

Innovative Education Strategies: Non-physician medical staff facilitating the education of undergraduate medical students through practicable experiences (P140)

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Introduction

There are 10,000 undergraduate medical student places filled in the United Kingdom (UK) every year (Bolton, 2024). NHS understaffing, combined with the method of educational delivery transitioning to more small group modules, has increased demand on the senior consultants' already limited available time. This can be difficult, as these professions are often already under pressure from long patient lists, attending emergency situations, completing appropriate charting and other patient care responsibilities. This study explores facilitating undergrad learning with other high quality options, such as postgraduate nurses that have experience in the consultant's department.

Method

Convenience sample of undergrads that attended in-person 1 hour modules at Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast, directed by a postgrad Endoscopy nurse about cirrhosis, oesophageal varices, and endoscopic Variceal Band Ligation (VBI) treatment. For 28 weeks from September 2024 to May 2025, 10 UK 3rd year medical students were assigned to attend a one hour learning module with an endoscopy nurse, which included a hands on introduction to the gastroscope and the mechanics of variceal band ligation.

Results

With 240 potential students, 110 responded to the anonymised link that was provided through email. 6 were removed for only responding to demographic questions, leaving 104 (43% response rate). 72% of respondents chose "Strongly Agree" and 26% "Somewhat Agree" (total: 98%) that the lecture was useful; 69% chose "strongly agree" and 27% "somewhat agree" (total: 96%) in response to the statement "I feel more confident than before the class in my knowledge on oesophageal varices"; and 78% chose "strongly agree" and 21% chose "somewhat agree" with the statement "I feel more confident than before the class on the role of endoscopy in cirrhosis patients". There were also blank text boxes for the students to share extra information, all of which had positive feedback and suggestions.

Conclusion

In our changing learning environment, the education of the next generation of medical professionals can be problematic for physicians who are already under strain. One of the tools that could be considered going forward to address these barriers, is the utilisation of nurses with postgraduate degrees as ad-hoc educators. This case study demonstrates that when done successfully, undergraduate medical students can access knowledge of diseases and procedures without requiring physicians to be further overburdened. Educating the next generation of medical providers can emerge from numerous sources, and it may be time we look to those professionals, to ensure that there are enough physicians to meet the medical demand that the future requires.

