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## Introduction

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) can have a detrimental impact on sexual wellbeing.

Studies have shown on average over 50% of patient with MS report symptoms of sexual dysfunction (Mohammadi *et al.*, 2013)

NHS Tayside established an MS pelvic health clinic in 2018 to help address these issues. This was run by a specialist doctor in Sexual and Reproductive health.

A study undertaken in 2021 looked at staff perceptions of this service (Jarvis *et al.*, 2022).

Since this survey, the staff composition working with the MS service has changed. This new piece of work has reevaluated how confident staff feel asking patients about their sexual wellbeing.

## Method

Staff involved in the MS service within Tayside were sent an electronic questionnaire consisting of 6 questions. Questions asked can be seen via QR code in figure 1. Results were anonymous.

8 staff members were sent the questionnaire, this comprised the whole MS clinical department.



Figure 1: QR code link to MS pelvic health clinic questionnaire.

## Results and Analysis

- 7 of the 8 staff total completed the feedback questionnaire.
- 100% of staff surveyed have referred patients to the MS pelvic health clinic
- All staff rated their confidence in dealing with patients sexual difficulties as a 3 out of 5 or higher as seen in figure 2.

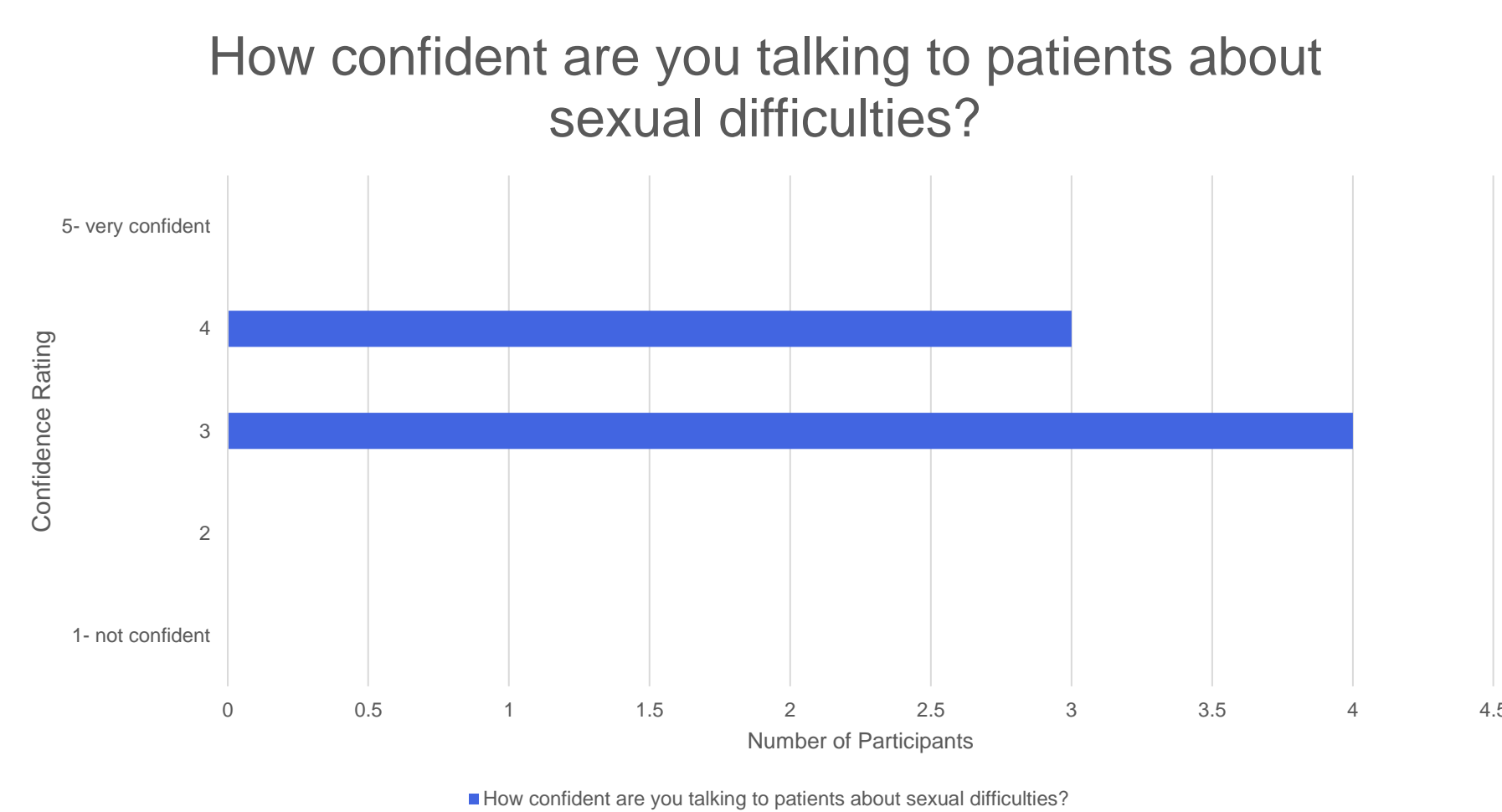


Figure 2: this graph shows the distribution of staff confidence levels with talking about sexual problems.

- 100% of staff felt that having additional resources about sexual well-being would be beneficial to their clinic.

- Having access to the MS pelvic health clinic made 86% of staff more likely to include sexual well-being questions in their consultation, as shown in figure 3.

Has having access to the MS pelvic health clinic made you more likely to include sexual well-being questions in your consultation?

