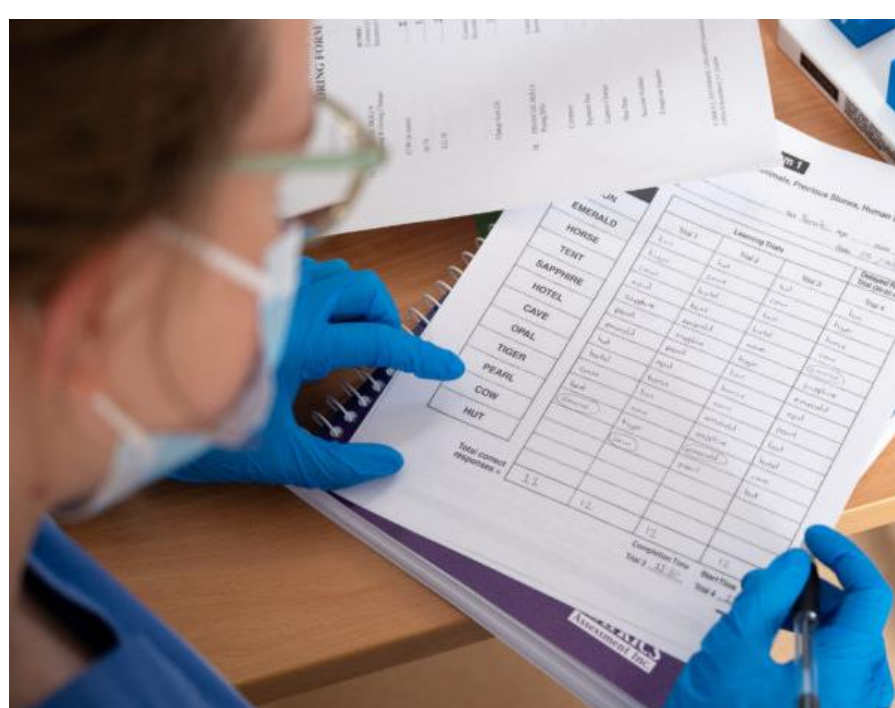# Improving the quality of administering complex specialist mental health assessments in research.

Jewitt-Sharpe I., Colston A., Zangani C., & Smith K.
AUTHOR AFFILIATION: NIHR Oxford Health Clinical Research Facility (OH-CRF), Warneford Hospital, Oxford.

Our CRF offers early-phase experimental medicine studies in mental and cognitive health. During study visits, we administer complex specialist mental health rating scales and assessments. After the introduction of a new Team Lead and the recruitment of additional research delivery staff we identified an opportunity to introduce a Ratings Lead role with the aim to:

- Increase the number of CRF staff trained in administering specialist scales.
- Have an improved method for identifying trained staff.
- Develop staff skills, knowledge and confidence in delivering scales.
- Improve the quality of delivery and data collection.

The development of the Ratings Lead role has been implemented as a quality improvement project. Over 8 months, the Ratings Lead:

- Created an electronic staff training matrix.
- Identified staff training needs.
- Arranged bespoke in-house teaching sessions for staff delivered by our CRF Medics and Clinical Lead.
- Introduced a feedback form to capture the impact and usefulness of teaching sessions.
- Organised regular practice sessions for staff.
- Compiled an electronic library of resources (including research papers, worksheets, scoring guidelines and test materials).

