

Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Patients Towards Generics in Greece

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PCR54

12-15 November

Copenhagen, Denmark

Introduction

Generic pharmaceuticals (generics) constitute a critical pharmaceutical policy tool to increase efficiency¹. Nonetheless, their penetration in the Greek pharmaceutical market remains limited, despite State efforts². Common misconceptions, even amongst the most sensitized audiences³, include differences from originators in terms of effectiveness, safety and manufacturing practices. We wanted to assess knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards generics amongst a key target audience, namely patients, members of PAs, in Greece.

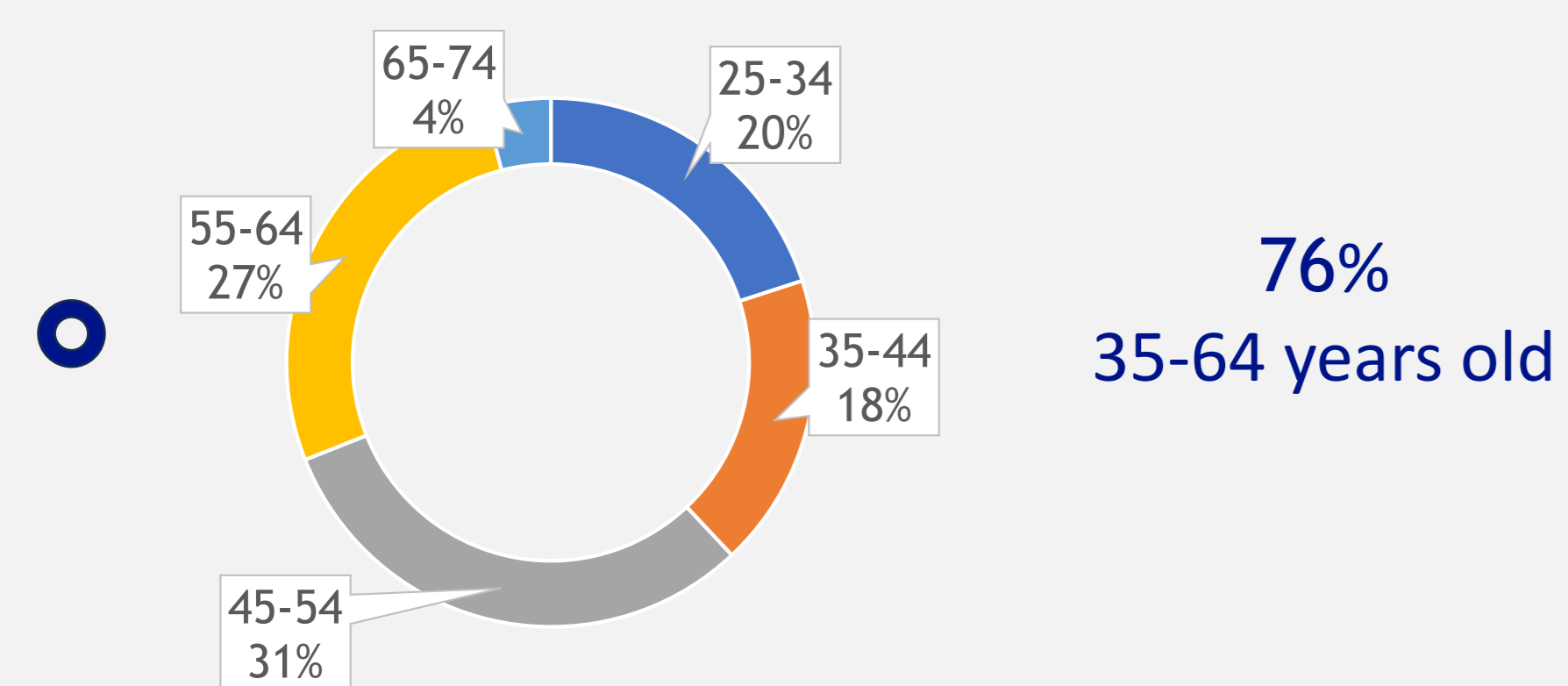
Methods

An online survey elicited knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding generics in Greece. Participants were registered members of PAs in Greece and received an email invitation containing a link to the survey by the Greek Patients' Association. All responses were anonymous.

Participants' characteristics

- 100 members of PAs

- 63% women



- currently employed 67%

- bachelor's degree or higher 84%

Summary

Despite consistent calls for strengthening generics use in the Greek pharmaceutical market, to increase efficiency and optimize costs, there is slow growth in actual generics penetration. Resistance to using a generic may stem from misinformation and misconceptions. A survey amongst patients who are members of PAs revealed that they exhibit high levels of knowledge, acceptance, and actual use of generics, whilst more than 6 out of 10 would switch to a generic in the future. More targeted awareness campaigns on elements of safety and manufacturing would help further inform and strengthen trust in generics in Greece.