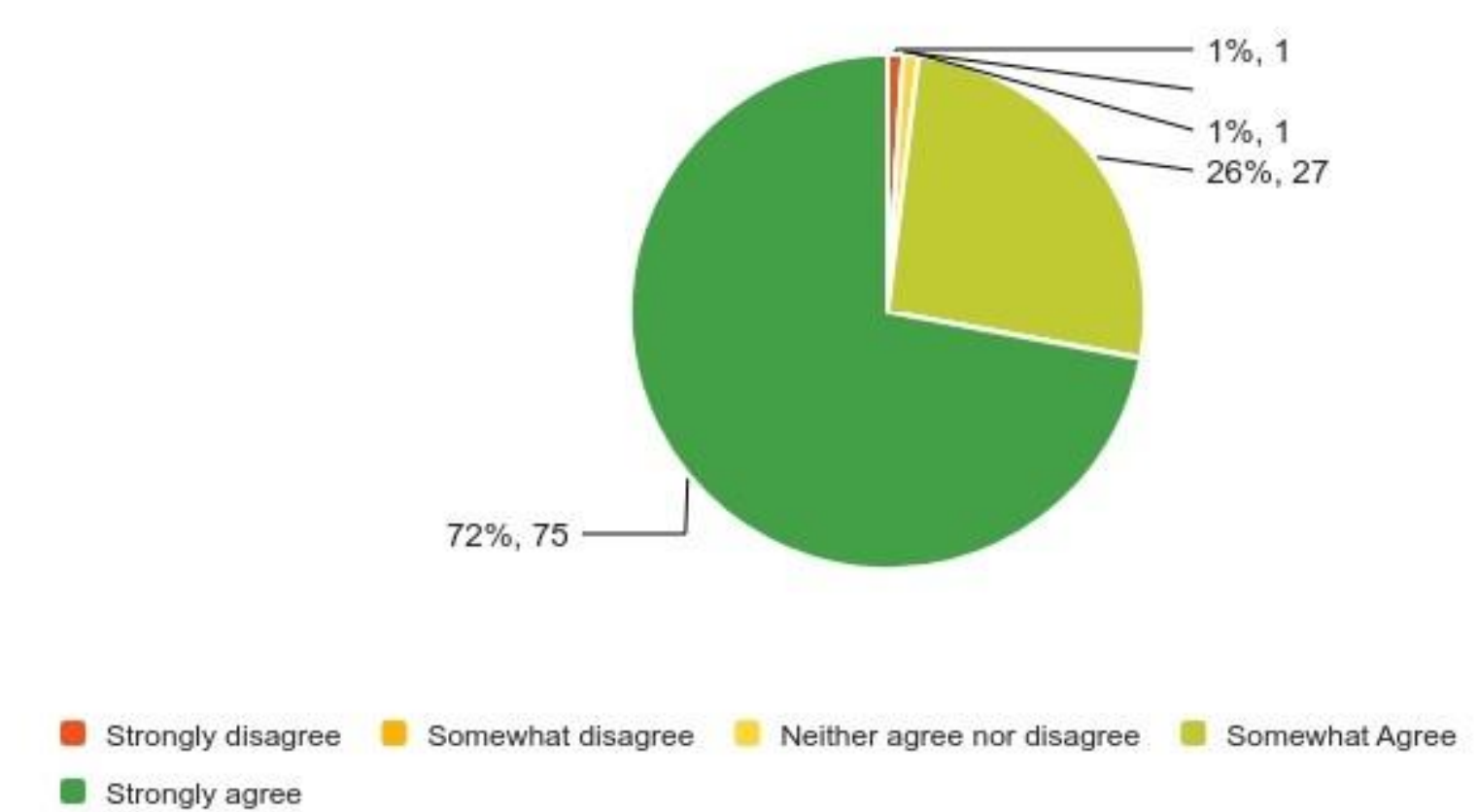
References

Bolton, P and Lewis, J. Oct 2024 "Medical, dental and healthcare students: UK numbers and student support arrangements," House of Commons library, retrieved on 6 June 2025 at <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9734/CBP-9734.pdf>

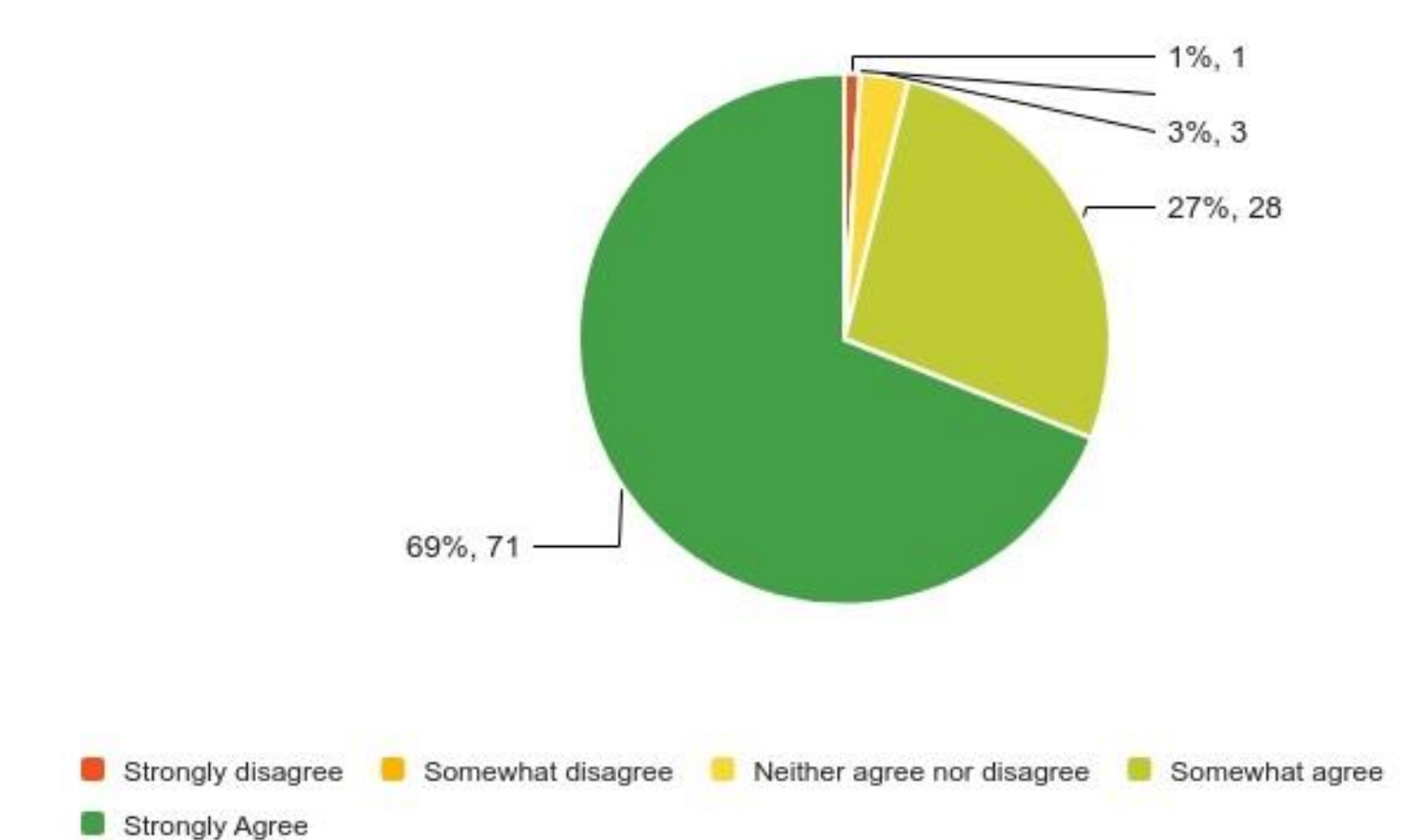
Harris, I et al, 2020. "Factors affecting consultant attitudes to undertaking undergraduate medical student teaching in the UK: a systematic review", British Medical Journal (Open), retrieved on 6 June 2025 at <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/11/1/e042653.full.pdf>



