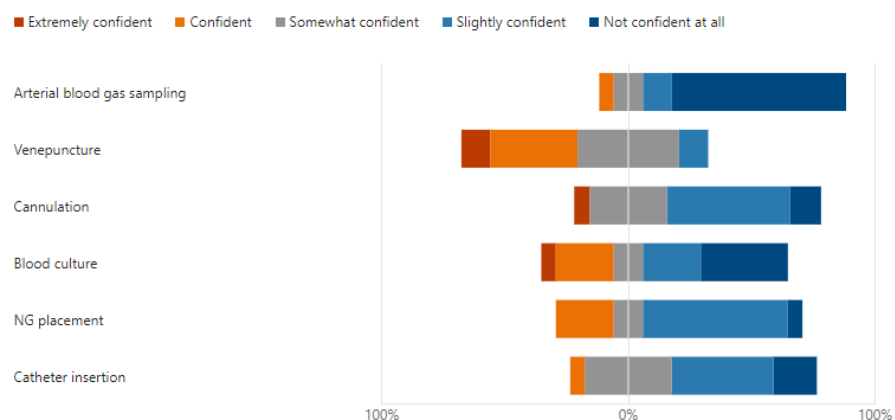


Figure 2 Pre course student self rated confidence

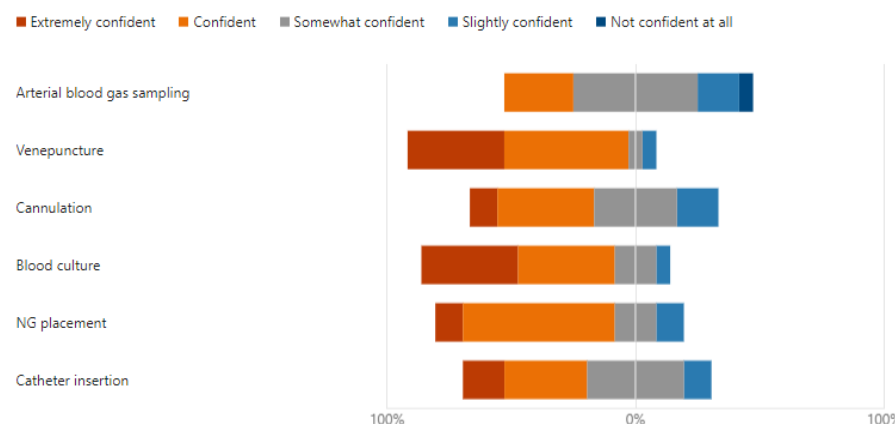


Figure 3 Post course student self rated confidence

## Conclusion

The transition from pre-clinical to clinical medicine is a valuable opportunity to address student concerns about the clinical environment and to familiarise students with equipment and procedures. This course has demonstrated that focussed teaching on clinical skills increased student confidence in preparation for their ongoing medical training.