

# CLINICAL SKILLS ASSISTANT



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## Background

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the lack of consistent opportunity for medical students in the UK to practise the clinical skills expected of all junior doctors. The Clinical Skills Assistant (CSA) volunteer project aims to address this problem. A grant was provided by Cascade, a group of Nottingham University alumni that fund projects to help enhance the student experience.

## Aim

To improve preparedness of medical students for qualifying as doctors

## Objectives

- To deliver training in clinical skills used within the Emergency Department (ED).
- To provide opportunity to perform skills regularly with feedback from experienced ED mentors.

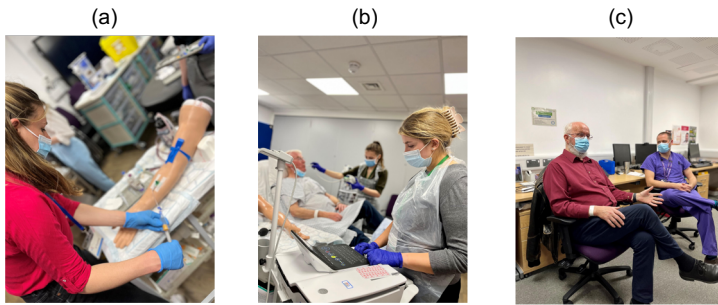


Figure 1: Activities performed during the induction weekend.

- (a) Practising skills on a task trainer.
- (b) A scenario with a simulated patient.
- (c) A talk by a member of the public explaining the patient journey.

## Methods

- Recruitment of 15 medical students (see figure 2) from the University of Nottingham via an expression of interest, then interview.
- A 2-day induction was held by a team of multi-professional educators, including patient involvement. Training was provided on core clinical skills using task trainers and in simulation.
- We simultaneously recruited ED staff (registered nurses and clinical support workers) to mentor the CSAs. They were trained to assess clinical skills, regularly review the progress of the CSAs and act as advocates for them in the department.
- Students sign up for a weekly 4-hour shift, working 1:1 with their mentor in a supernumerary period until confident and competent to practise independently.



Figure 2: The 15 CSA Recruits

## Evaluation

We are currently performing a service evaluation to assess student and staff perceptions of the impact of this project upon CSAs competence and confidence across five domains (Figure 3). We plan to evaluate the progress of the CSAs once they have completed their supernumerary period and again after 6 months.

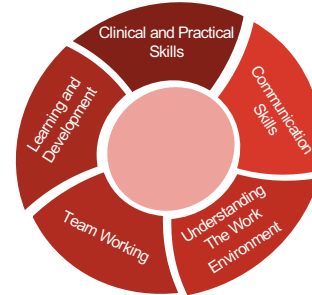


Figure 3. The five domains being assessed via the questionnaire [1].

## Initial Results

The CSAs completed an initial questionnaire prior to commencing. A 5-point Likert scale was used to assess the CSAs self-reported confidence in a series of 25 questions across the five domains, with 1 being 'not at all confident' and 5 being 'extremely confident'. A summary of the mean scores is shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4.

A chart summarising the results of the questionnaire (n=15).

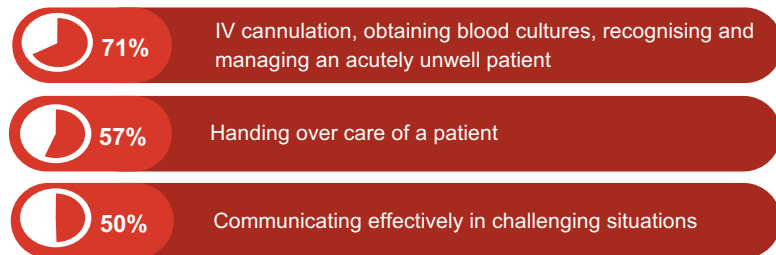


Figure 5. Preliminary analysis showing the percentage of CSAs lacking confidence in each of these skills.

## Future Plans

We will be expanding our evaluation to look at how the CSA role contributes to service delivery in Emergency Department, as well as the benefits to the CSA mentors by providing opportunity for professional development and improving job satisfaction. We aim to work towards a sustainable model through recruitment of future cohorts and possible transition to paid employment.



CSA  
Promotional  
Video for NUH  
NHS Trust