

# Getting the BASICS right improves recognition and management of incontinence in a hospital setting

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## Introduction

In hospital incontinence increases length of stay (1), in orthopaedic patients is associated with increased likelihood of discharge to an institutionalised setting (2) and can have a major negative impact, with many rating bowel and bladder incontinence as a health state the same or worse than death (3). Yet of the Geriatric Giants, it is given relatively little attention.

## Assessment

At a busy teaching hospital, we sought to raise awareness and improve management of incontinence across our 167 beds, by using a standardised, multi-disciplinary approach involving identification of patients and use of the components of BASICS (Bladder diary, A physical assessment, Symptom profile, Infection and Constipation check and a bladder Scan, **see figure 1**).

## Methods

Baseline data of a sample of 14 patients with new urinary incontinence with their aspects of continence assessment were added to a cumulative audit. Alongside checklists, a poster was designed, (**see figure 2**) and placed on each ward, a local teaching session about incontinence was delivered, and data shared at our local governance meetings. Following this, a further cycle of audit was performed. Reversible causes were identified and addressed appropriately.

Figure 1: BASICS Chart

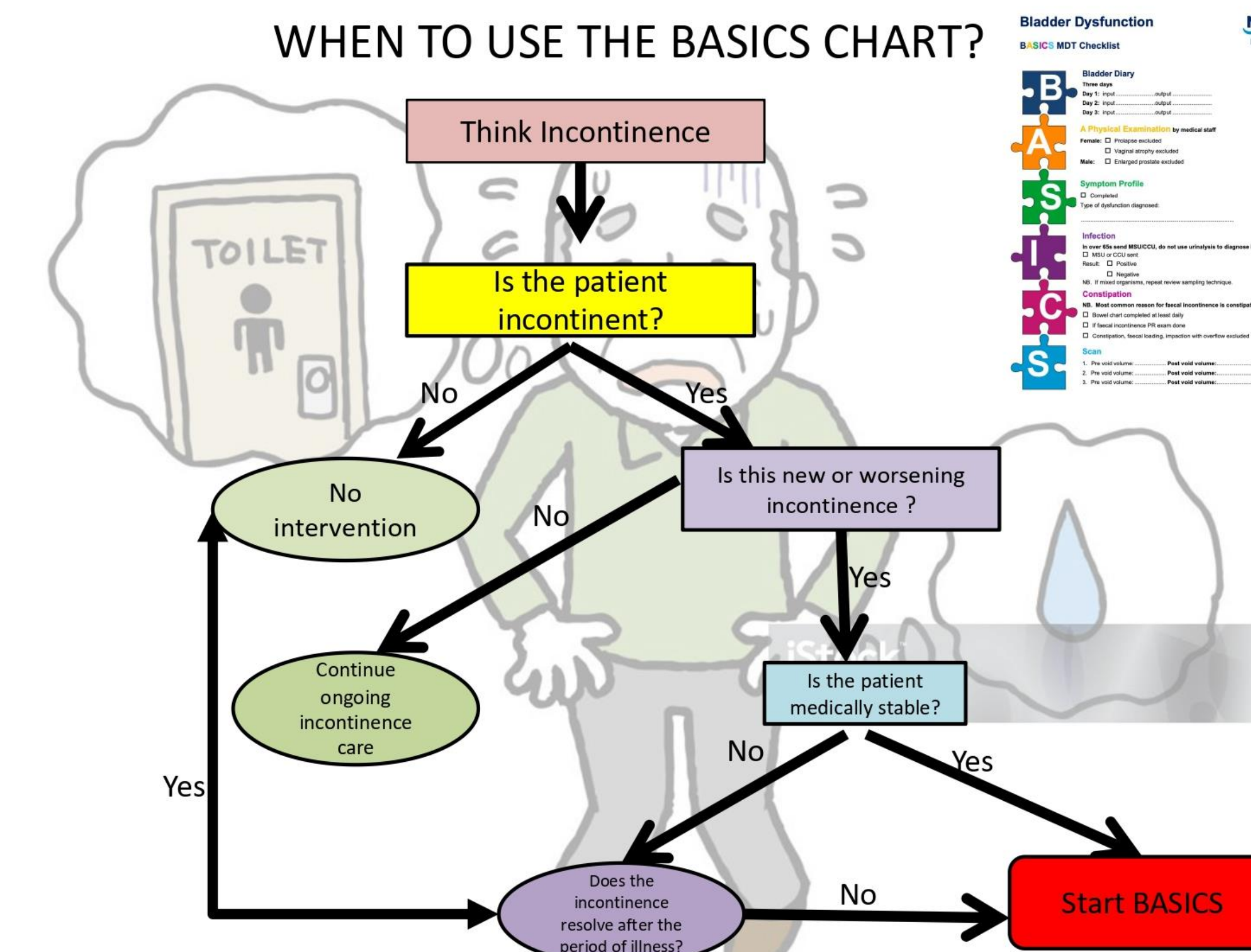


Figure 2: BASICS poster

## Results

Between cycle 1 and 2 (February and June 2024), significant improvements were seen in most aspects of BASICS assessment with notable increases in use of the bladder diary (7 to 50%) and medical examination (7 to 57%). **See figure 3** for breakdown. As a consequence, there were several interventions aiming to improve patient symptoms.

