



Results of Pre Project Evaluation (Staff)

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Introduction

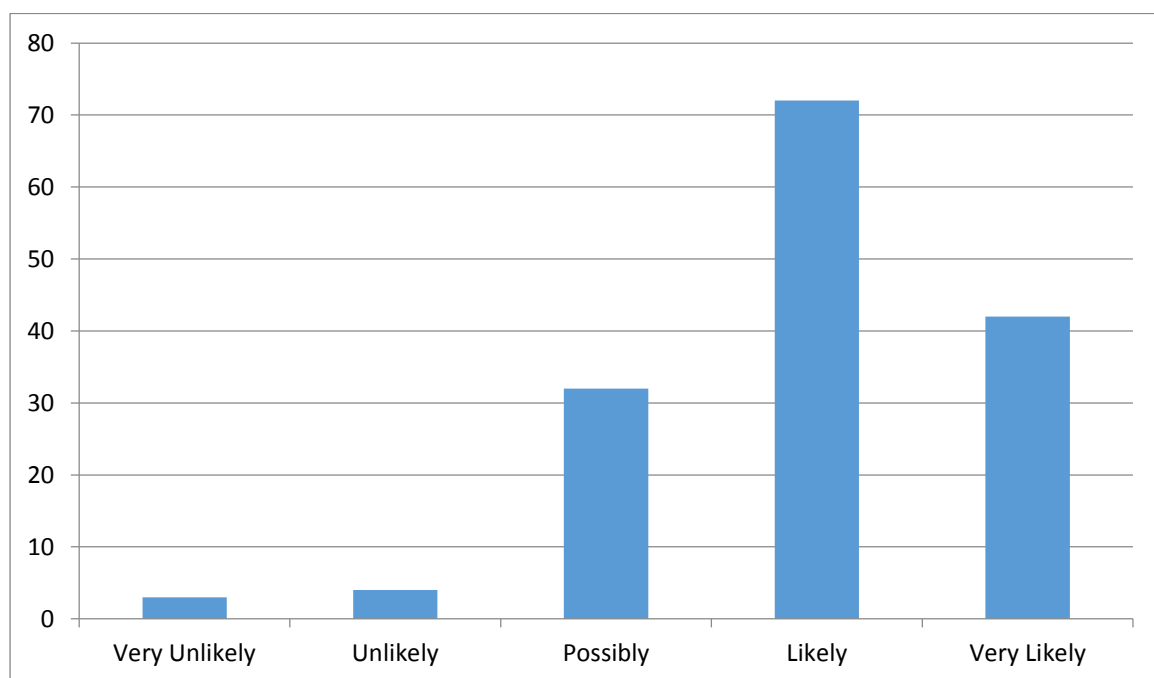
Opportunistic sampling was used to conduct staff surveys to explore their attitudes to introducing more young volunteers into the clinical areas. Data was collected between 05.02.19 and 18.02.2019 on nine acute wards on one site at the hospital trust. The respondents were ward based staff. Roles included doctors of all grades including:

- Doctors of all grades (n=9)
- Registered Nurses of all grades (n=27)
- Therapists including physiotherapists and occupational therapists (n=11)
- Unregistered staff including Healthcare assistant, activity coordinator, housekeeper, physio assistant, discharge coordinator, patient support worker, receptionist, ward administrator, and domestic (n=38)
- Students in physiotherapy, nurses, and apprentices (n=6)
- Pharmacist (n=2)
- and others where the role not stated or unclear (n=60)

