

Improving Research Opportunities for Paediatric Trainees

C. O’ Regan¹, L. Crossman¹, J. Burgess- Shannon¹

C. Battersby¹⁻², C. Gale¹⁻², I. Andrzejewska¹⁻²

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust¹
Imperial College Healthcare Trust²

Introduction

Background:

A recent national survey shows only 45% of paediatric consultants participate in research¹. With this in mind, we designed a survey for paediatric trainees working in a Neonatal Unit, to assess what their experience and perceived barriers were to research.

Our survey demonstrated 62% of respondents (n=13) did not feel confident that they had the research skills expected for their stage of training. However, 77% were interested in gaining further research experience. Our survey highlighted several barriers to participation, including time constraints and a lack of apparent opportunities, consistent with qualitative research findings². This highlights a need for initiatives to support trainees in pursuing research opportunities, so that we develop a workforce with robust research skills.

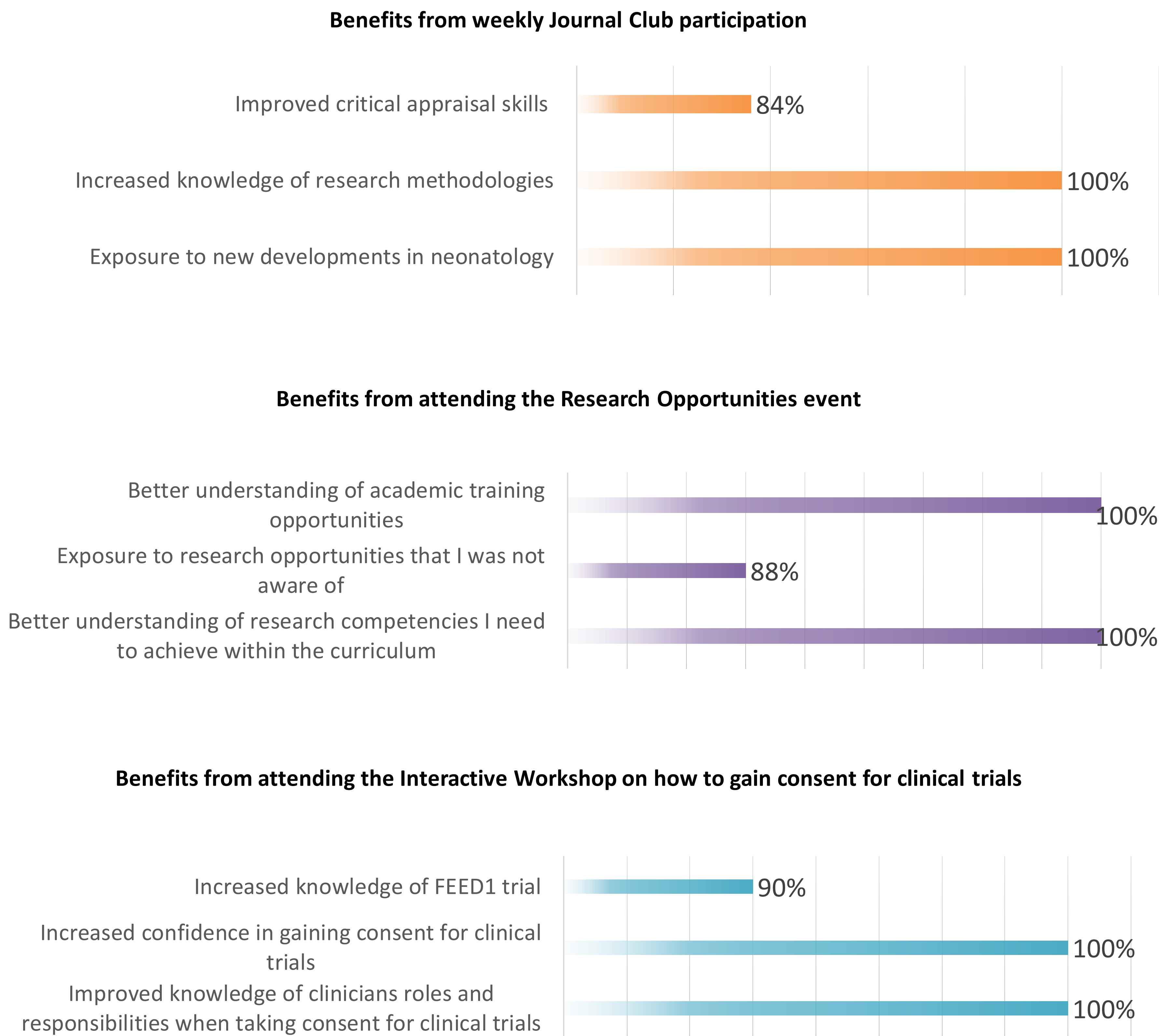
Methods: Multiple events were held over a 6-month period including weekly Journal Clubs, a ‘Research Opportunities Event’ exploring options for developing research skills and an ‘Simulation based Interactive Research Workshop’ for practical training on trial recruitment and consent. A research newsletter was developed to communicate opportunities and engage staff with studies running within the department.