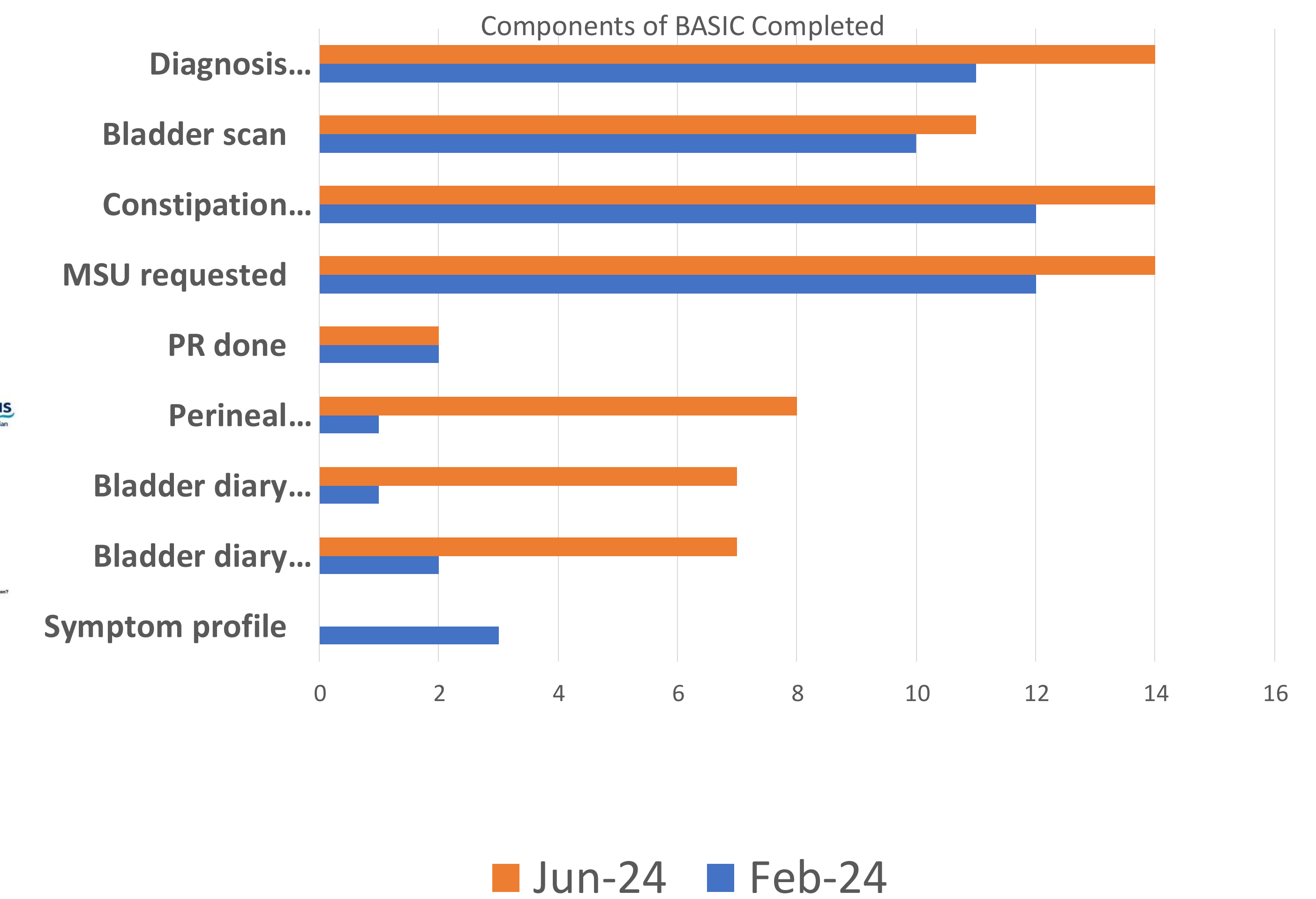


Figure 3: Showing improvement between the 2 cycles

## Conclusions

Paying consistent and sustained attention to this neglected area of practice has demonstrated a change of culture is possible. We are now incorporating continence assessment into our medical trainee audit programme to support a sustained multi-disciplinary approach and maintain improvements.

## References

1. J Campbell, R Hubbard et al.. Incontinence during and following hospitalisation: a prospective study of prevalence, incidence and association with clinical outcomes. Age and Ageing, Volume 52, Issue 9, September 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afad181>.
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