

Evaluation of Medicines Information Training for Pharmacy Technicians

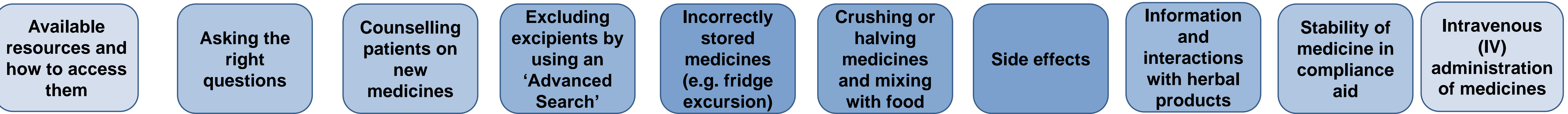
**Authors: Nicola Dickson and Vinod Patel, Midlands Medicines Information Centre.
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust**

Introduction

Medicines Information (MI) delivers quarterly training sessions to pharmacy technicians at the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust. The 3.5 hour training session covers various clinical topics (figure 1), questions to ask, demonstration of available resources and practical workshop scenarios for each topic. The sessions are interactive and participants are asked to bring a laptop to find answers for the scenarios to increase engagement, retention of knowledge and simulate a ‘real world’ environment.

The objective was to evaluate the impact of the delivered training on pharmacy technician’s awareness of resources, self-confidence in answering questions about medicines and perceived benefits of the training.

Figure 1: Topics Covered



Method

Between January and October 2024, a total of 22 pharmacy technicians attended across three training sessions.

All participants completed an anonymous questionnaire before and after the session. They were asked to rate their confidence on a scale of 1 to 10 – where 1 indicates ‘Not confident at all’ and 10 being ‘Extremely confident’ – in their ability to ask the right questions, use available resources and provide clinical advice related to eight specific clinical topics (Figure 1).

Constructive feedback was also collected in the post-training questionnaire. Data on perceived benefits, such as improvements to the pharmaceutical care given to patients and time to answer questions, were also collected.

Results

- Increased confidence was seen in knowing what resources are available and how to access them, with the mean score rising from 5/10 to 9/10 after training (Figure 2).
- Participants also reported increased confidence in knowing what questions to ask, with the mean score increasing from 6/10 to 8/10 after training (Figure 2).
- Confidence in using resources and providing advice improved across the eight clinical topics (Figure 2).
- When the scores for the eight clinical topics were combined, the overall pre-assessment confidence score was 4/10, which increased to 8/10 after the training.
- All pharmacy technicians thought the training would improve the pharmaceutical care they give patients and all reported that it would help them answer questions more quickly.
- All pharmacy technicians stated that they would recommend the training to colleagues.
- The training was well received (Figure 3). Nine participants explicitly mentioned the interactive scenario questions as one of the most positive aspects of the session in their open comments.
- Two participants thought more practical examples could be included.

