

# Navigating Critical Moments: A Medical Emergencies Teaching Series for Nurses on Surgical Wards

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## Introduction/Background

Surgical patients are vulnerable to postoperative acute medical emergencies requiring prompt recognition and intervention to improve outcomes. Nurses are often the first line response to medical emergencies, but research shows that they do not always feel comfortable recognising or escalating their concerns [1].

## Aims and Objectives

Improve healthcare professionals' knowledge and competencies in recognising, treating, and appropriately escalating medical emergencies through a structured teaching series targeted at nursing and allied health professionals in an acute orthopaedic ward.

## Methodology

A teaching series employing case-based interactive discussions addressing key emergencies (cardiac arrest, NEWS (National Early Warning Score) emergencies, delirium, hypo- and hyperglycaemia, falls, haemorrhage, sepsis, seizures, and acute withdrawal). Sessions led by resident doctors following the daily nursing huddle, with pre- and post-feedback forms to assess knowledge, confidence and quality of teaching.

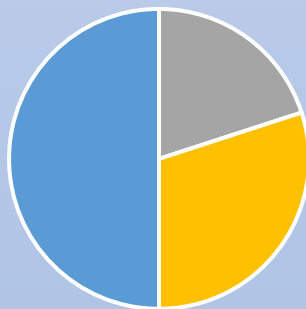
## Results

Confidence in recognising NEWS scoring parameters rose from 60% to 100% with overall confidence in managing emergencies rising from 60% to 80% (figure 1a, 1b)

Confidence in Recognising Clinical Deterioration (Before) (Figure 1a)



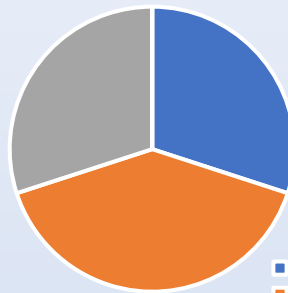
Confidence in Recognising Clinical Deterioration (After) (Figure 1b)



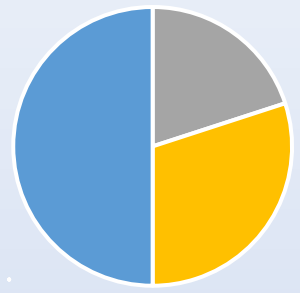
■ Extremely not confident  
■ Somewhat not confident  
■ Neutral  
■ Somewhat confident  
■ Extremely confident

0% of participants rated their confidence in the initial management of seizures as somewhat or extremely confident prior to the teaching session (figure 2a). Post teaching analysis found that 80% of participants felt somewhat confident or extremely confident in managing seizures (figure 2b).

Confidence in the Management of Seizures (Before) (Figure 2a)



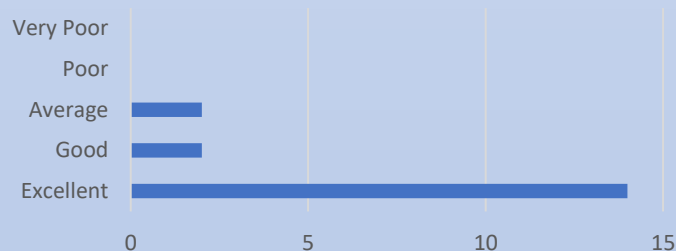
Confidence in the Management of Seizures (After) (Figure 2b)



■ Extremely not confident  
■ Somewhat not confident  
■ Neutral  
■ Somewhat confident  
■ Extremely confident

A session on hypo-hyperglycaemia found that 67% of professionals were somewhat or extremely confident in managing emergencies. This number rose to 100% after the session. Overall participants showed significant improvement in understanding of emergency protocols, trust guidelines, early recognition of emergencies, and the initiation of role-appropriate management following each session. Sessions attracted a diverse group of healthcare professionals and consistently received positive feedback (90% rated good or excellent) (figure 3).

Overall Quality of Teaching Series (Figure 3)



## Conclusion

The teaching series increases confidence and effectively equips healthcare providers with essential competencies in managing medical emergencies in a ward environment leading to improved patient safety and outcomes.

## References

[1] Vardnell W, Fry M, Elliot D. Emergency Nurses' Perceptions and Experiences in Managing Acute Pain in Critically Ill Adult Patients: A Qualitative Study. 10/05/2025. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.17033>