

# Improving the knowledge and confidence of health care professionals delivering perinatal mental health in Wales through training

Dr Oluwaseun Adeitan, Higher trainee in General Adult Psychiatry ST5<sup>1</sup>

Dr Divya Sakhuja Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist<sup>1</sup>

1. Aneurin Bevan University Health board



## Background:

As part of the commitment of the RCPsych Wales to training in perinatal mental health, an online training day was organised for health professionals across Wales who are in contact with and deliver care to women in the perinatal period.

## Aim and hypothesis:

To demonstrate an improvement in the knowledge and confidence of health care professionals attending an online perinatal mental health training day.

## Method:

The session was open to any professional providing care to women in the perinatal period irrespective of their role or specialty.

This training was delivered by Consultants Perinatal Psychiatrist, Obstetrician and Neonatologist; Clinical psychologists and a peer mentor.

Topics discussed include the following:

- Prescribing in pregnancy
- Obstetrics management of mothers with mental illness
- Parent infant mental health
- Neonatal monitoring following in utero exposure to psychotropic medication
- Managing risk in the perinatal period: lessons from the confidential enquiries into maternal deaths

A pre and post training survey was carried out to assess the knowledge and confidence of the health professionals on the above.

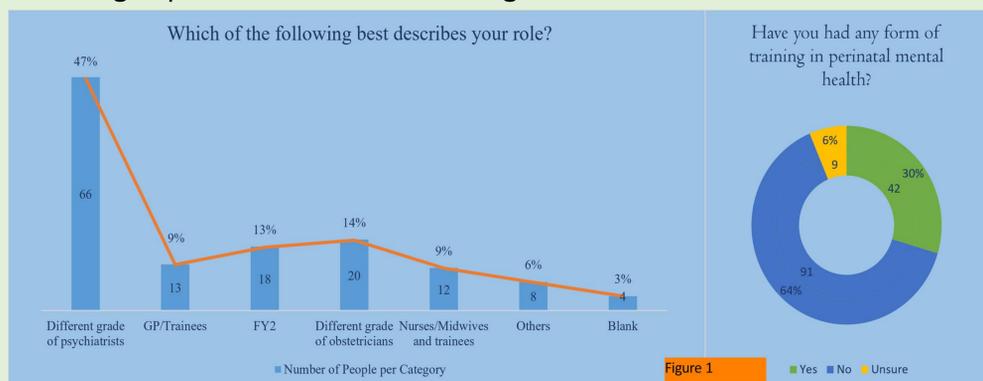
The post-survey included an open-ended comment section on the following questions:

- What did you find useful and how will this impact on your clinical practice.
- Do you have any suggestion for improvement.
- Are there any topic that you would like to be covered on future training day.

Qualitative content analysis was employed to systematically categorize the content of the comments.

## Result:

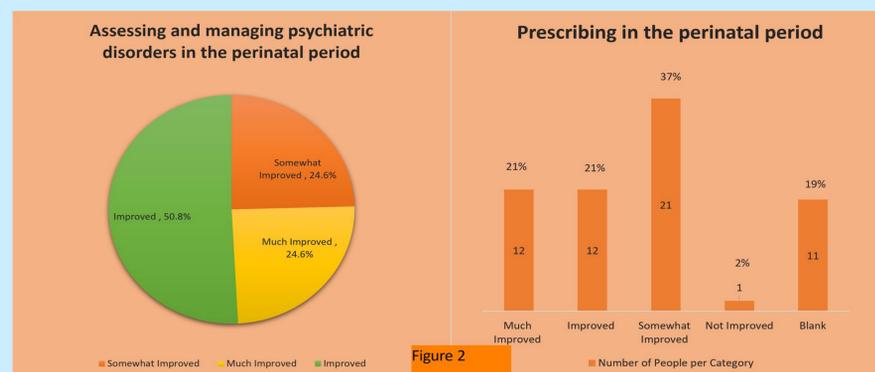
The surveys demonstrated that the session was well accessed by a variety of professionals, 64% of whom had reported that they previously had no form of training in perinatal mental health Fig 1



