



Improving Foundation Doctors' understanding of the application process for CT1 Core/ACCS anaesthetics training

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INTRODUCTION

The number of applications to Core and ACCS anaesthetic training continues to rise each year. In the August recruitment round 2023, there were 2604 applications for 545 posts resulting in a competition ratio of 4.78. The application process spans several months with multiple stages including; submission of an online application form, Multi Specialty Recruitment Examination (MSRA) and a two-part panel interview ^(1,2).

Considering the tough competition and prolonged application process faced by applicants, we designed an education course to help navigate Foundation Doctors through this process and aid their preparation. Anaesthetic Interview Preparation and Exam Excellence course (AIPEX) is a five part course held during the application window (November 2023-March 2024), promoting interest in Anaesthesia as a speciality and guiding applicants through each stage of the application process.

AIMS

1. To improve participants' confidence in having a successful application to Core / ACCS anaesthetic training.
2. To increase participants' understanding of the overall application process, MSRA exam and anaesthetic interview.
3. To give advice, provide tools and resources on how to prepare for each part of the application process.
4. To provide interview practice and facilitate a 'mock interview'.

METHOD

The AIPEX course was advertised with an electronic poster sent to foundation doctors via trust education departments. 46 foundation doctors from 8 different hospitals across different foundation deaneries, signed up to the course.

Five teaching sessions were delivered virtually using Microsoft Teams. Each session focused on a different aspect of the application process and carefully mirrored the recruitment timeline as detailed in *Figure 1*.

Feedback was collected prior to the course in addition to before and after each teaching session. This helped to guide the development of future sessions as well as collect objective evidence to assess the achievement of the aforementioned aims.

