

# The importance and value of listening to frontline staff when implementing a new dementia pain assessment tool

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## Background:

Pain is often undetected and underrated in people with Dementia (Sampson et al 2005). In 2011 following reports and observations of patients with Dementia within the Trust, it was found that patients were often receiving inadequate and at times no analgesia at all.

## Method:

In 2011 a Dementia pain assessment tool was developed in Bolton NHS FT.

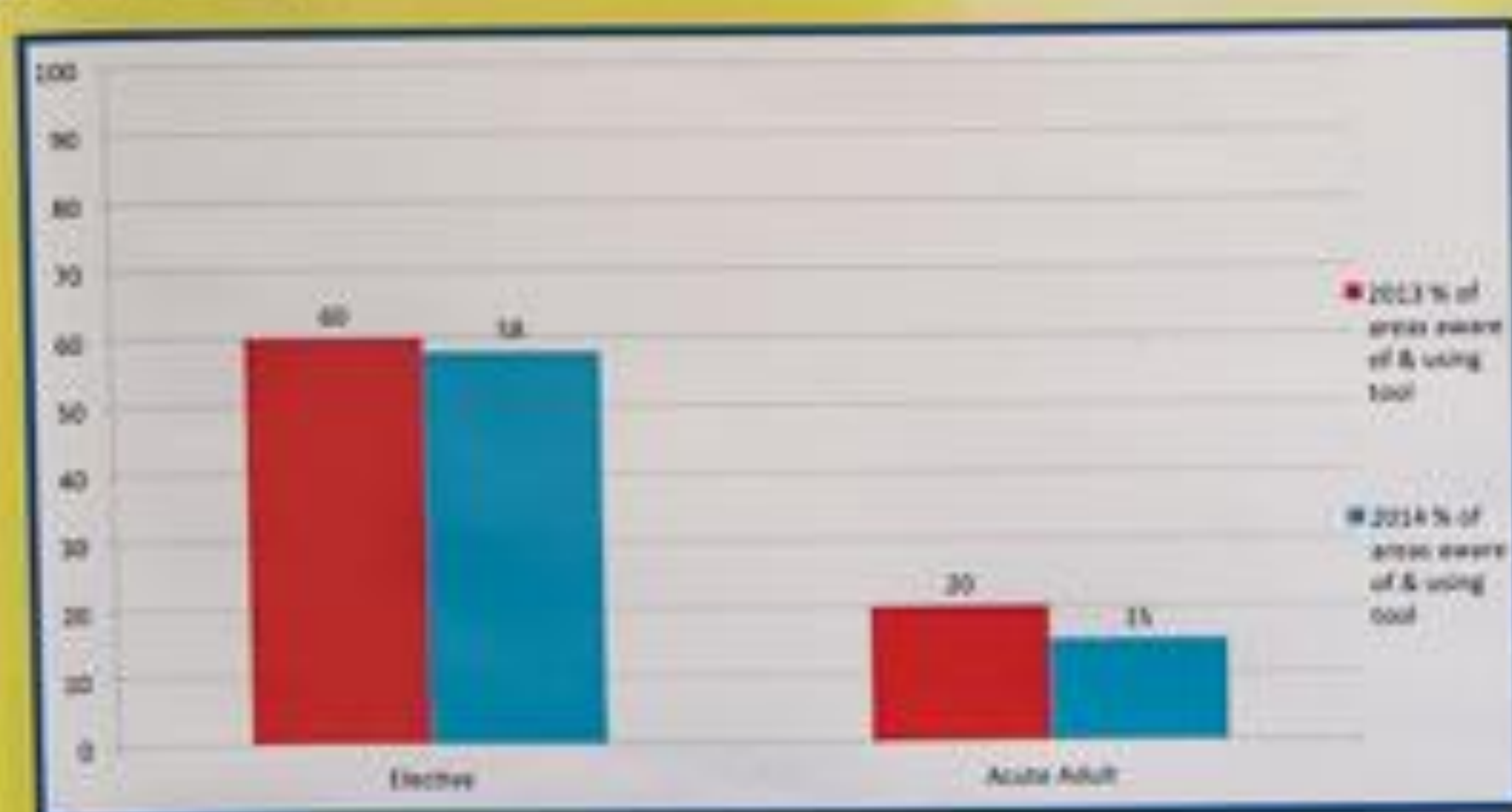
## Re-designed Pain assessment tool:

This tool was recognised at Chester Pain Symposium in 2013 and many other Trusts showed interest in using the Tool for their dementia patients. Unfortunately, regular audits at Bolton NHS Foundation Trust showed that usage throughout the Trust was poor.

## Audit results:



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## Improvement Strategy:

Due to low usage a full re-launch took place midway through 2014 but in 2015 a re-audit found that the uptake of the tool remained poor. Staff in all areas were asked to provide feedback as to why the tool wasn't being used.



Following discussions with numerous frontline staff a task and finish group was formed comprising of both hospital and community staff, Pain Link, Nurses, Consultant Anaesthetist, Recovery Staff, Orthogeriatrician, Acute Pain Team and Community Groups. The tool was completely re-designed. It was colour coded with a much simpler pain scale to fit into the EWS which could be used, not only for people with Dementia but also people with learning difficulties or language barriers. This was launched Trustwide in September 2015.

## Conclusion:

The pain service listened to constructive criticism from frontline staff and this made the tool fit for purpose and much more user friendly. Due to this, audits now show that this new tool has become embedded in our daily practice and is being used Trust wide making a huge impact on patient care and improving the quality of care for our dementia patients. People living with dementia deserve to be listened to, no matter how they choose to express their pain (Regan et al 2015)

## References:

Regan A, Colling J, Tapley M. Pain Management: a fundamental component of dementia care. *Nursing Standard*. 2015 Oct 28; 30(39):43-50

Sampson E, White N, Lord K, Laurent B, Vickerstaff, Scott S, Jones A. Pain, agitation and behavioral problems in people with dementia admitted to general hospital wards: a longitudinal cohort study. *Pain* 2015 Apr; 156(4): 675-683. Published on line 2015 January 28.