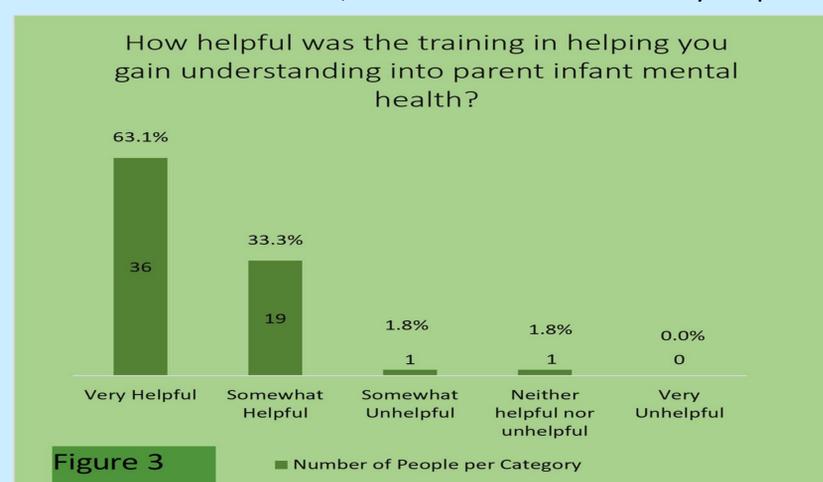
Post training feedback was obtained from 40% of the 142 people who completed the pretraining survey.

75.4% of respondents reported improvement in their knowledge and confidence in assessing and managing psychiatric disorders during the perinatal period, while 24.6% reported some degree of improvement Fig 2

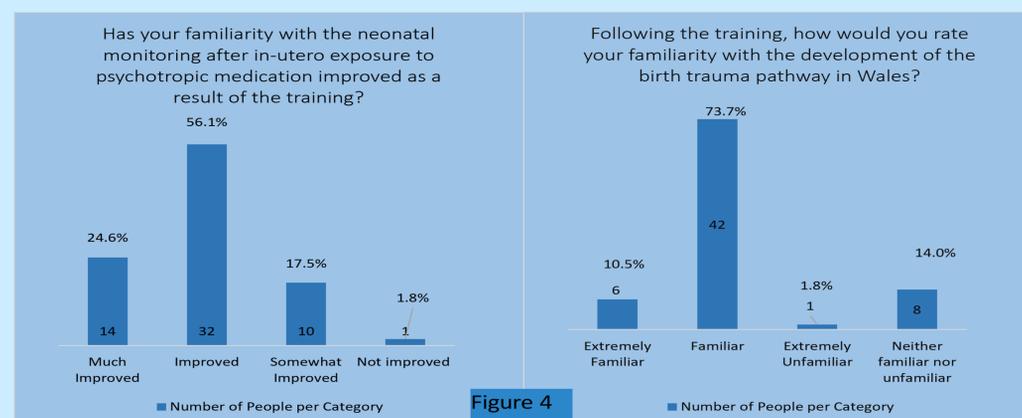
58% of respondents reported improvement in their knowledge and confidence in prescribing in the perinatal period, while 21% reported some degree of improvement Fig 2



96.4% of respondents reported the training to be helpful in gaining understanding into parent infant mental health, 63% of whom found it very helpful Fig 3



98.2% of respondent reported an improvement in their familiarity with neonatal monitoring after in utero exposure to psychotropic medications, while 84.2% had become familiar with the development of the birth trauma pathway in Wales Fig 4



The quantitative content analysis of the post-survey open-ended comment section revealed several key themes and subthemes.

Most participants greatly valued the evidence-based information provided, the interdisciplinary collaboration and discussion with the obstetrics and neonatology team, the updates on prescribing practices, learning new concepts and gaining a deeper understanding of the field. Most reported that this will translate to a more proactive care and an improvement in their clinical practice.

Comments on suggested improvement included having more interactive elements within the training in form of case-based discussions and interactive breakout rooms. Future topics suggested by respondents include psychological and other non-pharmacological treatment in the perinatal period, forensic perspective to perinatal psychiatry and perinatal mental health among the BAME population.

## Conclusion:

Feedback highlights that the content of the training was appropriately pitched and clinically valuable to attendees with little knowledge of perinatal mental health as well as to those who needed to update their knowledge and skills on specific areas of perinatal mental health. Feedback will guide further programme development and topic selection.