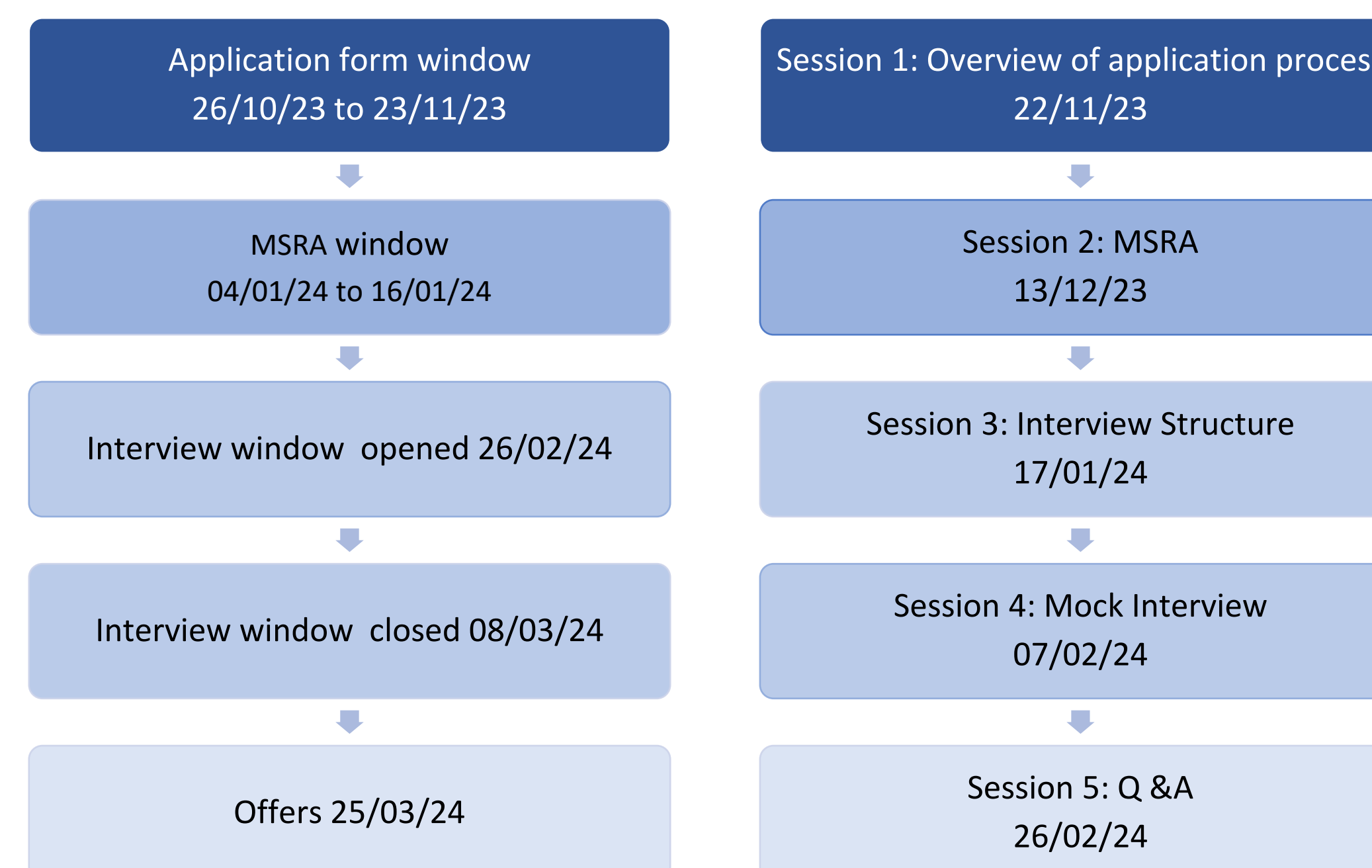


Figure 1

To what extent do you feel you will be successful with your application? (Likert scale 1-10)

