

Greater than the sum of its parts: a pan-region virtual education network formed during the COVID-19 pandemic

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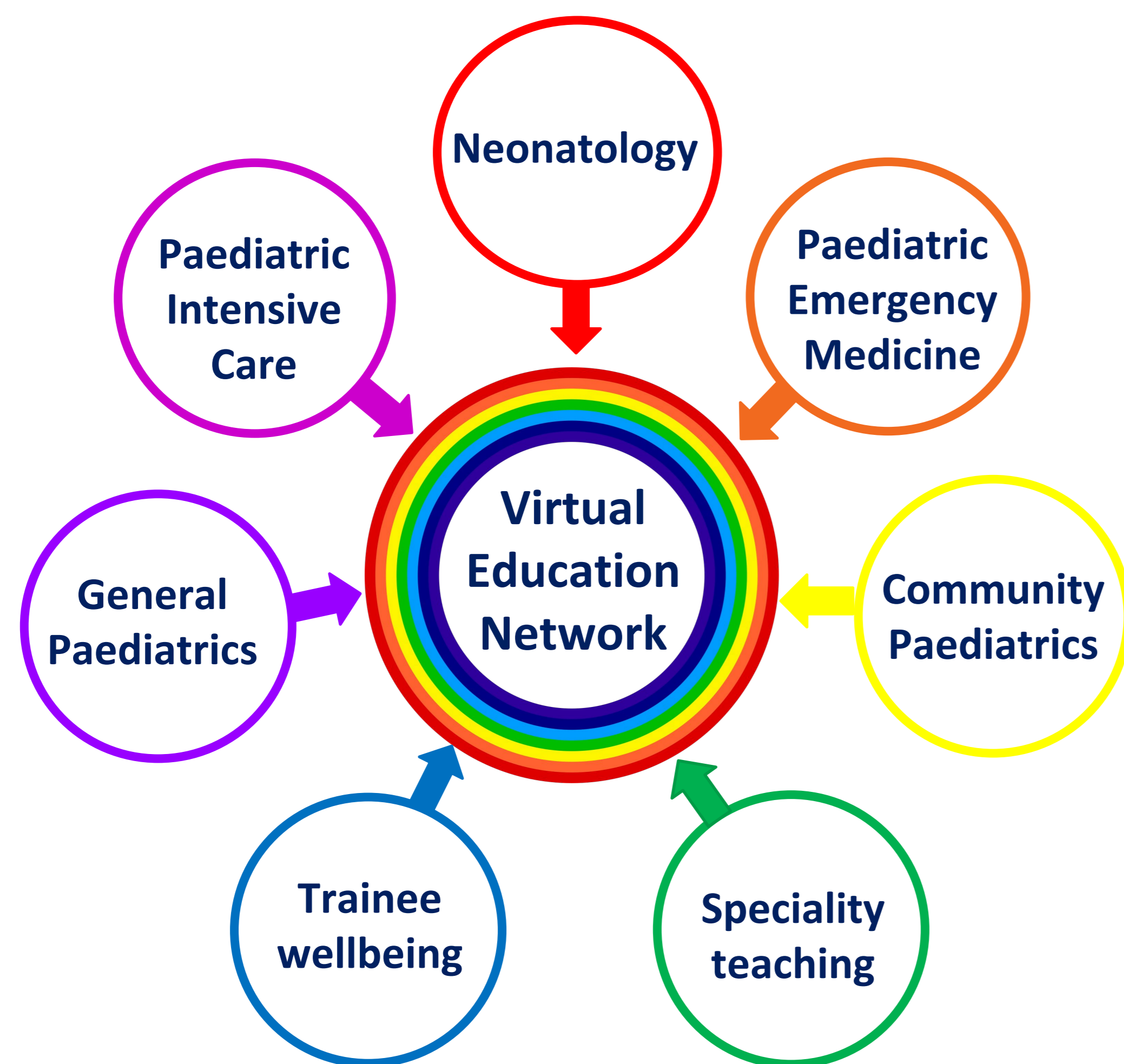
Background & aims

All formal regional Paediatric teaching was cancelled following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Departmental teaching was also paused in some units, due to redeployment, rota re-design, working from home and social distancing. Recognising the potential impact of this on trainees, and keen to facilitate an equitable training experience for all, we formed a collaborative pan-region virtual teaching network, so that all trainees had access to regular educational opportunities.

Method

1 Departments who had established virtual teaching early (mostly via Zoom) were offered the opportunity to share their teaching with all trainees in the region.

