where breastfeeding stopped, 57 infants had a negative antibody test (≥ 18 months); 28 are awaiting confirmatory testing and 5 LTFU before infection status was confirmed. Breastfeeding was reported to have stopped owing to maternal VL rebound in 4/90 (2 infants negative, 2 awaiting confirmatory antibody). A further 3 reported ≥ 1 detectable maternal VL during breastfeeding (1 negative antibody test, 1 in follow-up and 1 LTFU). Among 9 ongoing breastfeeding cases, there was 1 VL blip.

Challenges to data collection included access to maternal monthly test results by paediatric respondents and obtaining infant test results where care was transferred during breastfeeding.

Conclusions Numbers of supported breastfeeding cases remain low, and cases diverse regarding duration and attendance for monthly testing. Findings contribute to clinical awareness of the complexities involved in managing supported breastfeeding, including the importance (and challenges) of monthly testing to identify maternal VL blips and establish infant infection status post-breastfeeding. In recognition of the significant testing burden in the COVID-era, the BHIVA pregnancy guidelines March 2020 statement discourages supported breastfeeding. ISOSS will continue to monitor these cases, providing further insights into clinical practice and outcomes, and supporting future guidelines.

Paediatric Educators' Special Interest Group

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COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING: A QUALITATIVE STUDY TO EXPLORE STUDENT AND STAFF EXPERIENCES OF A PILOT SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS SCHOOL PLACEMENT

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Background Medical professionals report lacking the confidence and assurance necessary to meet the needs of children admitted to hospital with complex needs. This has been linked to limited knowledge, inadequate communication skills and negative attitudes. Training in these areas could improve inpatient experiences for these children.

Objectives We aimed to explore student and staff experiences of a pilot hands-on placement for pre-clinical medical students in a Special Educational Needs school. We reviewed if the project could create sustainable links between the university and community-based organisations and had the potential to improve care for children with disabilities.

Methods 23 pre-clinical intercalating BSc students spent six half days at a school for children aged five to eighteen with complex needs. Their responsibilities included teaching support, attending to personal care and supporting therapy sessions.

Students completed a pre- and post-placement open-ended questionnaire about the perceived benefits and challenges of the placement. They submitted a reflective account of their experience and we conducted semi-structured interviews with three students and two school staff members, to explore emergent themes in more depth.

Results Thematic analysis revealed three key themes:

Greater confidence working with children

Students felt more comfortable working with children and gained confidence in non-verbal communication tools following the placement. There was a notable decrease in stigma and both students and teachers felt the placement would improve the care of children with complex needs in the future.

'... this placement definitely helped my confidence with communicating with patients who may not be verbal or have a form of learning difficulty (P2)'

Increased preparedness for clinical years

Students reported increased preparedness for clinical years. Many identified increased self-confidence after the placement, as well as feeling more comfortable in unfamiliar environments and empowered to take initiative and get involved.

'Since working at the school and understanding how easy it is to communicate with all of these children...it's something I can bring forward with me (P3)'

Multi-disciplinary team working was contextualised, improving students' knowledge of concepts delivered in lectures.

Positive impact on wellbeing

Overall, students reported that the placement had a positive impact on their wellbeing. Practical roles and relationships with students and staff provided a sense of responsibility and belonging, leading students to feel more rewarded about the course.

'Actually getting involved in an organisation where you can do some good is quite important ... I definitely think it has a massively positive impact on my wellbeing (P2)'

The school viewed working with university students positively. Students and staff recommended continuing the project with further iterations guided by student and staff evaluation.

Conclusions This study has shown that a hands-on placement in a Special Educational Needs school can improve students' confidence caring for children with complex needs. The community environment allows students to undertake practical roles, providing a sense of responsibility and belonging, and helps develop transferable skills for subsequent clinical years. This may lead to improvements in care for children with disabilities by decreasing stigma and equipping future medical professionals with communication skills that are specific for those with complex needs.

Paediatric Mental Health Association

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PAEDIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH PRESENTATIONS PRIOR TO, AND DURING, THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Background The COVID-19 pandemic impact on the mental health of the population has been widely reported and paediatric mental health has not been spared (1). Assessing the impact of this on acute paediatric services is important to ensure our facilities and services can meet the needs of these young people going forward.

Objectives This retrospective study looked at changes in number, type and acuity of patients presenting with suicidal ideation and self-harm to a single district general hospital before and during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The potential