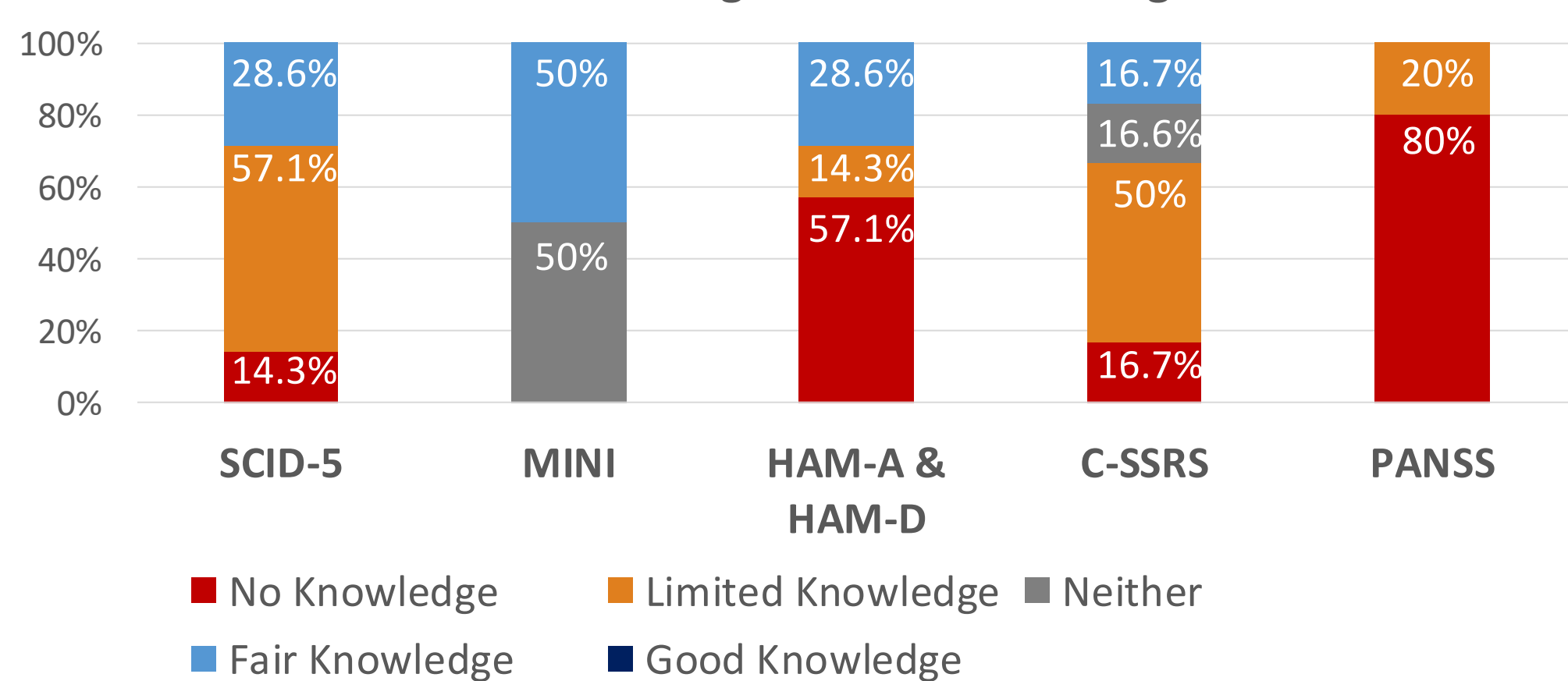### Section of the Staff Training Matrix

Core Rating Scales	Research Nurse	Research Nurse	Research Nurse	Medic	Research Assistant	Research Assistant
SCID 5 (Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5)	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
MINI (Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview)	T	T	Y	Y	Y	Y
CSSRS (Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale)	Y	Y	T	Y	Y	Y
HAM-A (Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale)	T	Y	Y	Y	Y	T
HAM-D (Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression)	T	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
PANSS (Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale)	T	N	T	Y	T	T