Results

- 96% of participants knew of generics and 91% knew they contain the same active substance as originators. 82% knew that generics have the same effectiveness as originators, but only 45% were aware that generics are as safe as their originator. 62% perceived generics to be manufactured in high-quality facilities (Figure 1).
- 90% of participants considered generics important, irrespective of personal or family income and 91% suggested patients should be free to select between generics and originators. In line with this, 75% perceived that social insurance should not mandate use of generics (Figure 2).
- Almost half (49%) of respondents perceived a switch from originator to generic to have no impact on clinical outcomes. 72% had ever been prescribed a generic, and 58% had switched treatment from originator to generic, mostly on doctor's recommendation (Figure 3).
- 63% of the participants would be willing to switch to a generic in the future (Figure 4).

Figure 1. Knowledge on generics

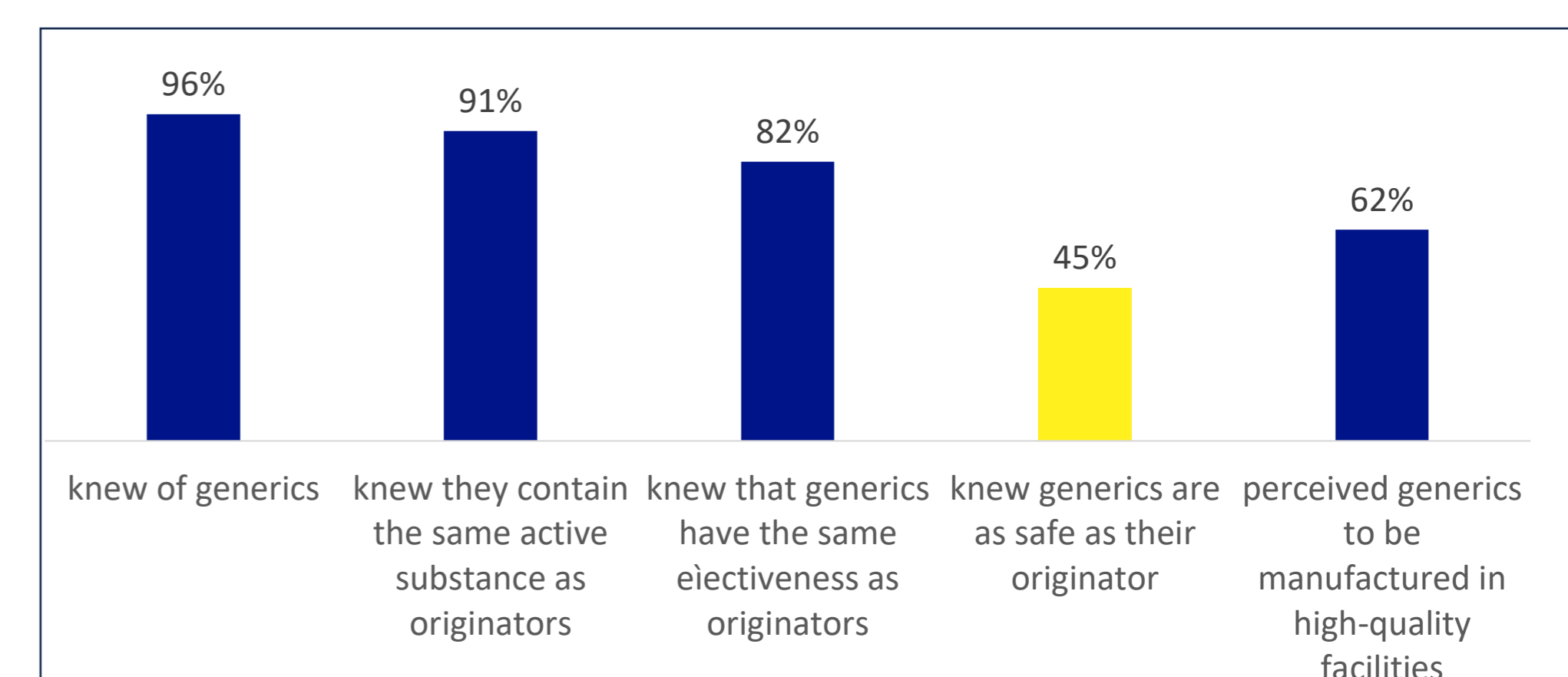


Figure 2. Attitudes towards generics

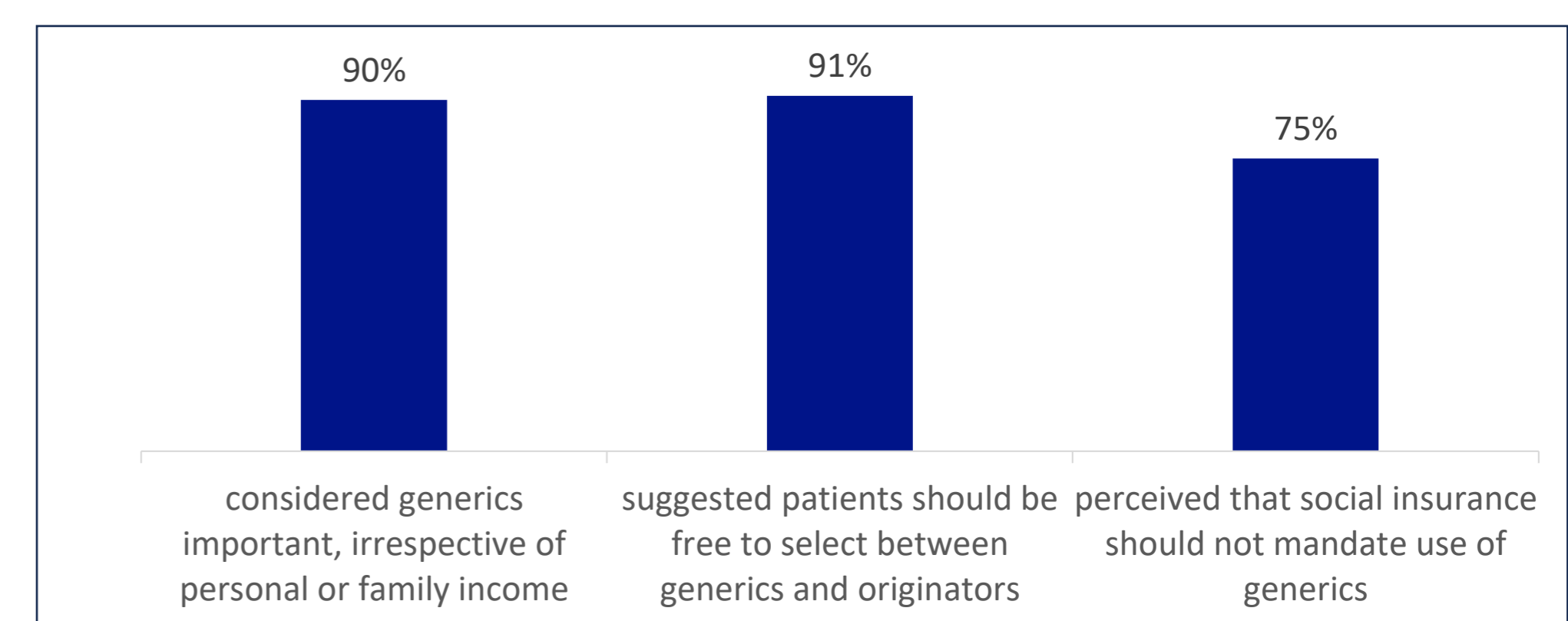


Figure 3. Behaviors towards generics

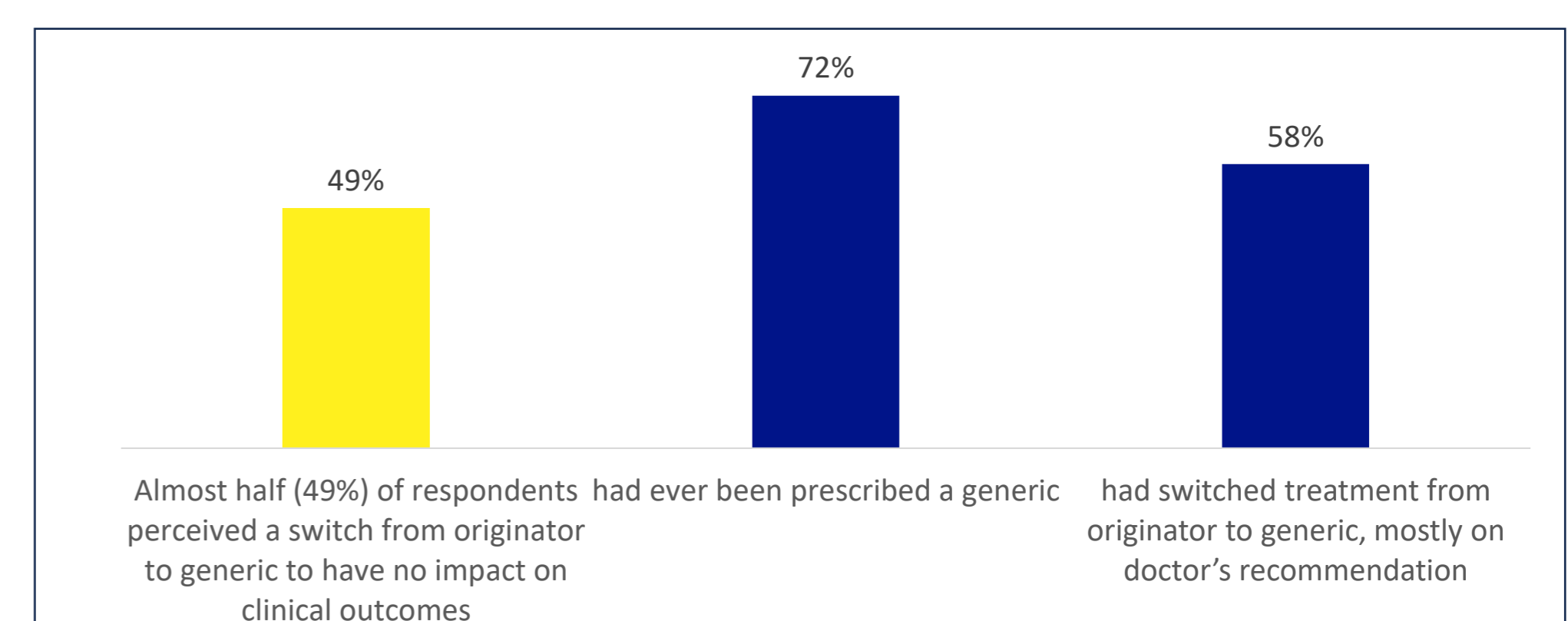
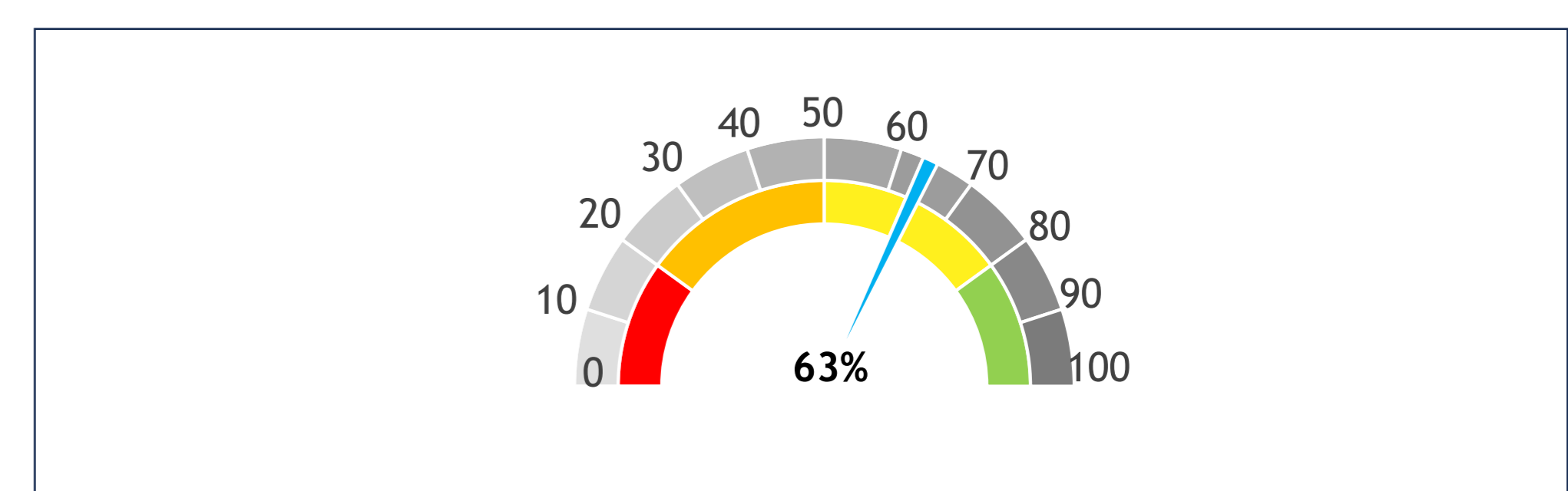


Figure 4. Willingness to switch to generics in the future



Key take away

Members of PAs in Greece exhibit high levels of knowledge, acceptance, and use of generics. Further strengthening public awareness of safety and quality assurance processes for the manufacturing of generics together with additional financial incentives may contribute to increasing their voluntary uptake.

References: 1. OECD. Executive Summary of the Discussion on Competition and Generic Pharmaceuticals. Feb 2015., 2. IMF Working Paper, WP/21/189, July 2021. 3. Souliotis et al. Expert Rev Pharmacoecon Outcomes Res. 2019 Oct;19(5):569-574.

Author Contributions: Substantial contributions to study conception/design, or acquisition/analysis/interpretation of data: KS, MO, CG, FM, PG; Drafting of the publication, or revising it critically for important intellectual content: KS, MO, CG, FM, PG, ND; Final approval of the publication: KS, MO, CG, FM, PG, ND

Acknowledgements: This study was sponsored by ELPEN Pharmaceutical.

