

Practical skills workshops for Physician Associates (PA): the final piece of the workforce puzzle?

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Introduction: PAs are now an integral part to the NHS workforce, however their role and responsibilities require further definition. And whilst acquiring competencies in bedside procedures like cannulation and Arterial blood gas are unequivocal, the ability to perform Lumbar punctures, Ascitic or Pleural aspirations may be of increasing importance.

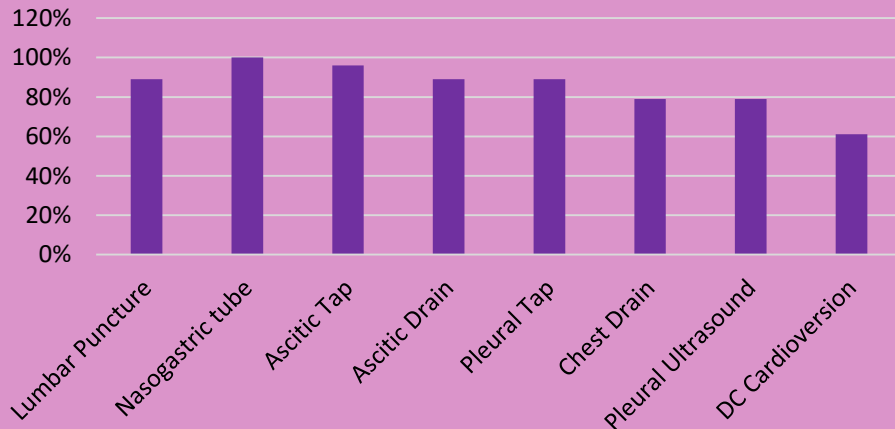
We created and delivered practical skills workshops for PAs with the aim to improve confidence/competencies in these procedures. We assessed their prior exposure of practical skills and the expectations of PA/PA students with a view to start mapping the curriculum and learning needs.



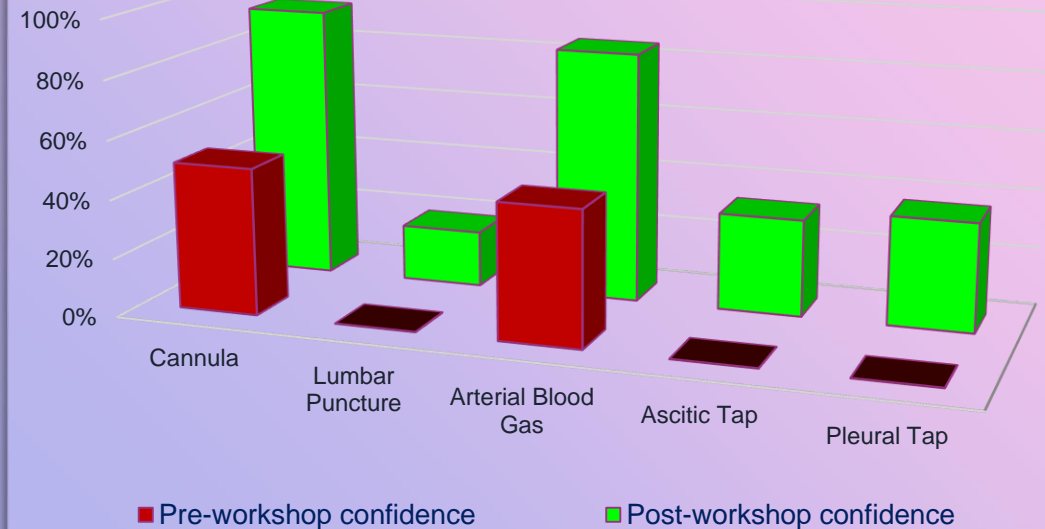
Results

- 50% attendees were PA Students
- 50% qualified PAs
- 89% had access to simulated training
- 21% had previously attended some simulation/skills lab training

PA's expectation of performing practical procedures



Pre- & Post-workshop Surveys



Discussion: All the PAs acknowledged the expectation to perform bedside procedures however none had received any formal training or teaching. Initially, 0% felt confident in independently performing any of these procedures; post-workshop, there was a significant increase in confidence levels in all procedures: e.g. 0% were confident in ascitic aspiration, post-workshop 67% felt comfortable to perform the procedure under supervision and 33% felt independently confident.

Conclusion: Practical skills workshops have a pivotal role in helping PAs attain the requisite competencies, and presents an opportunity to explore newer models/ pathways of delivery of patient care and potentially improve both the patient journey and safety.