Trainees completed a survey before and after events to evaluate their efficacy.

Results

100% of respondents (n=12) attended Journal Club, 67% attended the ‘Research Opportunities Event’ and 75% attended the ‘Interactive Workshop’. Feedback was very positive as highlighted in Figure 1. 100% of trainees who attended Journal Club felt their knowledge of research methods had improved. 100% of trainees who attended the ‘Research Opportunities Event’ had a better understanding of the research curriculum. 100% of trainees who attended the ‘Interactive Workshop’ felt more confident obtaining consent for clinical trials.

Figure 1:

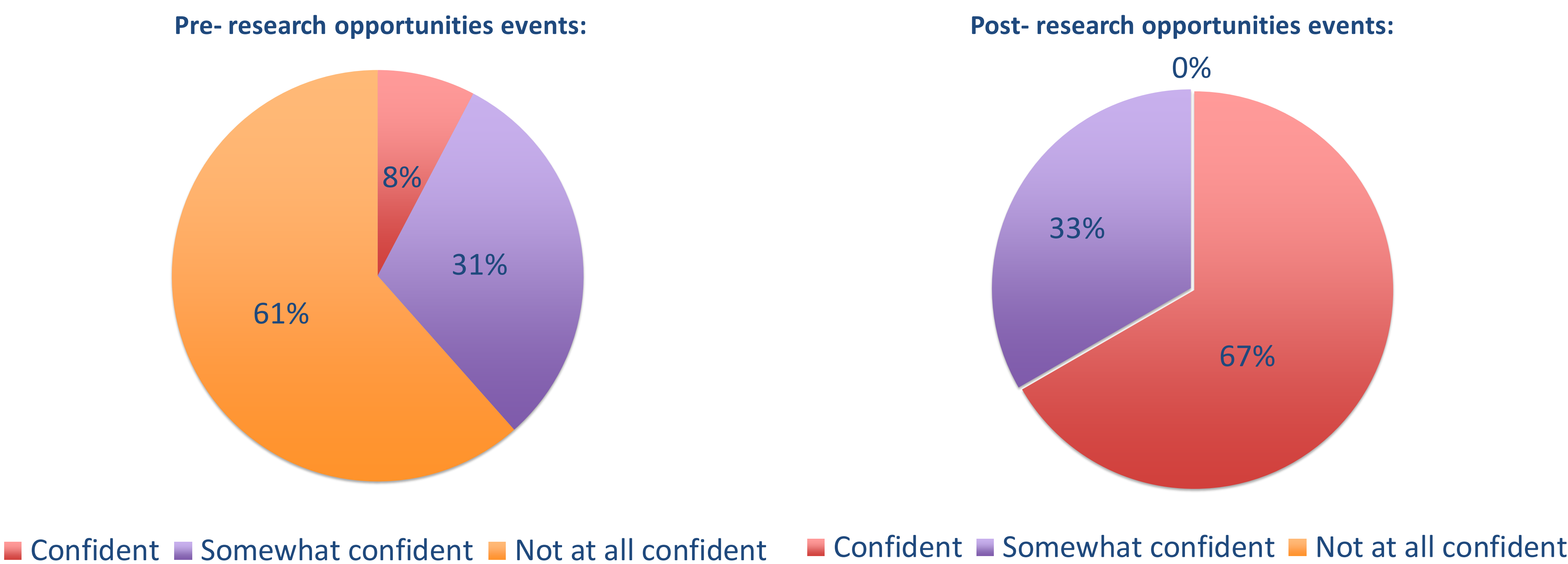


Results

Following our multi-faceted research programme, 100% of trainees felt ‘confident’ or ‘somewhat confident’ they had the research skills expected for their stage of training, in contrast to 38% prior to attendance, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2:

How confident trainees felt that they had the research skills required to meet the curriculum needs for their stage of training, pre and post research opportunities events.



Conclusions

Our findings suggest a disconnect between trainees’ interest in research and their previous exposure to opportunities that allow them to develop this interest through their training. Research orientated teaching and interactive workshops were well received and improved confidence levels amongst paediatric trainees. The sessions were easy to implement and could viably run on a routine basis, to enhance understanding and participation in research, which is essential for maintaining an environment fostering research and innovation.



Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

References:
1. Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, 2015. Participation in child health research: A survey of the paediatric Workforce 2015 [online] Available at: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/participation-child-health-research-survey-health-professionals> [Accessed on 29/01/2021].
2. Mustafa, K et al. 2018. Understanding barriers for research involvement among paediatric trainees: a mixed methods study. BMC Medical Education 18: 165. doi: 10.1186/s12909-018-1263-6. Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, 2015. Participation in child health research: A survey of the paediatric Workforce 2015 [online] Available at: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/participation-child-health-research-survey-health-professionals> [Accessed on 29/01/2021].