Y = Trained and confident / T = Further training / N = Not trained

The changes improved skills and competencies: of 14 staff, the number trained in ≥3 rating scales increased from six to eleven. Staff feedback indicated knowledge and confidence increased across all scales. Feedback suggested a need for practical learning opportunities to complement teaching, and feedback showed all attendees found "dedicated time set aside to practice was helpful", that they would attend future sessions, and would recommend the sessions to colleagues.
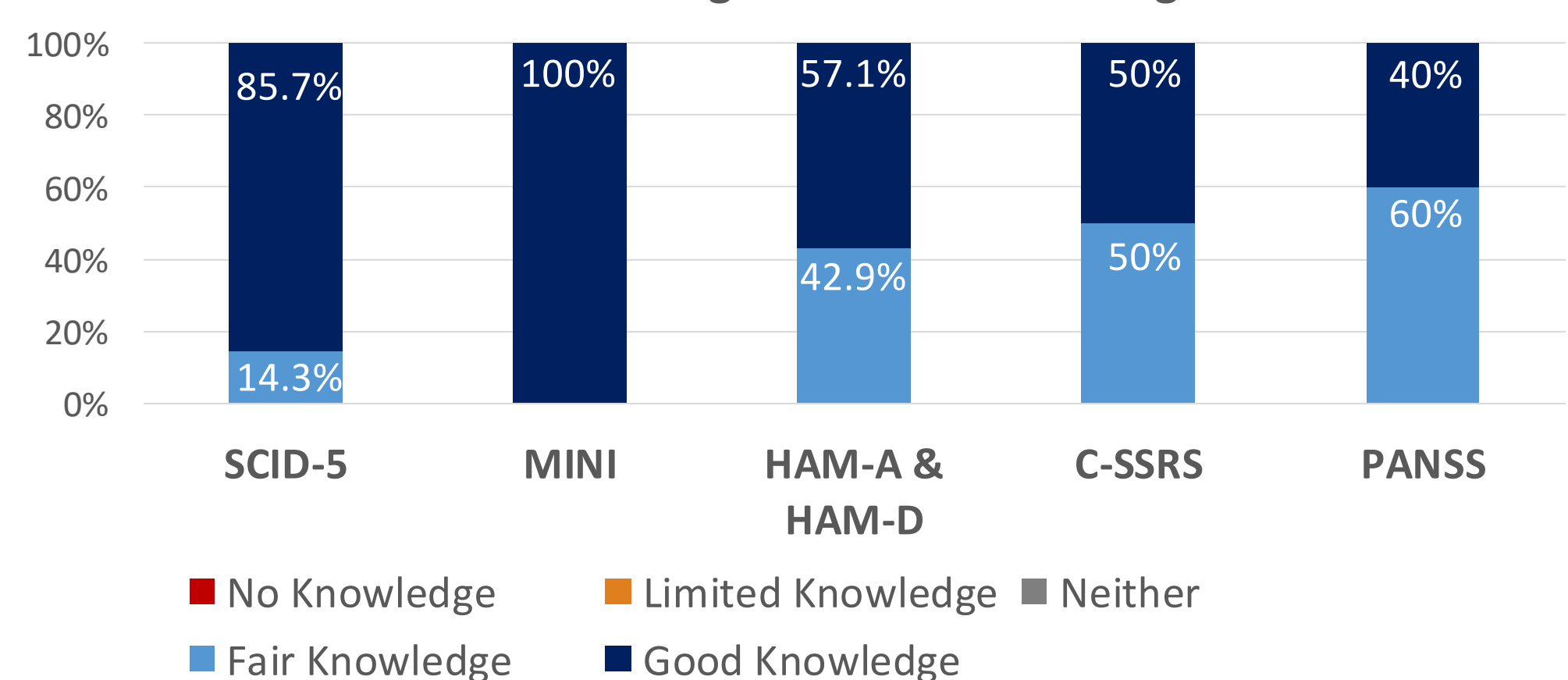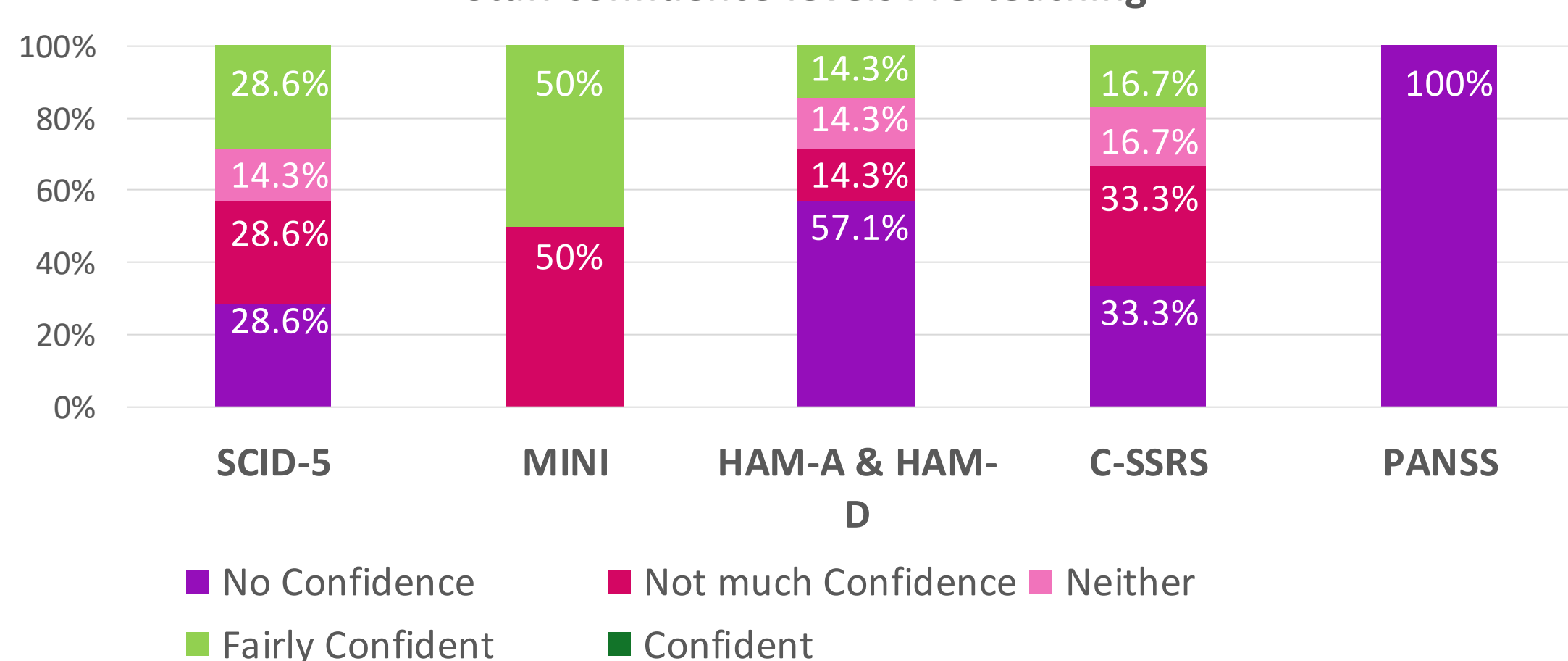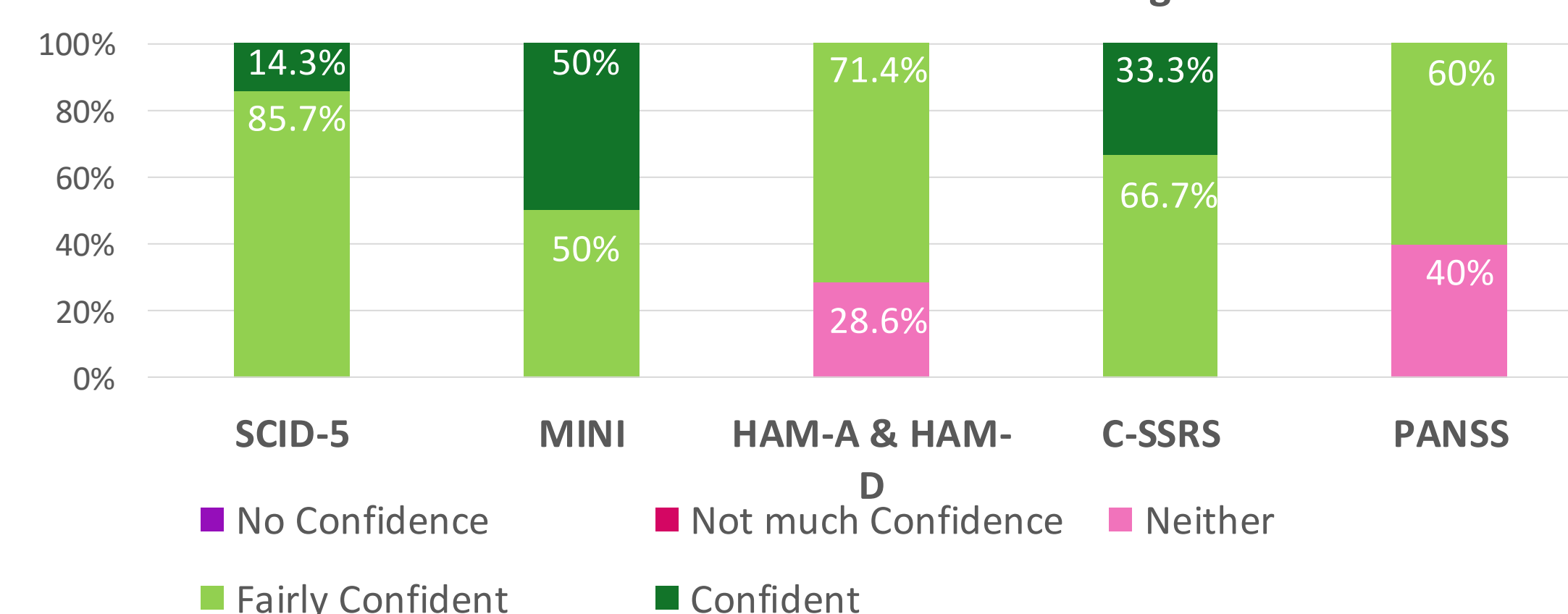
"Explanation of the scale was really great".

