



# An Innovative and Cost-Effective Undergraduate Surgical Skills Course

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## Background

- Surgical skills courses carry high attendance fees, which often put them financially out of reach for undergraduate medical students.
- Local centres wanting to run these are prohibited themselves by the high cost of course materials, such as artificial skin, tendons and “prepared for purpose” animal tissues.
- Subsequently, undergraduates risk delaying their development of core surgical skills until well into their postgraduate years.

## Aims

- To provide a course for undergraduate students that **introduces, teaches and develops** a range of core surgical skills, using **innovative approaches** to minimise course costs.

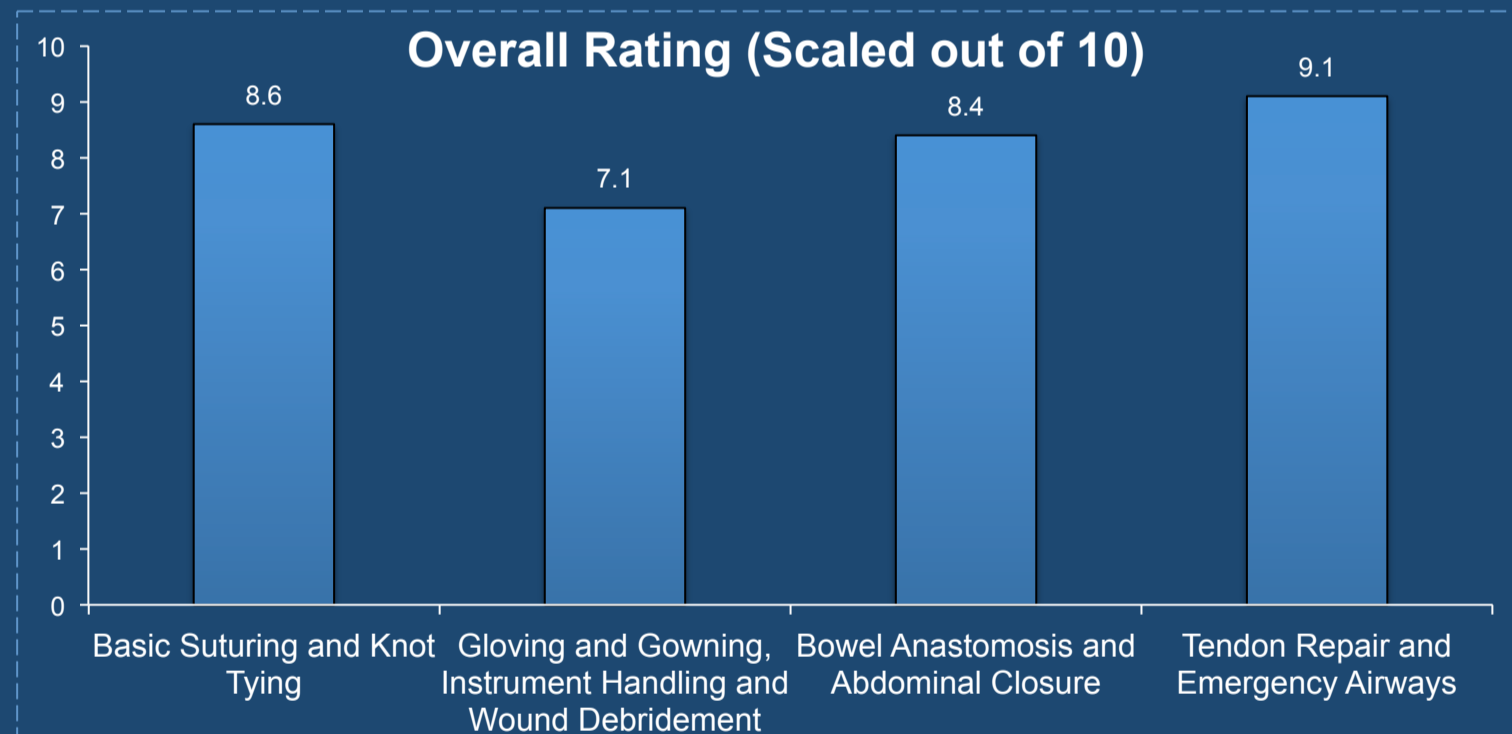
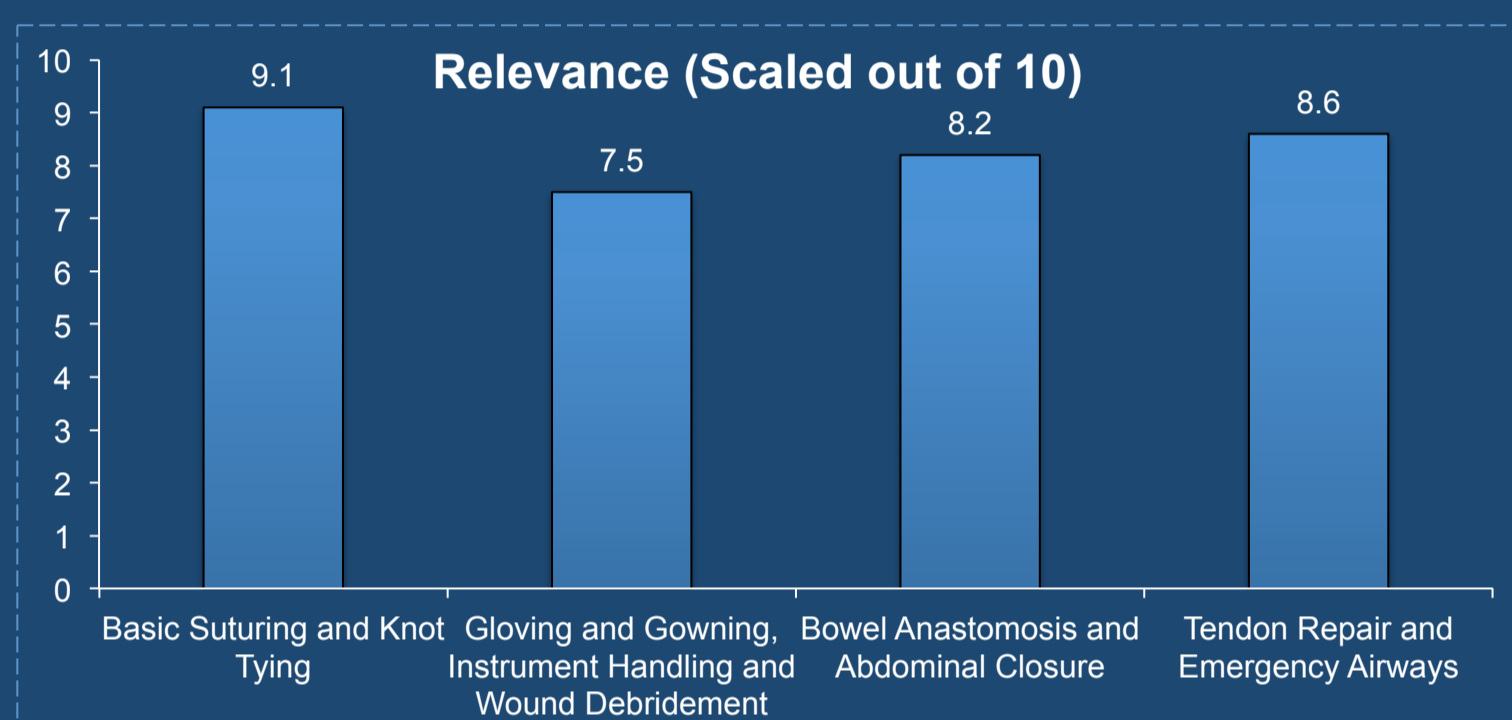
## Participants and Structure