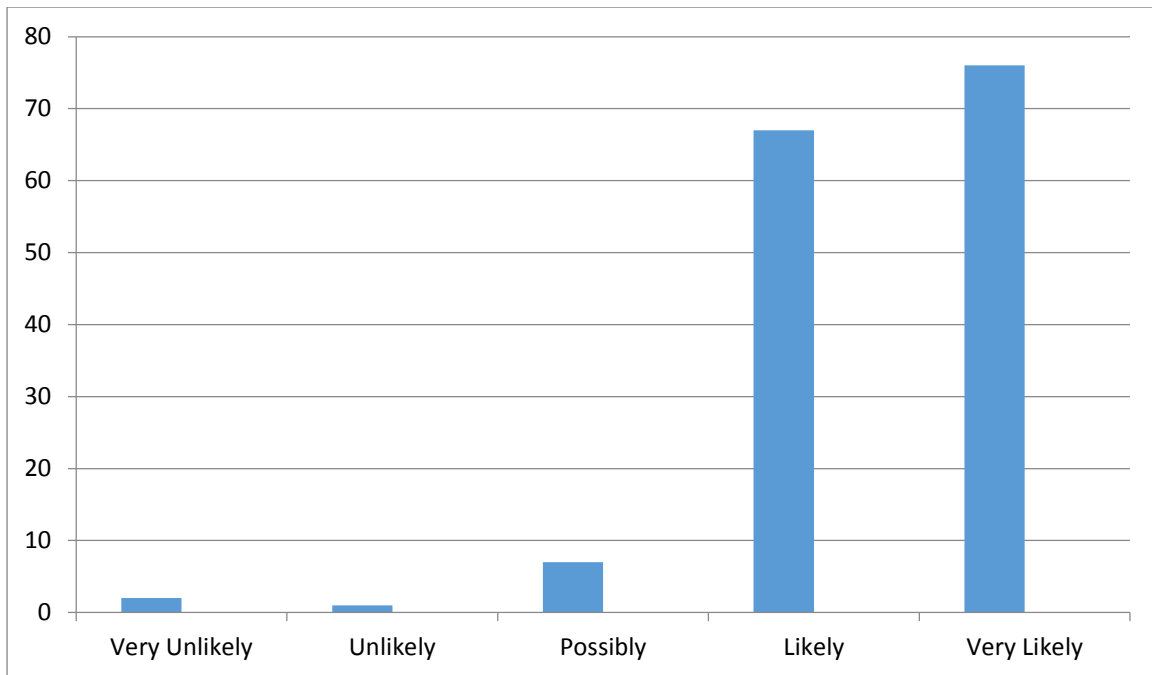
Total respondents (n= 153)

Results

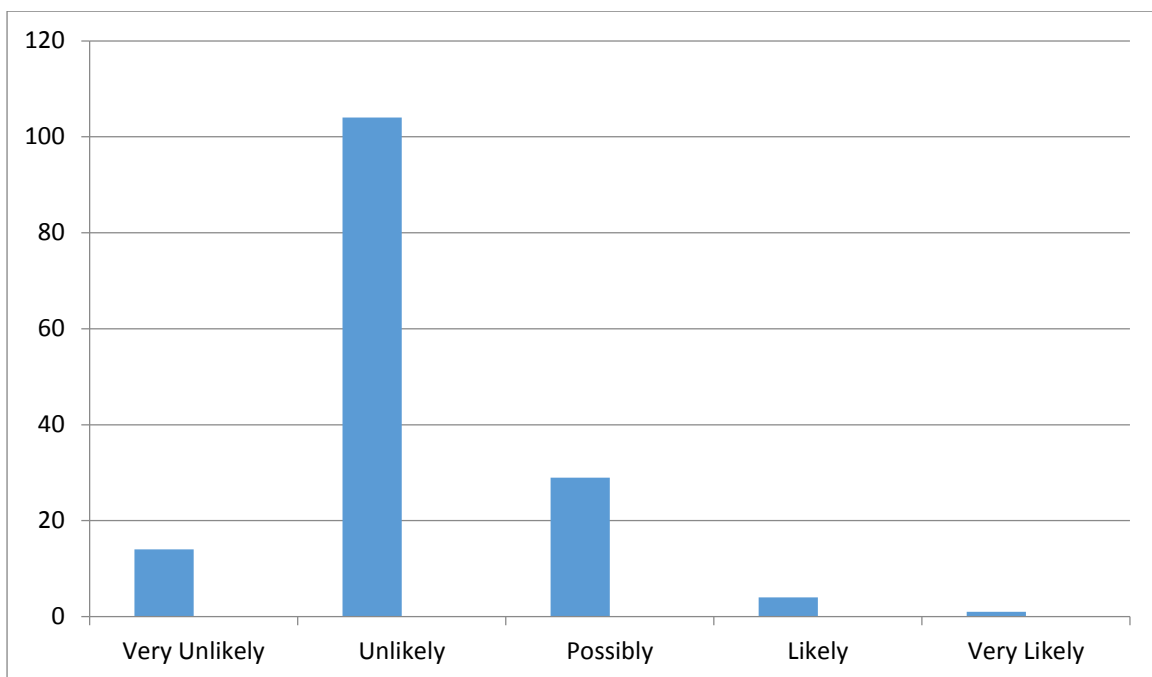
The pre project evaluation of staff perspectives highlighted an overall acceptance of young volunteers (see diagrams 1-5). They expressed views that young volunteers would benefit patients, staff, and the volunteers themselves.