Figure 3: Selected Feedback Comments

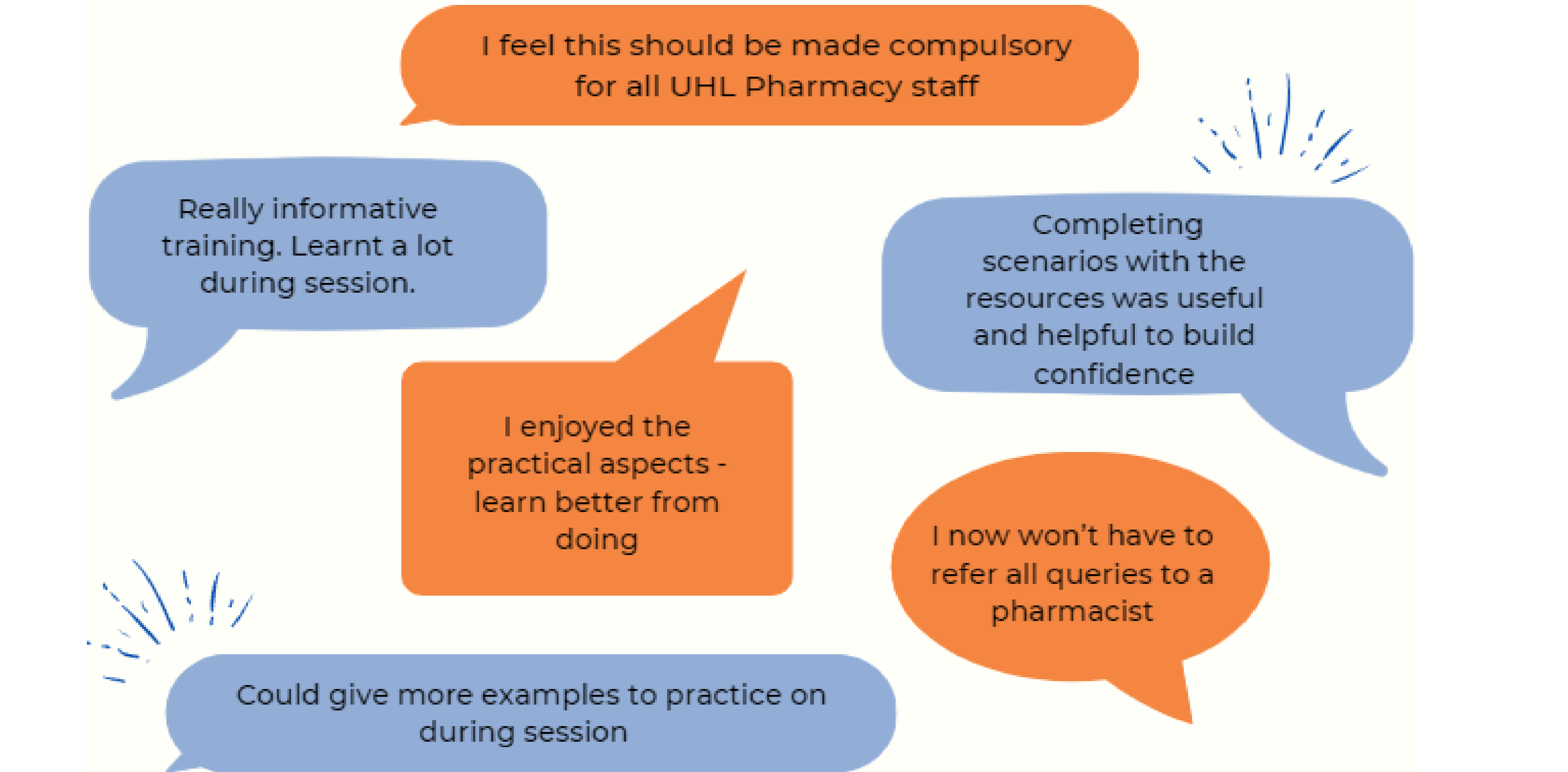


Figure 2: Pre and Post Training Confidence Scores (n=22)