- **25** medical students from Southampton Medical School, across all year groups, attended.
- Course fee: **£5**.
- The course was run over **4 evenings** on consecutive weeks.

Skill Taught	Materials Used
Tendon Repair	Pigs' trotters (3 for £1)
Skin Flaps	Pancakes
Suturing	Pigs' trotters (3 for £1)
Bowel Anastomosis	Bicycle inner tubing
Scalpel Technique	Pancakes
Excision of Skin Lesion	Pancakes
Knot Tying	Expired sutures – kindly supplied by Southampton clinical skills department
Gloving and Gowning	Reusable gowns and expired gloves – kindly supplied by Southampton clinical skills department

- Two surgical registrars, from orthopaedics and general surgery, acted as tutors.
- University approval was gathered.

## Results



- *“Generally really professional comprehensive course covering very important skills for surgery.”*
- *“I feel it has given me a good idea of some of the basic skills required in surgery.”*
- *“As I started my surgical attachment shortly after, the skills that I learnt at this sessions were immensely helpful.”*
- *“The bike tyres were a very nice way of seeing how to do an anastomosis”*

## Conclusions

- With improvisation, cost-effective and educationally relevant surgical skills courses can be provided.
- These low cost surgical skills courses can improve access for undergraduates.
- Earlier acquisition of practical skills can subsequently occur; especially relevant given modern reductions in operating time.