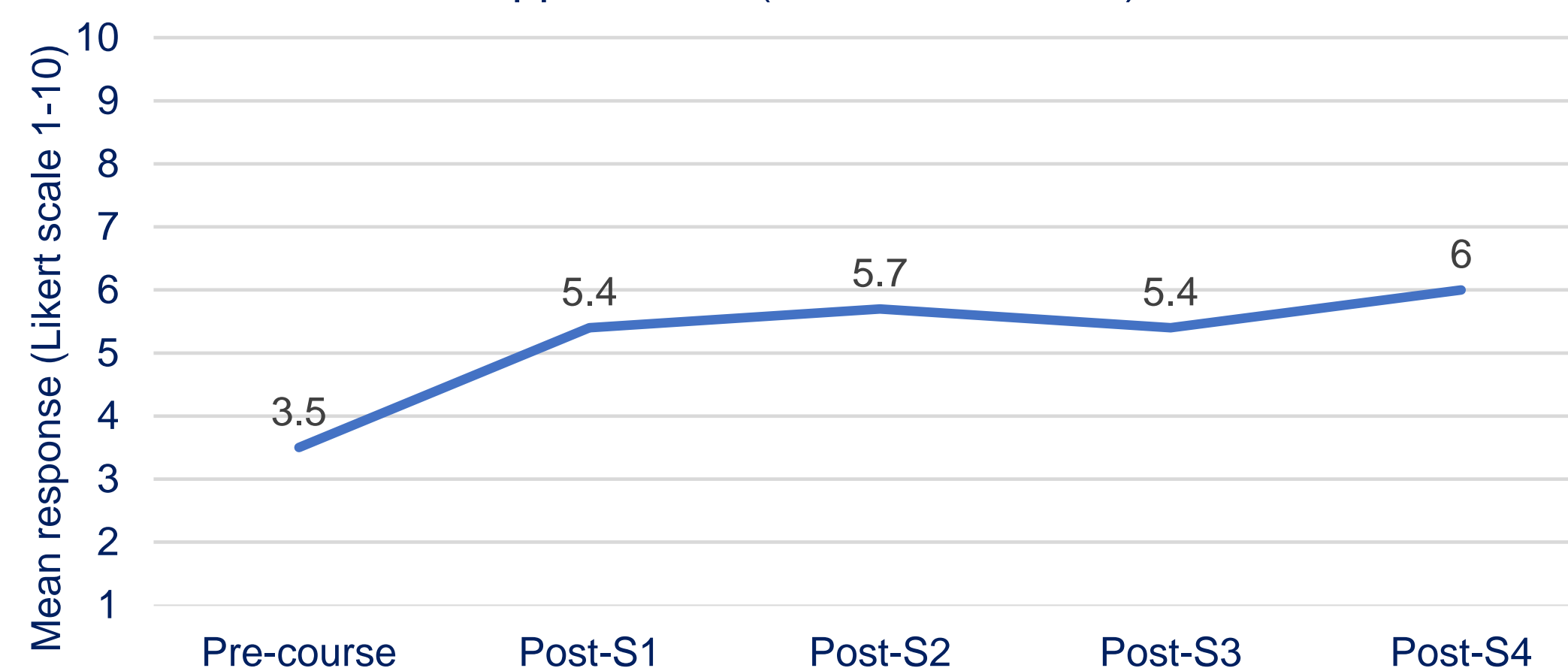


Figure 2

Comparison of understanding of overall application process, MSRA and interview pre vs post session

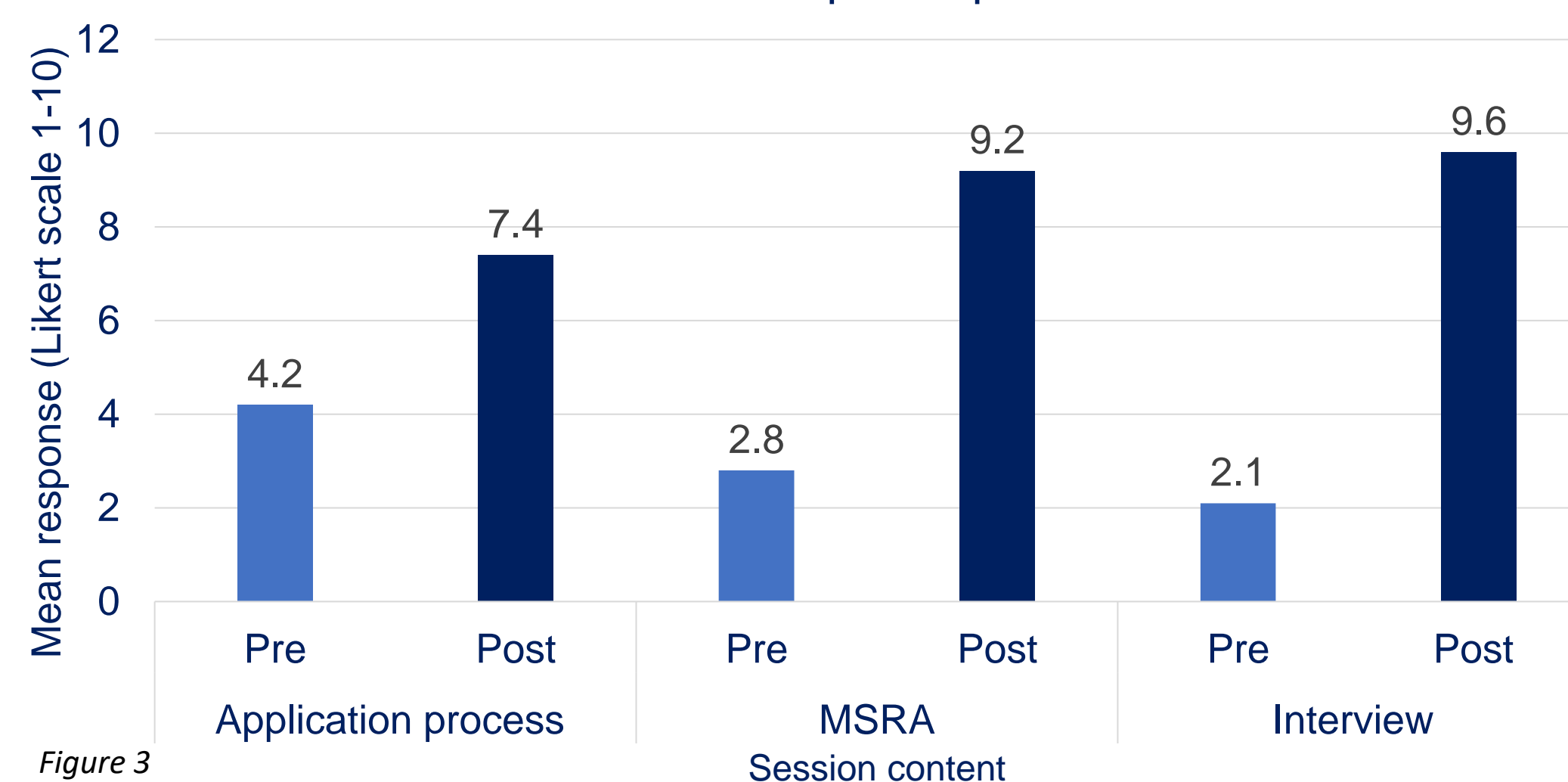


Figure 3

Has your hospital trust provided any specific guidance on Anaesthetic / ACCS applications?

