Maintaining a continuous programme of support and education for hospital transfusion laboratory professionals during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic

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Introduction

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic created a significant challenge for laboratories to maintain an on-going programme of training, education and continuing professional development for professionals.

Hence, the ***Biomedical Scientist Empowerment & Discussion Group*** was created by the NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) Patient Blood Management team (PBM England) as a free, safe space for education and discussion for laboratory professionals with an interest in blood transfusion.

Meeting monthly, a subject matter expert delivers a lecture before opening the session for questions and discussion between the delegates.

Methods

We invited the delegates who attended the sixth meeting of the group to respond to two key questions. 72 delegates responded:

1. Thinking about your usual workplace, has blood transfusion training time been reduced or difficult to facilitate during the last 12 months, due to the pandemic?
2. Do you think that the education provided during these sessions enables you to provide a better service to patients and service users?

Conclusion

Almost two thirds of biomedical scientists working in hospital transfusion laboratories felt that training time had been reduced or difficult to facilitate due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Delegates felt that the education provided during these sessions enabled them to provide a better a service to patients and service users.

By operating remotely, we eliminated social distancing related limitations for over 1750 registrants and were able to facilitate professionals who may not have otherwise been able to attend in-person due to time and travel constraints.

This simple, widely accessible, low-cost, and successful model might be considered by other organisations and pathology specialisms.

Delegate Experience

Subject Area	Delegate Rating (/5)
Human factors in transfusion	4.7
Antibody identification	4.8
A closer look at anti-G	4.8
Appropriate use of O D neg RBC	4.5
Specific requirements for transfusion	4.6
Antibody identification	4.7
Gender in blood transfusion	4.9

Results

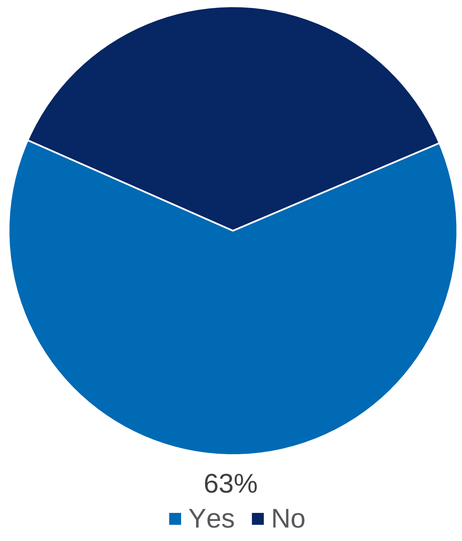


Figure 1: Distribution of responses to question 1

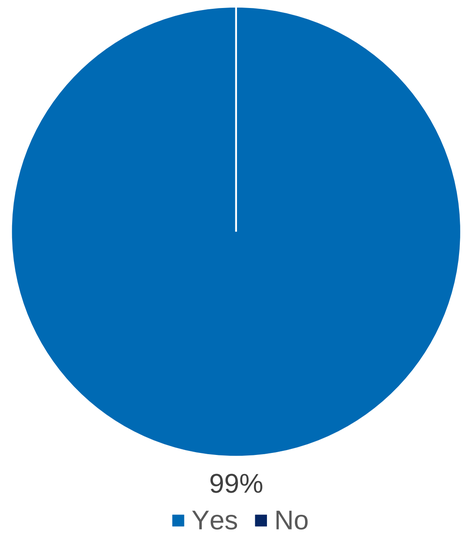
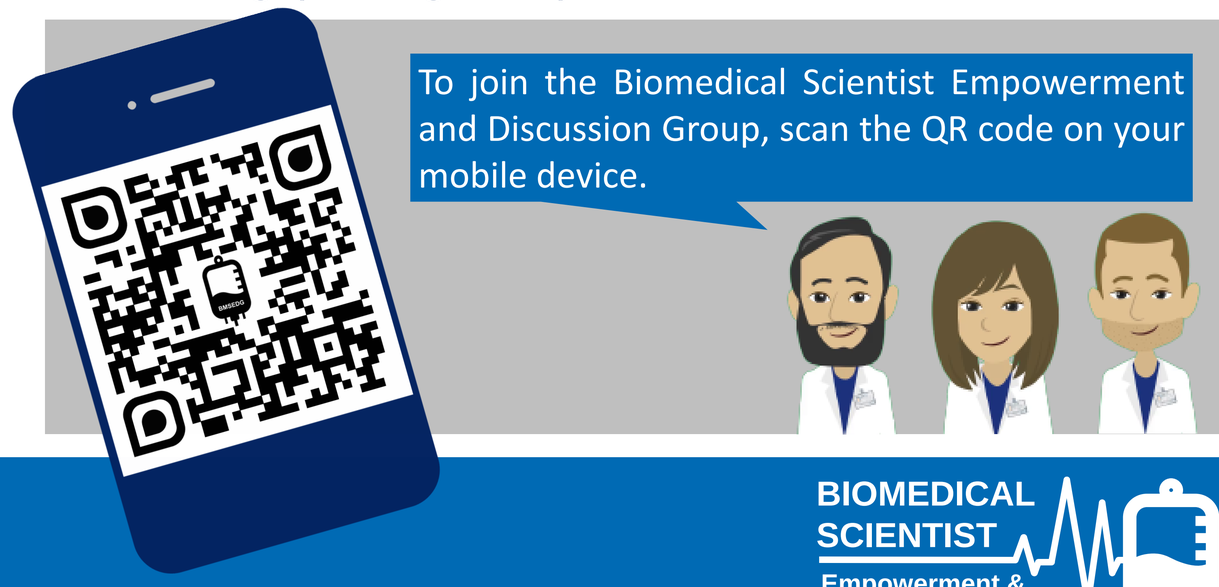


Figure 2: Distribution of responses to question 2

63% (n=45) respondents felt that blood transfusion training time had been reduced or difficult to facilitate, due to the pandemic. 37% (n=27) respondents felt that blood transfusion training time had not been reduced nor difficult to facilitate (see figure 1). 99% (n=71) respondents felt that the education provided during these sessions enabled them to provide a better service to patients and service-users. 1 respondent abstained from answering (see figure 2).



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BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST Empowerment & Discussion Group