

The Preparedness and Contribution of Community Pharmacists

During Public Health Crises

EPH262

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OBJECTIVES

During public health crises, the role of community pharmacists expands to encompass vital responsibilities beyond their traditional roles. This study aimed to investigate the services provided by community pharmacists during epidemics, with a focus on their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The objectives were to identify challenges faced by pharmacists in adapting to new roles and responsibilities, and extract lessons to enhance their preparedness and response to future public health crises.

RESULTS

The study revealed that only a small percentage (17%) of consumers sought consultation from pharmacy employees during pandemic. Furthermore, most consumers reported not receiving necessary information about their medication from pharmacy staff. Satisfaction with the answers provided by pharmacy employees was reported by only 29% of consumers, and only 26% expressed full trust in them.

METHODS

A questionnaire-based survey was conducted among 1,308 consumers utilizing pharmacies in Armenia and Yerevan. The survey instrument was designed to assess the consumers' interactions with pharmacy employees, their satisfaction with the information received, and their level of trust in the pharmacists. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

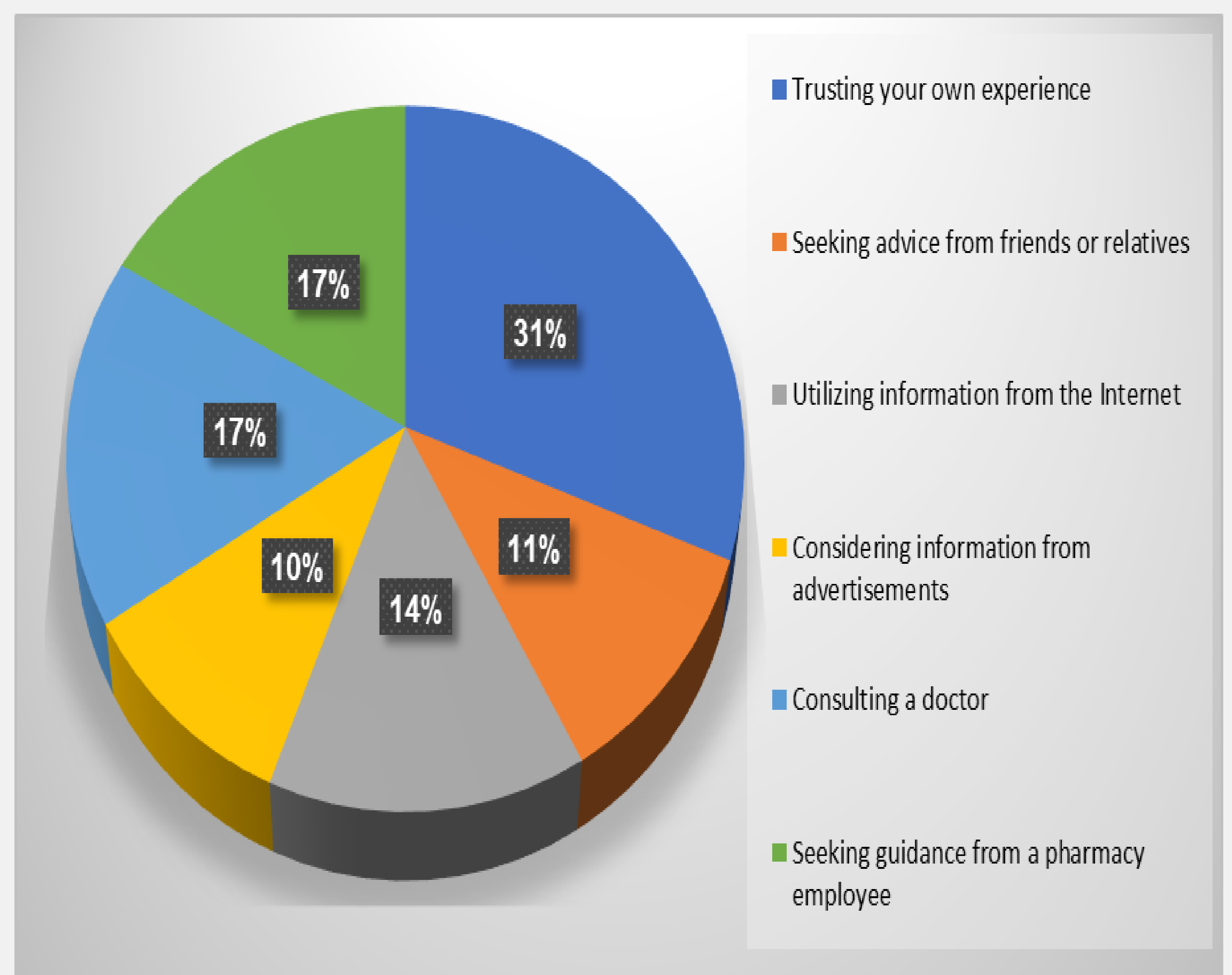


Figure 1. Public Perspectives on Medicine Usage During a Pandemic

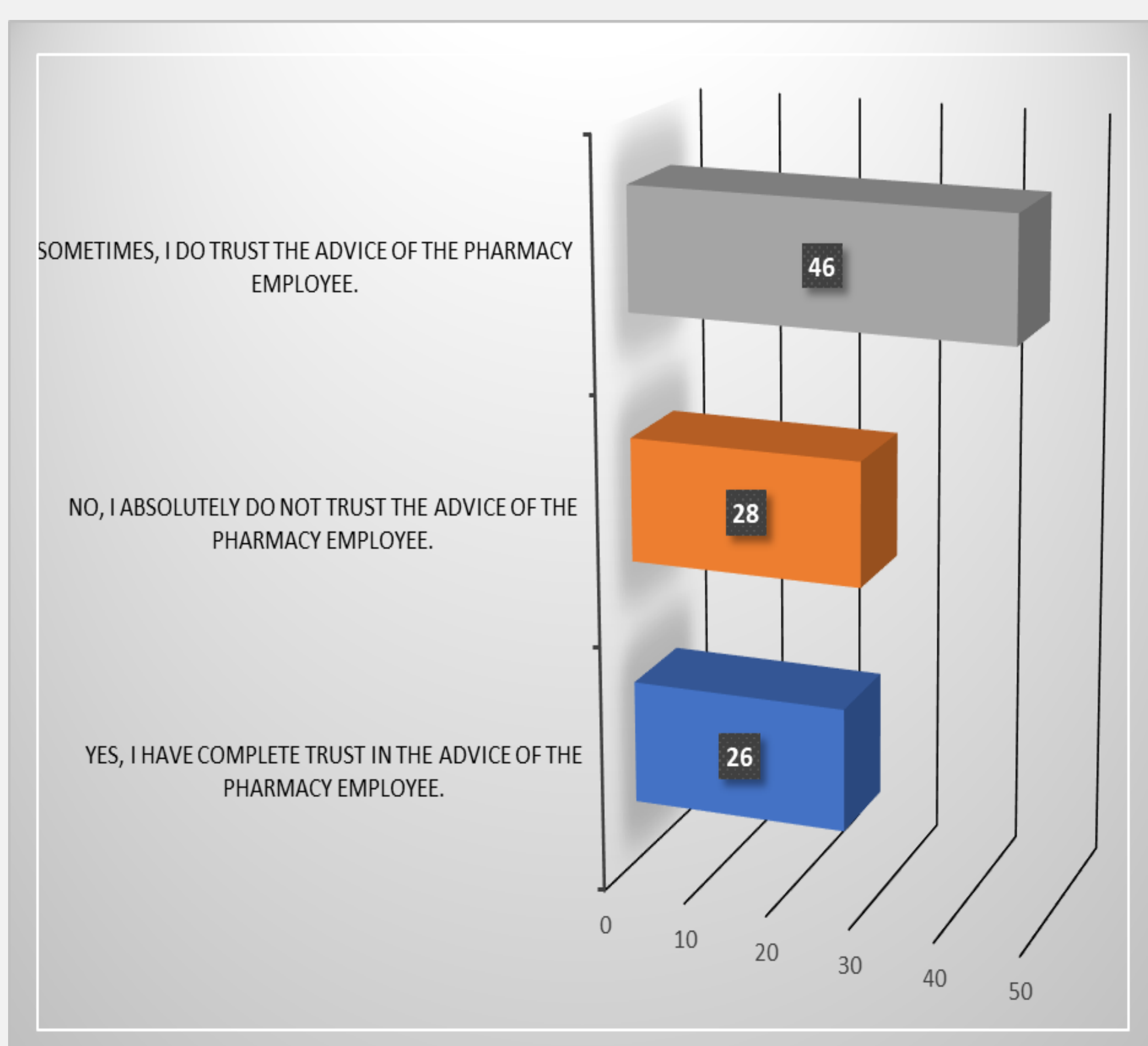


Figure 2. Confidence Levels in Pharmacy Employee Advice

CONCLUSION

Steps should be taken for improving the professional knowledge of pharmacists about medicines and pharmaceutical care, which, in turn, can restore consumer trust in them, will help avoid self-medication errors by providing advice on medicines in response to public health crises. There is a need to develop pharmaceutical care algorithms for minor ailments, national emergency drug formularies for pandemics.