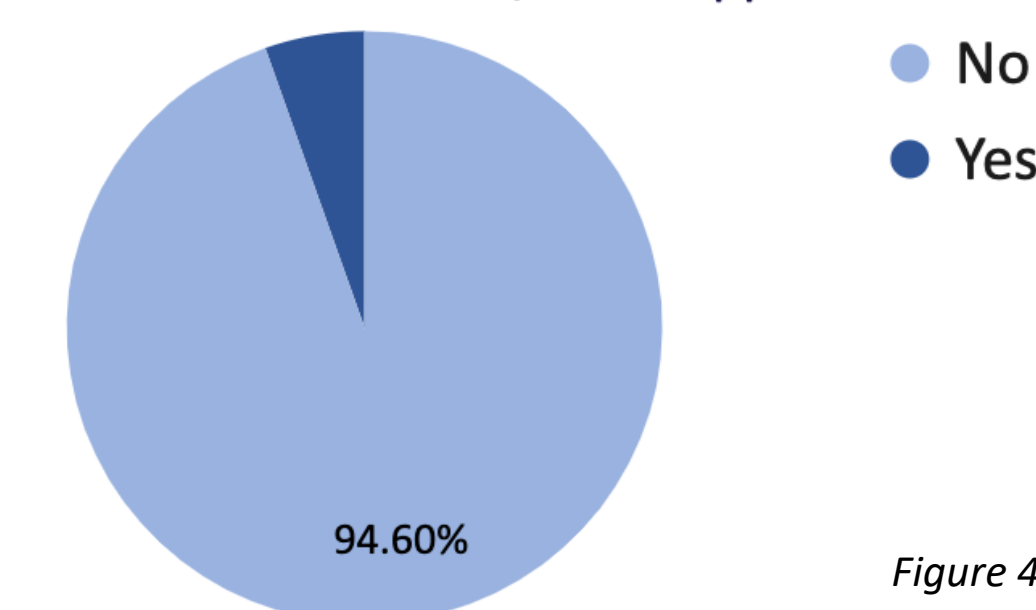


Figure 4

RESULTS

94.6% of participants reported that they had no specific local teaching or guidance for Core / ACCS applications (*Figure 4*).

Confidence in having a successful application on a Likert scale of 1-10 improved from a mean of 3.5 pre-course to 6 post-course, as demonstrated in *Figure 2*.

Figure 3 demonstrates improvement in the applicants' understanding (Likert 1-10) of each stage of the application process (overall, MSRA and interview) from pre vs post the corresponding teaching session.

CONCLUSIONS

Applying to anaesthetic training is becoming increasingly more competitive and the application process is challenging. Although there are other preparation courses, many of these are focused on either the MSRA or the interview rather than the process as a whole and often come with an expensive price tag. Additionally, foundation doctors do not appear to receive any local guidance on the application process.

This course therefore bridges this gap and is unique in both the delivery style of the course- covering the entirety of the application process, carefully following the application timeline and that it is free of charge. Applicant feedback provided objective evidence that this course led to improved understanding of each component of the application process in addition to improving applicant confidence in having a successful application.

Going forward, we aim to gather data on the number of successful applications for AIPEX applicants and will use our feedback to make necessary changes and continue to run the course for future application rounds.

REFERENCES

1. Health Education England (2023) Competition ratios for the 2023 recruitment round, Health Education England . Available at: <https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/competition-ratios/2023-competition-ratios> (Accessed: 24 April 2024).
2. Anaesthetic National Recruitment Office (ANRO) CT1 Anaesthetics & ACCS Anaesthetics Recruitment, ANRO. Available at: <https://anro.wm.hee.nhs.uk/ct1> (Accessed: 24 April 2024).