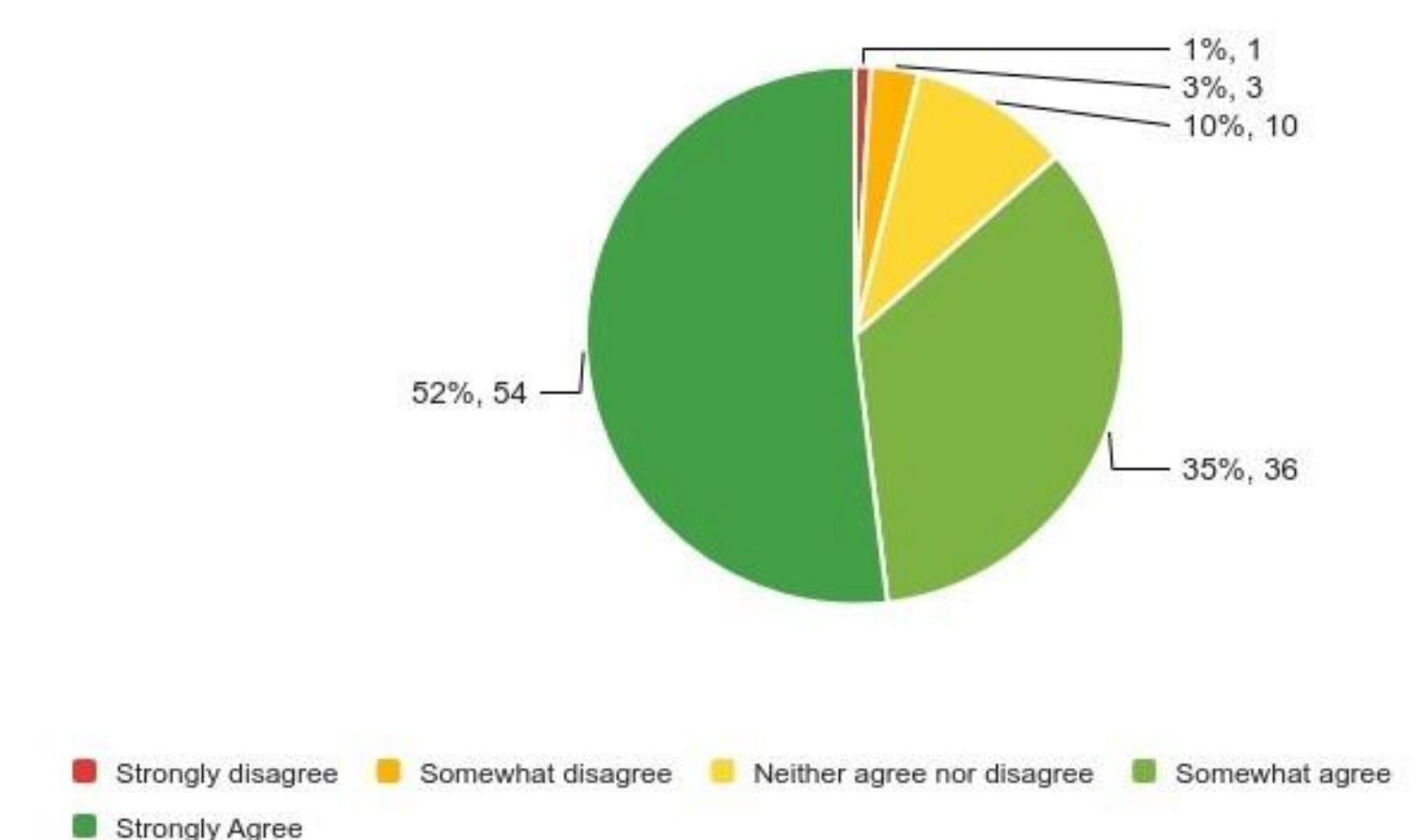
Q4 - Make a choice that matches closest to how you feel about each statement. "This lecture about cirrhosis, varices and endoscopy was useful" (strongly disagree to strongly agree, scale 0-5)



