

# A Survey of Non Consultant Hospital Doctors Knowledge, Awareness and Attitude Towards Delirium

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## Background

Delirium is a common problem in all healthcare settings with a prevalence of 20%-30% on medical hospital wards, 10%-50% on surgical wards and under 20% in long term care<sup>1</sup>.

Delirium is strongly linked with higher mortality rates both during hospitalisation and post discharge<sup>2</sup>.

Delirium treatment has historically been focused on identifying and addressing underlying causes, but increasingly delirium is being considered as an entity that warrants therapeutic consideration in its own right<sup>3</sup>.

**Objectives :** The aim of this survey was to assess delirium awareness, knowledge, and attitude, among University Limerick Hospital (UHL) NCHDs through a cross-sectional survey.

## Methods

A cross-sectional survey of (n=116) Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors, was undertaken in November 2018, to investigate doctors awareness of delirium, knowledge, and attitude.

## Results :

- Ninety-two responses (79.3%) were received. 47 (51%) worked in medicine, 18 (20%) in surgery, 17 (18%) in psychiatry, 5 (5%) in Emergency Department, 2 (2%) in anaesthesia and 3(3%) in others.
- 59 (64%) of the doctors reported that they had managed delirium in in the past month.
- 44 (44.5%) stated that they have good working knowledge of the delirium diagnostic criteria .
- Only 12 (13%) stated that they used delirium assessment tools-such as (CAM) in their assessment and only (24%) stated that they routinely undertake serial cognitive assessments in patients with increasing risk of delirium.
- Thirteen (17%) of the general NCHDs and 6 (35%) of the psychiatry NCHDs stated that they have had adequate delirium training.
- 29 (38%) of the general NCHDs and 9 (53%) the psychiatry NCHDs, felt confident that they could manage delirium patient.
- Only 18 (20 %) and 41 (45%) of the doctors sated that they were aware of the HSE and the NICE guidelines on delirium management, respectively.

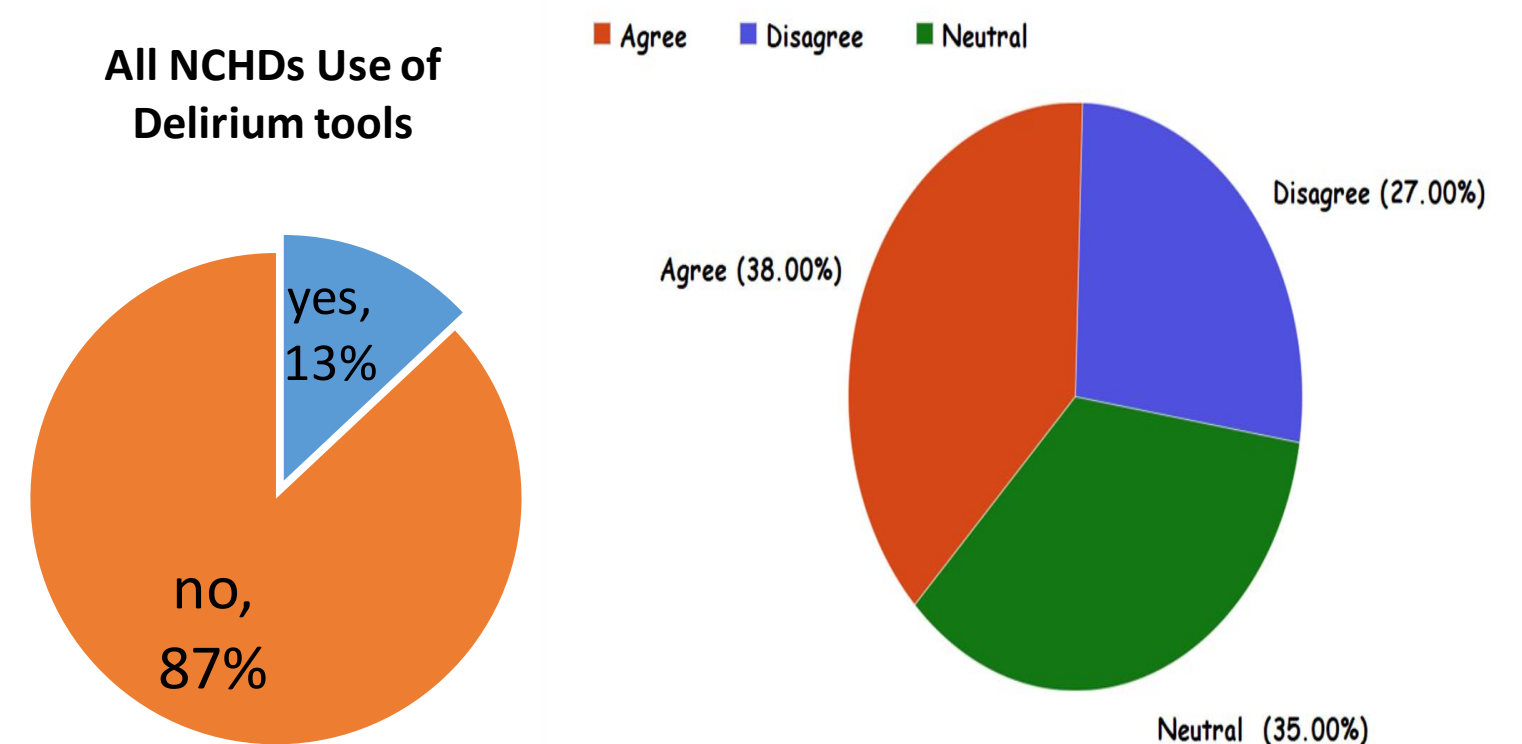


## Discussion

- Only (17%) of the general NCHD and (35 %) of the psychiatric NCHD, agreed that they have adequate delirium training.
- The delirium Assessment was only used by (13%) of the NCHDs.
- Only (38%) of the general NCHDs and (53%) of the psychiatric NCHDs, reported they were confident that they could manage delirium patient.
- Overall, these findings suggest that a lack of knowledge may be a significant barrier to improving delirium detection rates and, as a result, early and appropriate treatment initiation in the hospital, though other, more complex factors are likely to be at play.

## Conclusion

- This survey results suggests that there are significant gaps in (UHL) NCHDs knowledge of delirium and emphasize the importance of doctors' delirium training to improve knowledge of this relevant unmet educational needs.



## References

1. NICE, 2010.2. Caplan, 2011.3. Meagher et al., 2013.