

# Opening the Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) doors to medical students, welcoming early learning and enthusiasm



B. DINNEEN<sup>1</sup>, O. POROTTI<sup>2</sup>

1. City and Hackney Centre for Mental Health, Mother and Baby Unit, East London Foundation Trust
2. City and Hackney Centre for Mental Health, Mother and Baby Unit, East London Foundation Trust

## Aims:

- ❖ To improve medical student's psychiatric placements by broadening their clinical exposure to include time on an inpatient MBU
- ❖ To garner enthusiasm within medical students for psychiatry as a career choice
- ❖ To provide information and learning on perinatal mental health

## Background:

The World Health Organization has identified a **chronic shortage of psychiatrists** whereas the demand for mental health services is on the rise (1).

In July 2022 the BMA conducted a survey of final year medical students with representation from every medical school in the UK. 88.3% of students reported having thought about what specialty to pursue, **experience on a clinical placement** was identified as the greatest factor in this decision-making process (2).

In another qualitative study focused solely on factors associated with interest in psychiatry in UK medical students, **Education and Exposure** was among four key factors identified. They concluded that interest in psychiatry may be promoted by facilitating student exposure to **enthusiastic psychiatrists** and **psychiatry subspecialties** (3)

## Method:

**WHO?** 4<sup>th</sup> year medical students on their placement at City and Hackney

**HOW?** Invited to an MBU open morning during their induction and followed up with an email

**INTEREST?** Twelve students attended across three opening mornings, one every 8 weeks to capture each rotating group across one full academic cohort

### On arrival

Leaflet provided: information about the size and workings of the unit, the referral process and admission criteria, as well as information relating to perinatal mental health, important assessment considerations and perinatal specific 'red flags'. It also included information about training pathways for psychiatry and further reading.

### Introduction to the unit

Introduction to the MBU and a brief run through of the leaflet. Students were introduced to the wider team before sitting in on the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) morning handover. Following this a tour of the unit was conducted.

### Meet the mothers

Students were divided into pairs and introduced to the willing mothers. The students were encouraged to take histories and perform a mental state examination. Students were later invited to present their assessments, case discussions followed.

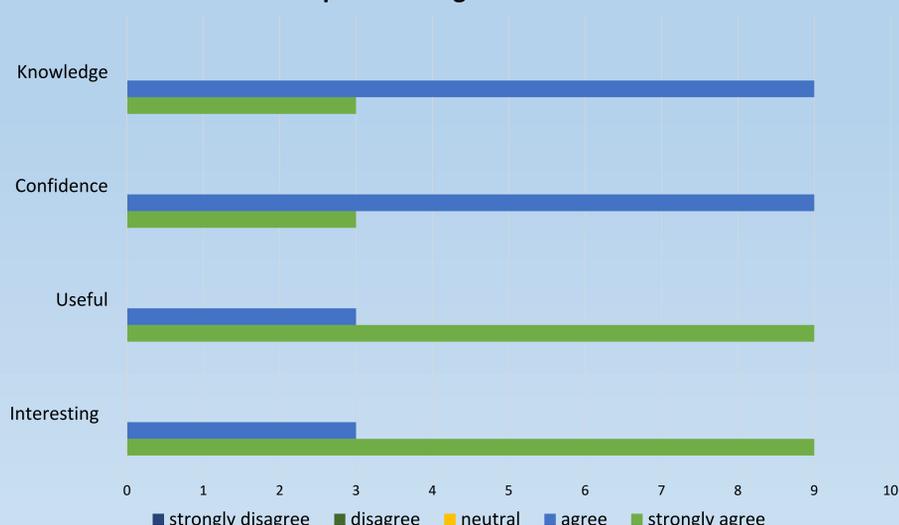
### Feedback

Feedback forms were completed anonymously before departure. Four statements with a Likert scale response:

- I found today interesting
- I found today useful
- I feel more confident when dealing with women presenting with mental health issues during the perinatal period
- I feel more knowledgeable with regard to perinatal mental health conditions

## Results:

MBU open morning student feedback



## Conclusion:

This group of self-selected students had a positive experience which may have lasting impact on their career choices. Given how well received this initiative has proven discussions are underway to continue this opportunity for future medical student cohorts.

## References:

- (1) Hankir A, Zaman R. Global strategies targeting the recruitment crisis in psychiatry: the Doctors Academy Future Excellence International Medical Summer School. *Psychiatr Danub*. 2015;27 Suppl 1:S130-S135.
- (2) Medical student survey, British Medical Association. Uploaded July 28 2022. Accessed October 29 2024. <https://www.bma.org.uk/media/6069/bma-student-survey-2022.pdf>
- (3) Crowley G, Banerjee S, Page L, Daley S. Factors associated with interest in psychiatry in UK medical students: qualitative study. *BJPsych Bull*. 2023;47(1):48-55. doi:10.1192/bjb.2021.71

## Contact information:

b.dinneen@nhs.net