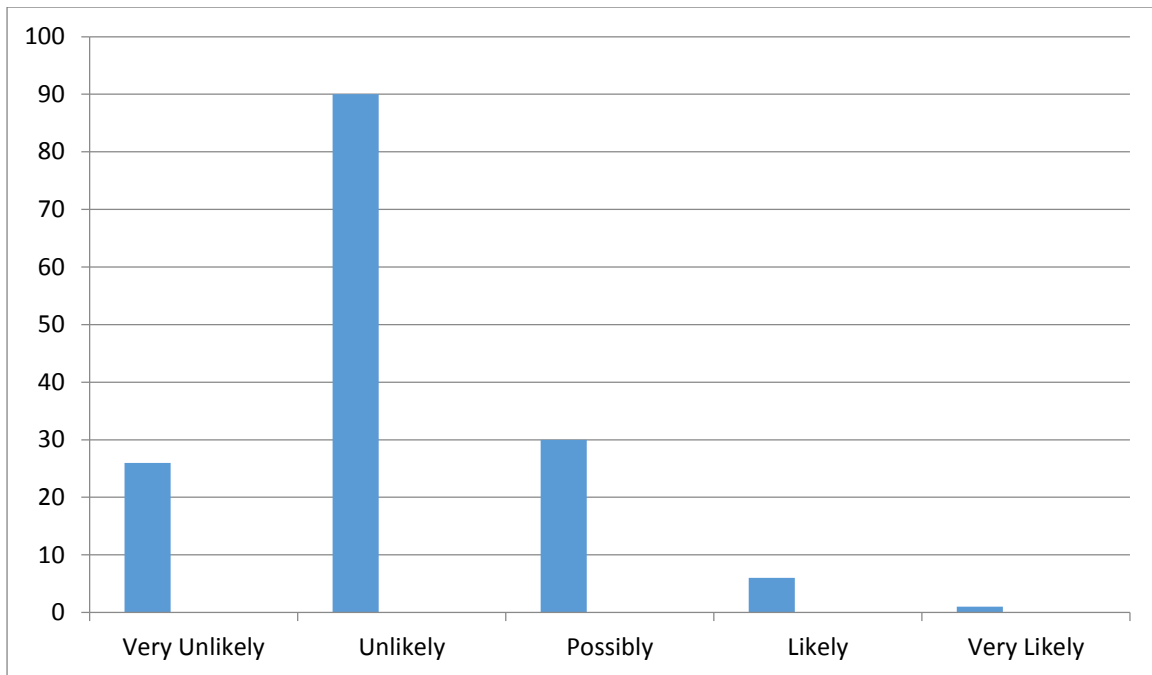
Question 1: Do you think involving young volunteers (16-21) will improve patient/carer care and experience?