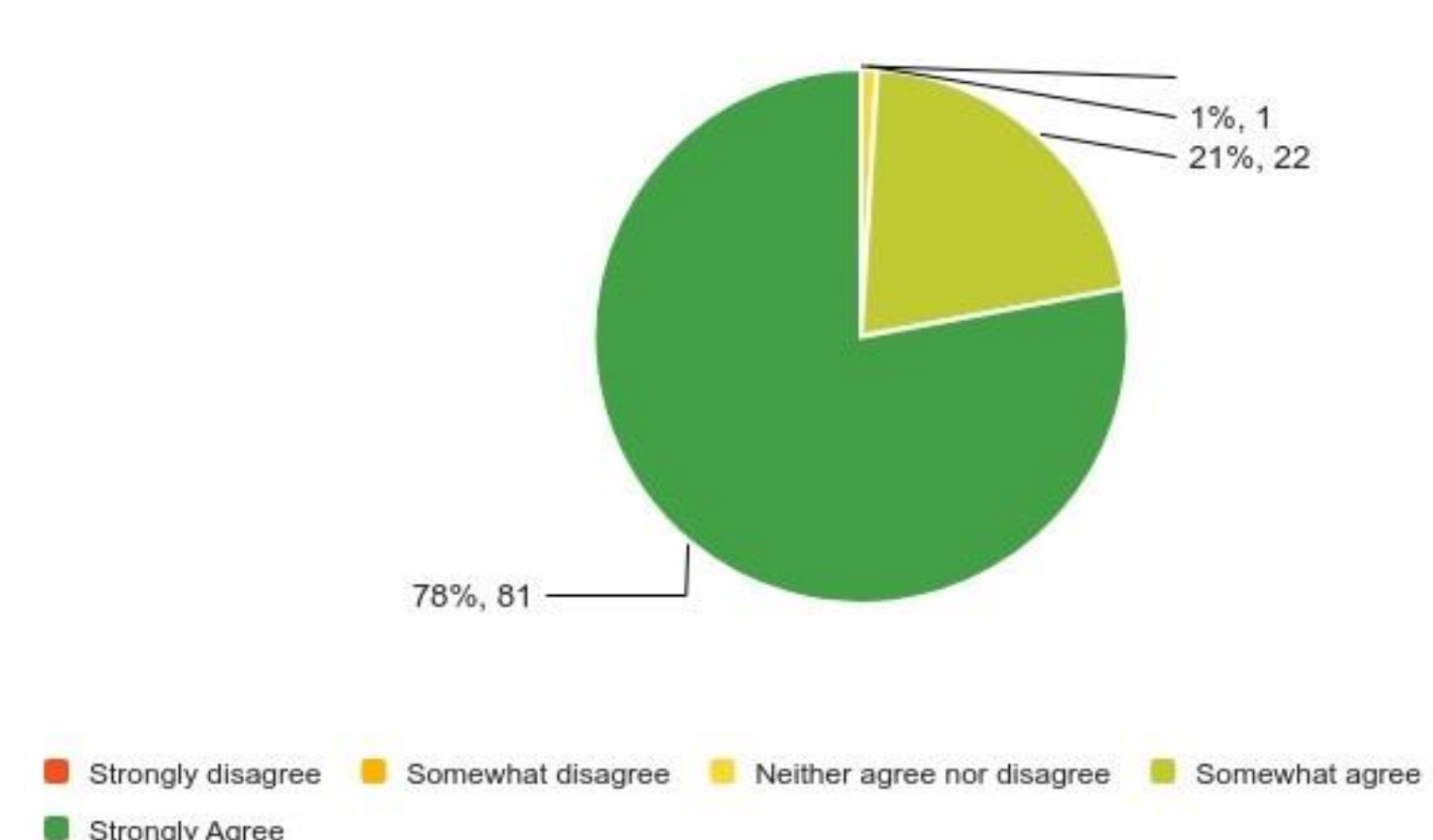
Q5 - I feel more confident than before the class in my knowledge on oesophageal varices



Q6 - I feel more confident than before the class on my basic understanding of cirrhosis



Q7 - I feel more confident than before the class on the role of endoscopy in cirrhosis patients



Q2 - Please share your gender identity