2 A wide range of departments generously contributed educational opportunities.



3 A virtual teaching schedule was uploaded to the trainee website every week.

Mon 18 th May	Tues 19 th May	Wed 20 th May	Thurs 21 st May	Fri 22 nd May
	General Paediatrics 13:30-14:30 Developmental impairment (Speaker) Zoom link	Neonatal teaching 13:00-14:00 Hypoxic ischaemic encephalopathy (Speaker) Zoom link	BCH PICU Respiratory Teaching 10:00-12:30 See document on previous page Zoom Link	Paediatric Emergency Medicine Teaching 10:00-11:00 Crashing Neonate UVC Insertion in the ED (Speaker) Zoom link
	Neonatal teaching 14:00-15:00 Neonatal Seizures (Speaker) Zoom link	General Paediatrics 13:30-14:00 Medical causes of psychosis (Speaker) Zoom link	Neonatal teaching 12:00-13:00 Cranial USS (Speaker) Zoom link	BCH Speciality Teaching 13:00-13:45 Nephrology (Speaker) Zoom link
		Trainee Support Network WMPaeds Quiz Night! 20:00-21:00 (Hosts) Zoom link		Neonatal teaching 13:00-14:00 Floppy baby (Speaker) Zoom link

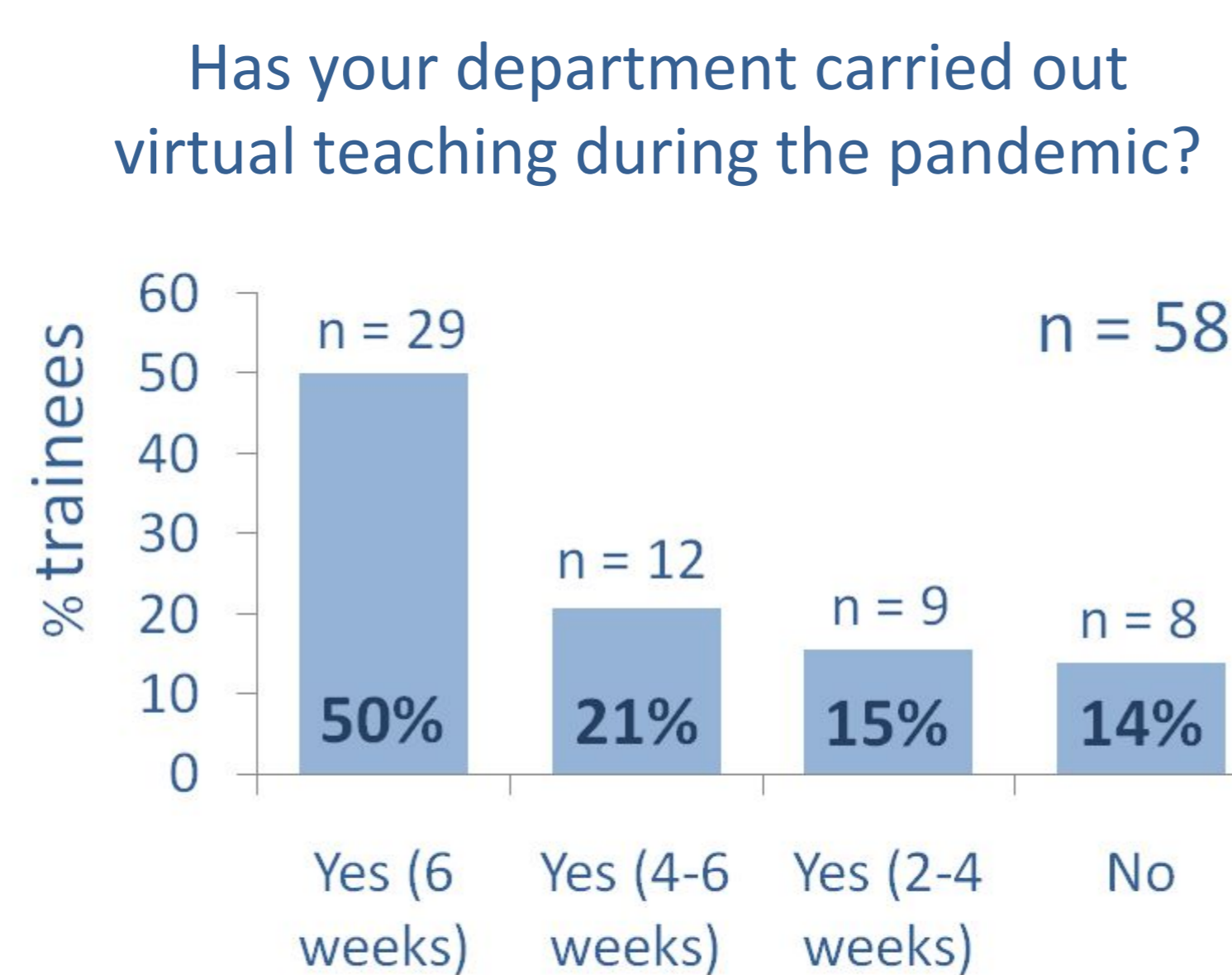
There were 100 events shared between April – September 2020.