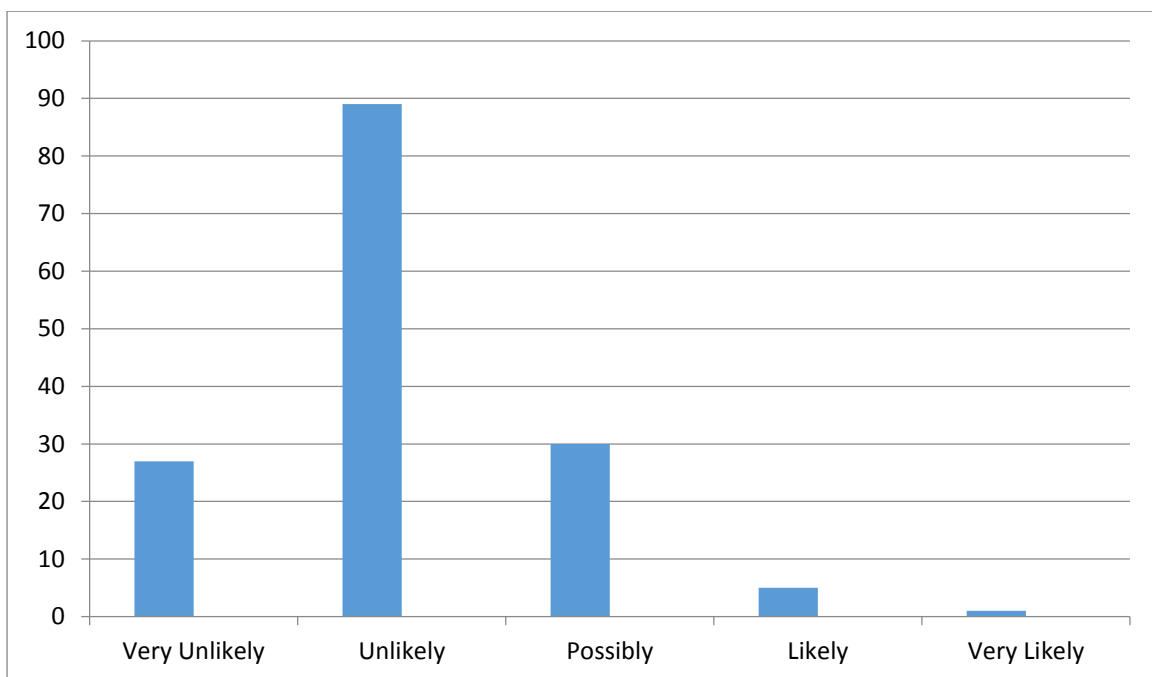
Question 2: Do you think patients will benefit from volunteer interaction?



Question 3: Do you think involving young volunteers (16-21) will increase complaints? (n.b. Q.3. unanswered by one participant)



Question 4: Do you think involving young volunteers (16-21) will increase your workload?



Question 5: Do you think supporting young volunteers (16-21) will cause you to feel stress?
(N.B. Q.5. unanswered by one participant)

Respondents were overwhelmingly in favour of young volunteer working on the acute hospital wards. They considered the benefits to patients, staff and volunteers.

Staff felt patients would enjoy contact with younger volunteers and engaging in social interaction together, making a valuable contribution to improving the mood and experience of patients while in hospital. The wider benefits to patients were that involving young volunteers would contribute towards reducing stigma and negative stereotypes around older age.

Staff voiced their concerns over having little time to engage socially with patients and expressed a need for extra people to talk and support patients. As such they felt that volunteers were well placed to take some of the pressure off the nurses. They valued the extra help that volunteers offered at mealtimes,

‘Always good to have extra help. They are very welcome’

They also felt that there were benefits to the young volunteers themselves, and felt that their needs should be considered. Staff felt it presented a good opportunity for young people to gain experience and to consider healthcare professions. Staff felt that volunteering presented a good opportunity for young people to develop their confidence, maximise their career prospects, and increase intergenerational engagement.

However, caution was expressed about involving young volunteers,

‘Sounds good in principle will 16 years commit?’

Staff voiced concerns over the need to support volunteers, as they observed that young volunteers often lacked confidence especially when they first arrived on the ward

‘Sometimes if we are busy we do not have time to organise volunteers’.

Some staff also expressed concern about how volunteers might deal with traumatic events witnessed by volunteering

‘I worry the younger ones may not have the maturity to deal with what they may witness I see on [name of ward]’.

Staff expressed caution over young volunteers, wondering if they might be able to cope with the experience at a young age. They felt that there was the potential for their workload to increase in the initial stages as new volunteers arrived, especially if there was a lack of things for volunteers to do. Therefore the positive comments about young volunteers came with the precondition that they are given the necessary training and support,

‘As long as young volunteers are given induction and proper introduction to the ward I feel it is a good initiative’.

Limitations

The limitations of the survey was that it was on one site only and staff were busy with clinical duties so had little time to discuss their views in depth. However, there was an opportunity to write further comments and discuss their views with the project manager. Some of the staff may have been aware of the work done previously by the project manager. This may have influenced their responses in

that they may have felt obliged to give a positive account of volunteering. Others completed the survey via the ward manager and had no contact with the project manager.

Conclusion

The introduction of young volunteers onto acute hospital wards was seen by staff to be generally positive. This came with the caveat that young volunteers should be adequately supported as staff were engaged in clinical duties and as such had little time to offer.