



COMPETENT OR CONFIDENT? NEONATAL AIRWAY SKILLS UNCOVERED



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INTRODUCTION

Airway management is a critical skill in neonatal care, with the British Association of Perinatal Medicine (BAPM) providing national standards to define competency levels.

This study explored discrepancies between neonatal clinicians' self-perceived competency and their actual self-assessed skills.

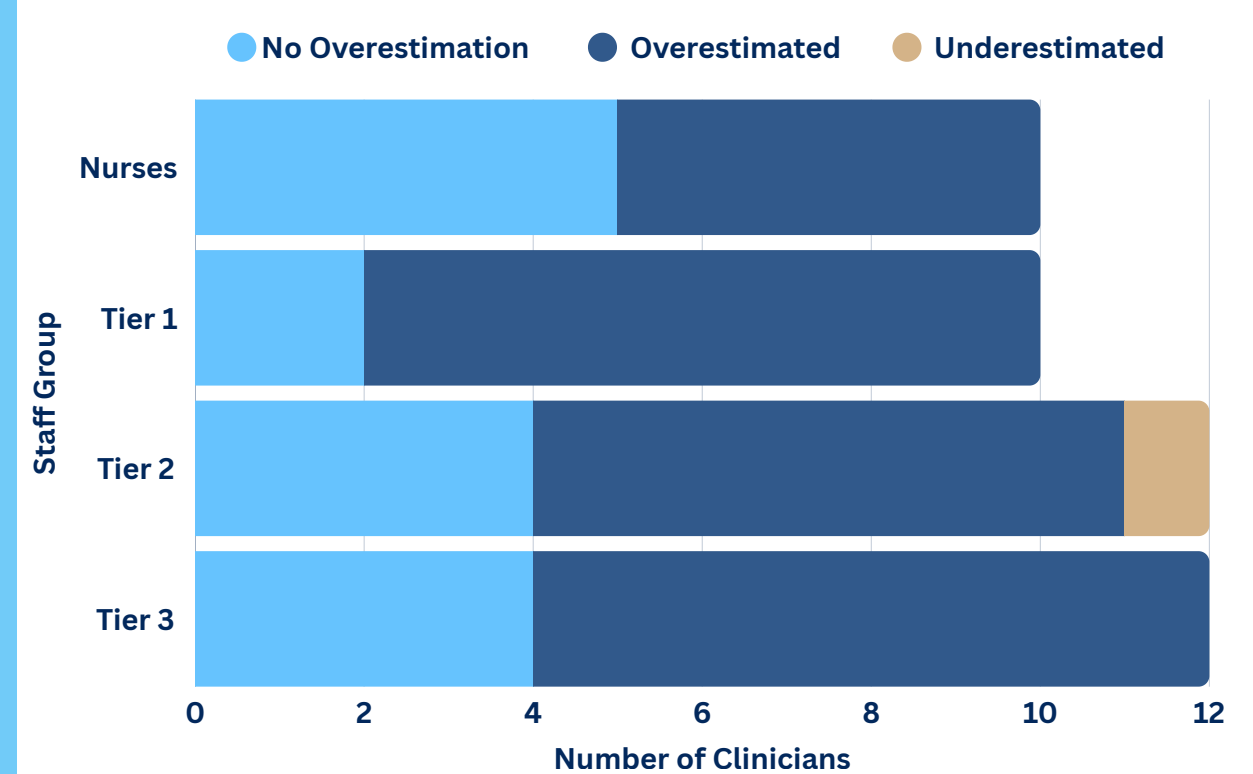
METHODOLOGY

A structured survey referencing BAPM defined competency levels (*Basic - Specialist*), was distributed to neonatal nurses and Tier 1–3 doctors. Participants reported their perceived competency level and completed a self-assessment of specific airway skills mapped to BAPM criteria.

Overestimation was defined as claiming a competency level while responding "No" to one or more required skills at that level. Data was analysed by staff group and self-assessed level.

ANALYSIS

A graph showing overestimation of neonatal clinicians' self-perceived competency compared to actual self-assessed skills.



KEY POINTS

- **64% overestimated neonatal airway skills**
- **Confidence ≠ competence**
- **Seniority does not eliminate overestimation**
- **Regular objective assessments needed**

RESULTS

Forty-four clinicians responded (10 nurses, 10 Tier 1, 12 Tier 2, 12 Tier 3 doctors). Most nurses rated themselves at Standard; Tier 1 and 2 doctors varied widely; Tier 3 doctors rated themselves Intermediate or higher.

Despite increasing confidence with seniority, **64% of respondents overestimated** their abilities - 50% of nurses, 80% of Tier 1, 58% of Tier 2, and 67% of Tier 3 doctors.

Common skill gaps included intubation, airway adjunct use and troubleshooting airway problems.

CONCLUSION

Findings reveal a substantial mismatch between self-perceived and self-assessed neonatal airway competency. While confidence increases with seniority, overestimation remains prevalent, even among experienced clinicians, posing potential risks to patient safety.

These findings highlight the need for regular, objective skills assessments and targeted training to align confidence with competence and to support compliance with BAPM standards.