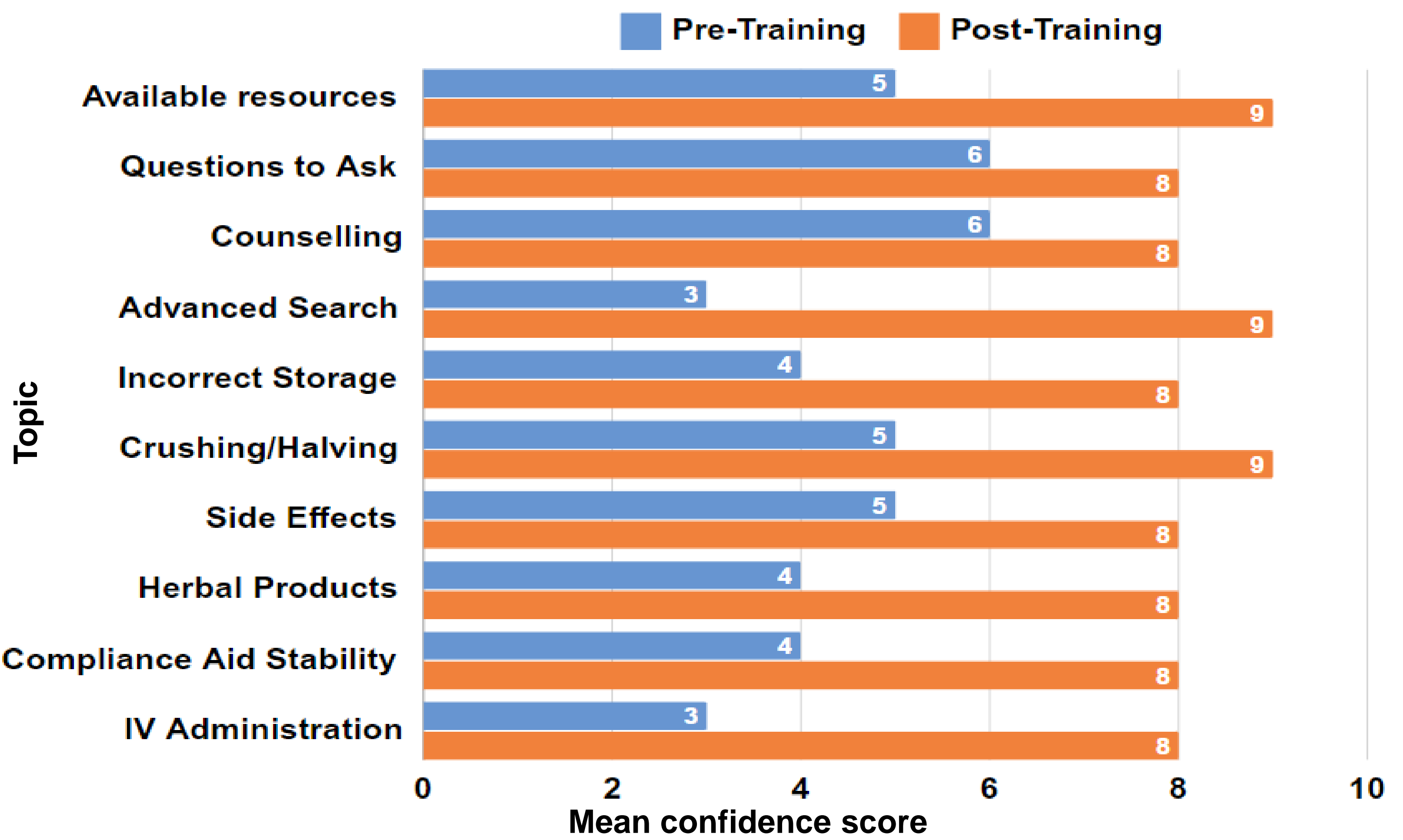


Figure 1: Pre and post training confidence scores using 10-point scale confidence scale, 1 being ‘not confident at all’ and 10 being ‘very confident’

Conclusion

The results show that training provided by MI increases pharmacy technicians’ knowledge of resources and reported confidence in answering questions about medicines.

The training was well received, perceived benefits reported by all participants included improved patient care and efficiency.

Learning through practical, interactive scenarios was noted as a positive aspect of the training.

Discussion

Interactive training provided by MI tailored to pharmacy technicians could lead to more autonomous and efficient working with reduced need to refer to a pharmacist.

Pharmacy technicians working in other acute NHS Trusts or other clinical areas like primary care or Mental Health Trusts would benefit from similar training, which can be tailored accordingly.

Upskilling the workforce is vital for the future, as roles of pharmacy technicians become expanded and diverse.

Limitations/Challenges

- Relatively small sample size.
- Workload pressures may reduce the uptake of training by pharmacy technicians.
- Collecting follow-up data on how the training was applied to ongoing practice would have been beneficial to assess whether the changes in knowledge and confidence are impactful.
- The interactive nature of the sessions relies on access to a computer or laptop. Due to the availability within the pharmacy department, pharmacy technicians were not always able to bring a laptop each.