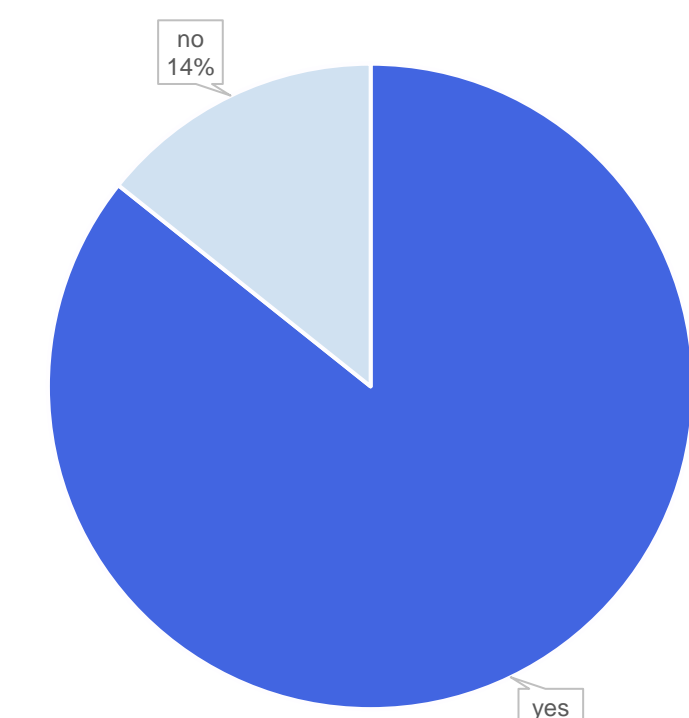


Figure 3: graph showing effects of having access to the MS pelvic health clinic has had on the questions they ask patients.

- Staff were welcomed to leave personal comments in a free text box, these have been summarised:

**Essential clinic**  
**Improved confidence**  
**Patient centred care**  
**Excellent service**

## Discussion

This piece of work shows the staff find huge benefit from having access to the MS Pelvic Health Clinic. All staff within the survey have made use of the clinic.

86% of staff felt having access to the clinic made them more likely to include sexual well-being questions in their routine consultations.

37.5% of staff rated their confidence levels when asking about sexual problems as 4 out of 5. This statistic shows there is still room for improvement to increase all staff confidence and knowledge levels.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Sexual well-being enquiry should be a routine part of MS care

Tayside MS clinicians see a huge benefit of having access to a specialised MS pelvic health clinic

Other MS services may wish to consider establishing a similar service

Creation of a sex and MS resource list would be beneficial for patients and staff

## References

- Mohammadi, K. *et al.* (2013) 'Determinants of sexual dysfunction in women with multiple sclerosis', *BMC Neurology*. BioMed Central, 13(1), pp. 1–6. doi: 10.1186/1471-2377-13-83/TABLES/4.
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- Sexual dysfunction in MS: how we can help as Health Professionals | MS Trust* (no date). Available at: <https://mstrust.org.uk/health-professionals-blog/sexual-dysfunction-ms-how-we-can-help-health-professionals> (Accessed: 30 January 2024).

Many thanks to the staff within the Tayside MS service for taking part in this study.