"I found it useful to talk about how to ask difficult questions."

"Able to ask questions. It was recorded so I am able to go back and watch again."

"The trainer included us in the teaching by making it interactive".

"I really enjoyed this [practice] session and felt I got a lot from it."

"The trainer gave tips and advice as she went along".

Staff knowledge levels Pre-teaching

	SCID-5	MINI	HAM-A & HAM-D	C-SSRS	PANSS
Fair Knowledge	28.6%	50%	28.6%	16.7%	
Neither		50%		16.6%	
Limited Knowledge	57.1%		14.3%	50%	20%
No Knowledge	14.3%		57.1%	16.7%	80%

Legend: No Knowledge, Limited Knowledge, Neither, Fair Knowledge, Good Knowledge

Staff knowledge levels Post-teaching

	SCID-5	MINI	HAM-A & HAM-D	C-SSRS	PANSS
Good Knowledge	85.7%	100%	57.1%	50%	40%
Fair Knowledge	14.3%		42.9%	50%	60%

Legend: No Knowledge, Limited Knowledge, Neither, Fair Knowledge, Good Knowledge

Staff confidence levels Pre-teaching

	SCID-5	MINI	HAM-A & HAM-D	C-SSRS	PANSS
Fairly Confident	28.6%	50%	14.3%	16.7%	
Neither	14.3%		14.3%	16.7%	
Not much Confidence	28.6%	50%	14.3%	33.3%	
No Confidence	28.6%		57.1%	33.3%	100%

Legend: No Confidence, Not much Confidence, Neither, Fairly Confident, Confident

Staff confidence levels Post-teaching

	SCID-5	MINI	HAM-A & HAM-D	C-SSRS	PANSS
Confident	14.3%	50%	71.4%	33.3%	
Fairly Confident	85.7%	50%		66.7%	60%
Neither			28.6%		40%

Legend: No Confidence, Not much Confidence, Neither, Fairly Confident, Confident

It is essential to have a systematic approach to training staff in administering specialist rating scales to deliver high quality experimental research studies in mental health.

In response to how well the project has been received at our CRF, we plan to have further discussions with our Research and Development (R&D) team's Training Lead to explore whether the project could be expanded and implemented into the other specialist Research Delivery Teams within the wider R&D department at our Trust.