

# Triage Re-Education: Impact on Accuracy of Acuity and Care Provision

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## Background

- Triage is the process of sorting and prioritizing patients requiring medical treatment.
- A primary goal is to identify high-risk or life-threatening situations.
- Emergency Severity Index (ESI) is a validated method to assign an acuity level from Level 1 (emergent) to Level 5 (non-urgent).
- ESI handbook states competency is vital to the success and accuracy of the ESI tool & requires periodic assessment of RNs conducting triage of patients.
- The Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) latest report states only 60% accuracy in assigning acuity.

## Purpose

The aim of this evidence-based practice project was to determine congruency with triage standards and provision of initial care through use of Nurse-Initiated Orders (NIOs) before and after an educational update.

## Methods

- Audited EHR from September to December 2022 for ESI Level 4 patients who required admission to hospital to identify accuracy of assigned acuity and provision of immediate care.
- Focused on over/under assignment of ESI triage levels and implementation of Triage Standardized Procedure.
- Provided additional education on ESI in February 2023 to improve acuity accuracy and encourage use of NIOs.
- Continued audits post intervention.

## Results

- St. Joseph Hospital, Orange ECC baseline acuity accuracy of ESI Level 4 patients who required admission was 44%.
- 100% of inaccurate ESI Level 4 patients who required admission were 'under-triaged'.
- 4-month post education March to June 2023 saw increase to 60% average accuracy of identifying ESI Level 4 patients who required admission, with highest accuracy in June at 80% (see Figure 1 below).

## Discussion

- Education about audit results given to staff lead to improvement in ESI acuity accuracy.
- Audits completed at range of census levels demonstrated Provider in Triage during high census times may reduce use of NIOs.

## Implications for Practice

- Education and competency validation of New RNs, along with re-education of experienced RNs is imperative to ensure accurate ESI acuity assignment and use of NIOs.
- Periodic re-education for triage is highly encouraged to ensure standardization and congruence.

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Level 4 Acuity Accuracy

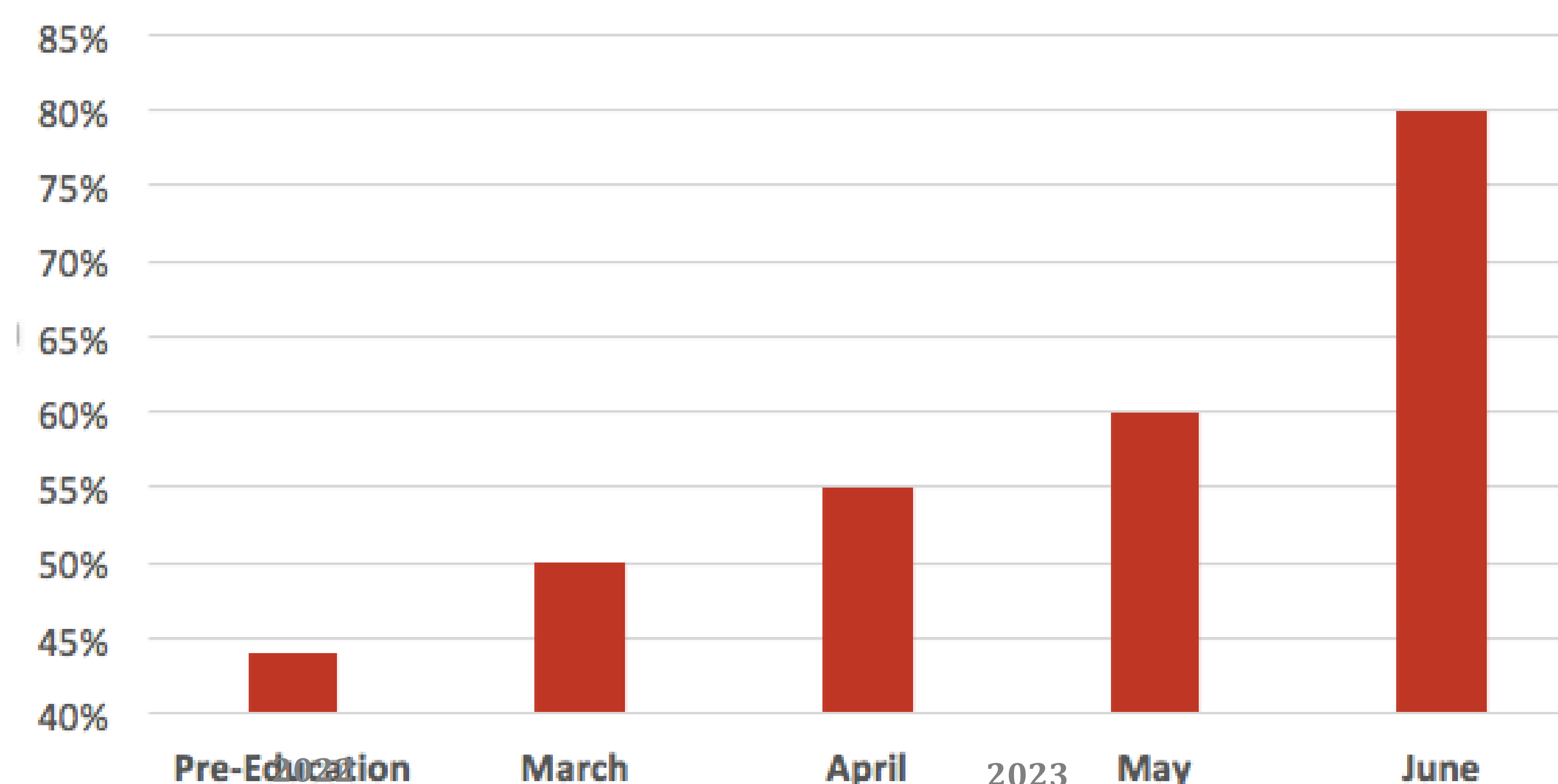


Figure 1.