4 A brief survey (via SurveyMonkey) was used to seek feedback from trainees (June/ July 2020).

Results

50% (n = 29) of trainees reported that teaching within their department had continued throughout the pandemic.

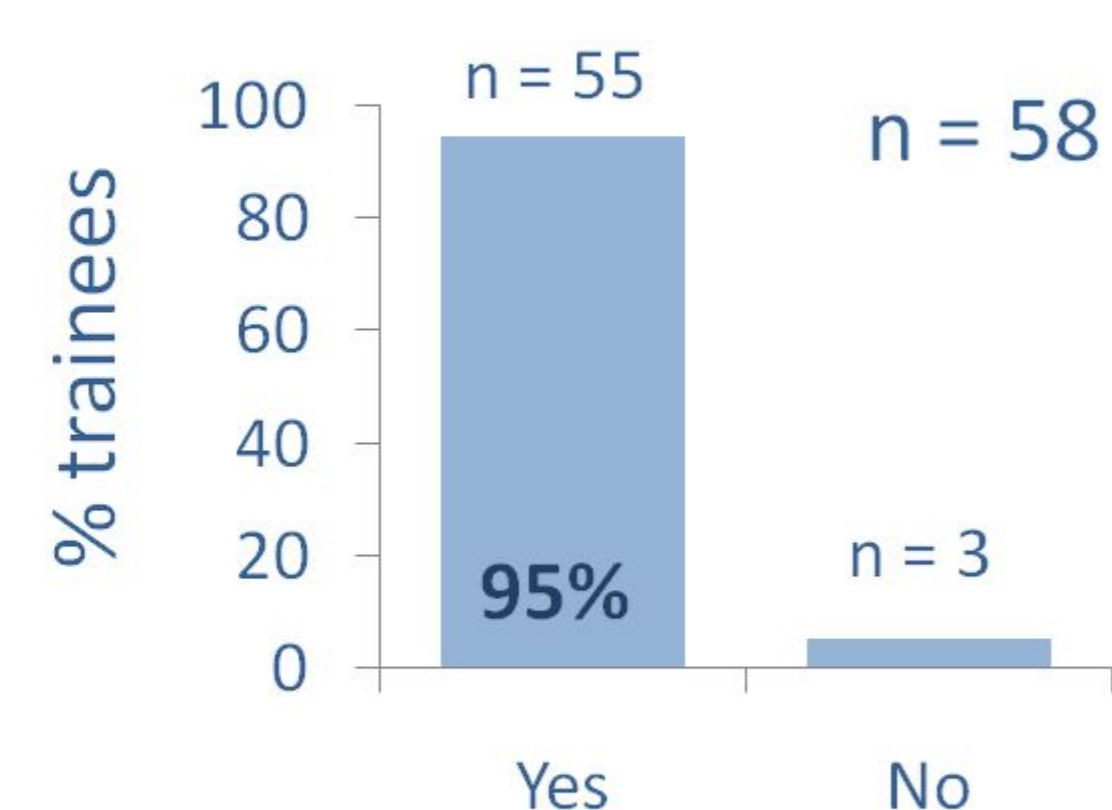
However, 15% (n = 9) reported it had only been available for 2-4 weeks, and 14% (n = 8) reported no local teaching.



95% (n = 55) of trainees felt that the virtual education network should continue.

5% (n = 3) of trainees felt it should stop, stating reasons like "if it is in addition to regional days, it might feel like you can never have a day off!"

Should the virtual education network continue once formal regional teaching restarts?



Virtual teaching has been fantastic and has lessened the impact of COVID-19 on our training.

The standard of virtual teaching has been incredible.

...has had a positive impact on my learning.

Inclusive to all trainees: a fair system.

Main benefit is for trainees in smaller units where departmental teaching was reduced or completely stopped during the pandemic – the shared learning is invaluable for those trainees.

Varied topics; interactive sessions have been great!

Good social interaction for shielding trainees.

The virtual teaching network helps to standardise the teaching that trainees receive across the region.

This has been a brilliant initiative; I hope it continues – thank you!

It's been brilliant having this resource available!

Delivering a virtual teaching session allowed me to spread key take home messages about a topic I am very passionate about, beyond my department.

Trainee comments

Conclusion

Harnessing the generosity of the departments which were able to deliver virtual teaching throughout the pandemic, we formed a pan-region collaborative network of enthusiastic Paediatric educators, enabling excellent virtual teaching opportunities to be shared with all trainees, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

This initiative reduced the impact of the pandemic on trainee education, and had a positive impact on trainee welfare during a challenging time.

However, in this new virtual learning environment, where educational opportunities are so readily available, it is important that trainees feel able to safeguard their downtime. We have therefore continued sharing virtual teaching opportunities, but have reduced the number since formal HEE regional teaching restarted.

Acknowledgments

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