

Women's Services Staff Knowledge and Attitudes towards Women with Substance Use Exposure

BACKGROUND

- Up to 5% of pregnant US women use substances (e.g., drugs, alcohol) with higher proportions of younger than older women (2010).
- Use of some substances is increasing.
- All substances can have deleterious effects on mothers/infants.
- Pregnant/breastfeeding women with substance use exposure (WSUE) face potentially poor health outcomes for themselves and their infants.
- Understanding knowledge and attitudes among staff would enhance an organization's ability to plan educational programs and offer support for WSUE.

PURPOSE

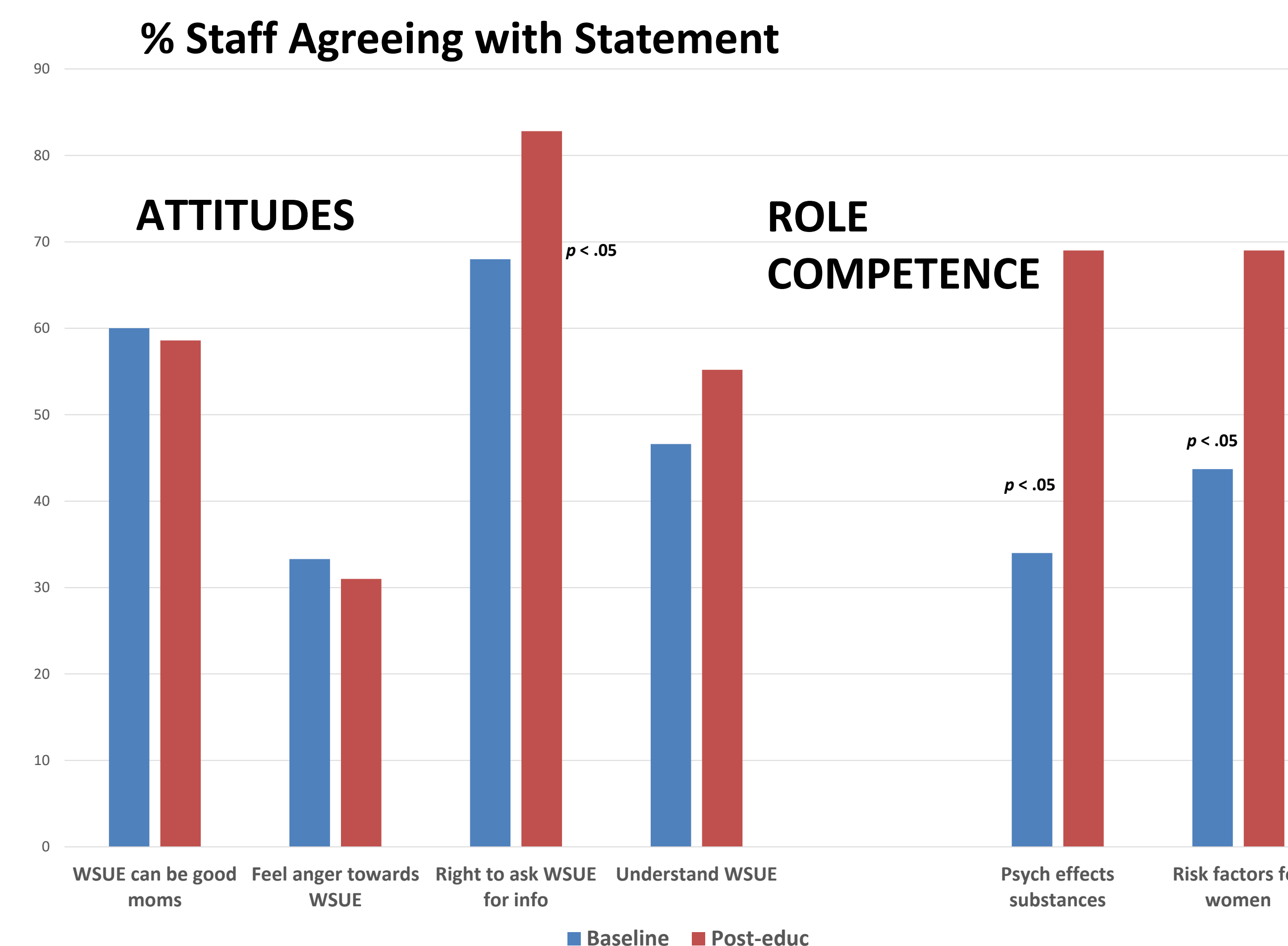
- To describe baseline knowledge and attitudes of women's health service (WHS) staff in a community hospital about substance use in maternity-infant care.
- To evaluate effects of a brief educational program.

METHODS

2019 pre-post survey study

1. 109 baseline responses from ~240 WHS staff.
2. post-education responses from 63 attendees of a non-mandatory inservice offered by psychiatric nurse experts.

Online surveys: demographics, 8 knowledge questions, 12 attitudes items, and 7 items about resource adequacy.



LEARNER OBJECTIVES Caring for Women with Substance Use Disorders

- Describe myths and realities of substance use among pregnant women.
- Distinguish difference between substance use and dependence.
- Identify early warning signs of substance use.
- Discuss communication skills/interventions for interacting with patients abusing substances.
- Examine strategies for providing a safe environment for women and their babies.

RESULTS

- Baseline respondents (~45% response rate) - all female; most - nurses working inpatient units.
- At baseline, almost all staff needed more education: talking with mothers about substance use, encouraging patients to get help, and referring mothers to resources. Post-education, significantly fewer (about 2/3) reported having these needs ($p < .05$).
- **Knowledge.** Scores 1 to 8 (best); M 6.8. Baseline scores related to years worked in WHS and at the hospital; no association between knowledge, other variables. Post-education scores 5 to 8 (M 6.9). No significant difference between mean baseline, post-education knowledge scores.
- **Attitudes.** Most attitudes positive towards WSUE. 80+% agreed that WSUE have challenging issues, that mothers can successfully recover from addiction.
- **Competence.** When asked about preparation to care for WSUE, greater proportions of post-education staff agreed that they knew enough to carry out their role, $p < .05$.

CONCLUSIONS

- Despite moderately high knowledge, WHS staff report needing to know more about caring for WSUE.
- Though knowledge did not differ after the education, the short non-mandatory inservice led to greater likelihood that staff felt comfortable asking questions about substance use as well as positively impacting role competency.