

VISION IN ACTION CAMEROON



VISION IN ACTION CAMEROON

www.viacame.org

A summary report on the knowledge and practice of friendly pharmacies and drug stores on the WHO protocol on self-manage abortion with pills in Buea, Southwest Region of Cameroon.

BACKGROUND

Pharmacists, as drug therapy experts, provide drug therapy management services based on a collaboration between the pharmacist, the patient (or his or her caregiver), physicians, and other members of the patient's health care team thus their absence can result in high morbidity and mortality if drug therapy is not observed. In Societies where access to hospitals is almost impossible or using health services attending to conditions or illnesses associated with stigma, Pharmacy services are being used more. Pharmacies play a vital role in improving patient care through the medication and prescription they provide.

Cameroon has restrictive laws on abortion and pharmacies are required to sell abortion pills only on prescription, despite this, the rates of abortion are on the rise. According to Guttmacher Institute, from 2015 to 2019 abortion rate increased from 29% to 41%. Due to the restrictive laws and stigma associated with abortion, According to the International Organization of Gynaecology and obstetrics, the rate of unsafe abortion is high with over 25% of maternal morbidity and mortality arising from unsafe abortion in 2019.

Abortion seekers turn to self-managed abortion so as to maintain confidentiality and avoid stigma. Because of high levels of stigma and discrimination of those who seek abortion services, restrictive laws and little or no access to health facilities, especially in the crises-laden areas of Cameroon.

Pharmacists have had to leave their previous shops and relocate to other areas due to this there, has been a reduction in access to medication. It is therefore imperative in mapping out friendly pharmacies and drug stores present in the community and their knowledge of the WHO protocol on self-managed abortion with pills.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the crises affected South West Region of Cameroon specifically in Buea. Participants of this study were pharmacy or drug store owners. Participants were identified through snowballing in all the communities found in Buea. The number of participants included in the study was the total number of pharmacies and drug stores identified in communities in Buea that were willing to participate in the study. Questionnaires were designed to take into consideration the very sensitive nature of self-managed abortion in Cameroon.

RESULTS

Demographics

A total of 54(100%) respondents, voluntarily participated in the study of which, 10(19%) were males and 44(82%) were females.

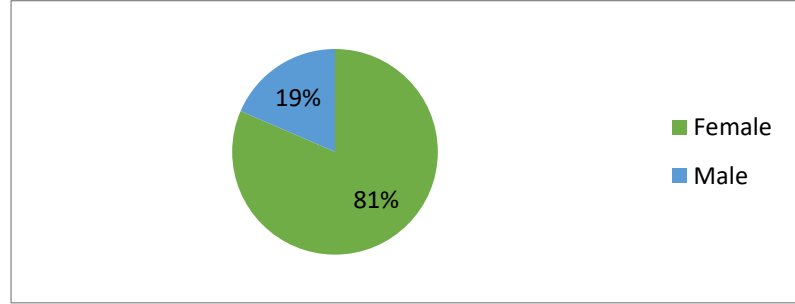


Figure 1: Sex of Participants

A total of 54 pharmacies are located in Buea. The number of pharmacies located in different communities within Buea are; 13 in Molyko, 9 in Mile 16, 6 in Bakweri Town, 6 in Muea, 5 in Buea Town, 4 in Campaign street, 3 in Bokwaongo, 4 in Bomaka, 2 in Sandpit, 1 in Mermoz, and 1 in Mile 18

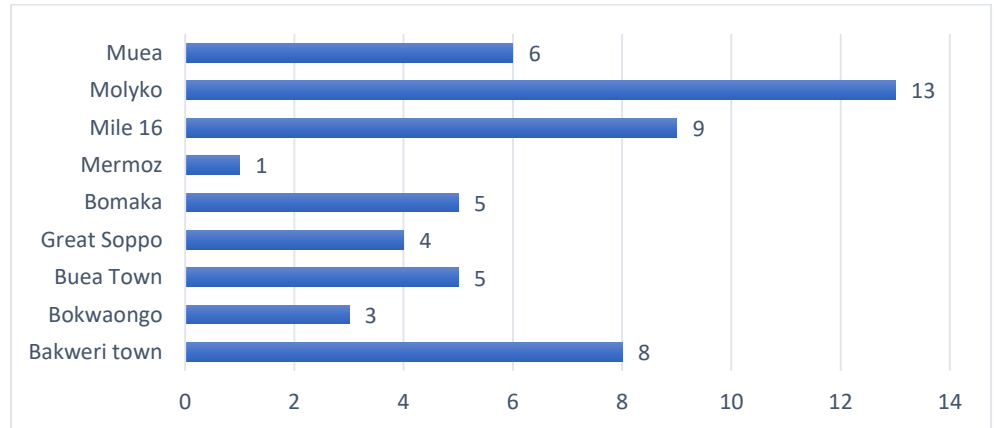


Figure 2: Location of Pharmacies

Majority of the participants 42(78%) knew of Misoprostol.

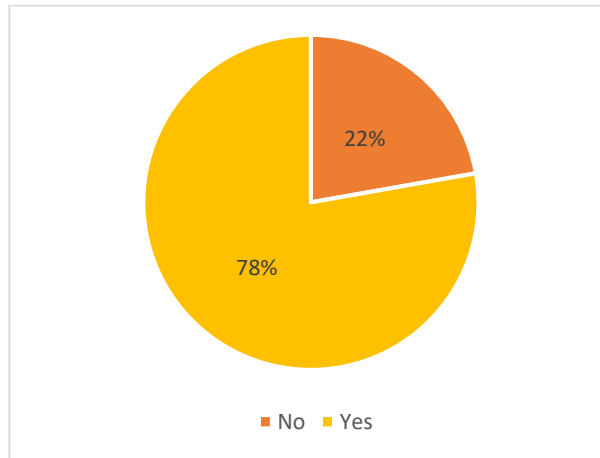


Figure 3: Awareness of Misoprostol

A few of the participants 14(26%) knew of Mifepristone.

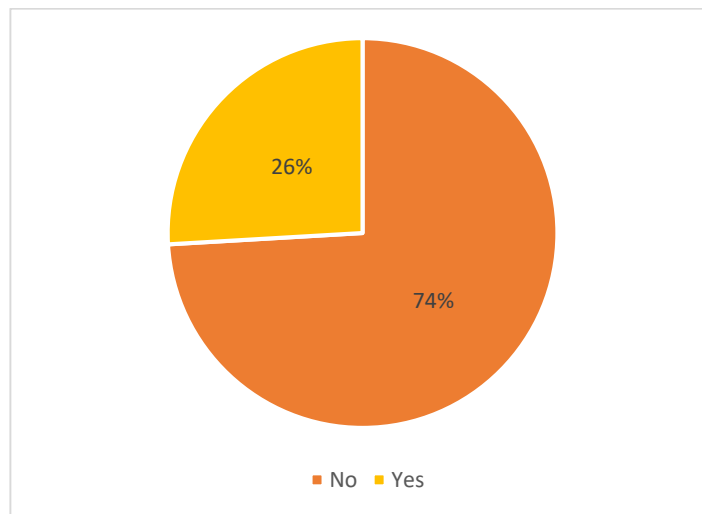


Figure 4: Awareness of Mifepristone.

Majority of the participants 29(54%) do not sell/prescribe neither mifepristone nor misoprostol. While 18(33%) sell Misoprostol only, 4(7%) sell Misoprostol and Mifepristone, 2(4%) sell Misoprostol and injection combination of various drugs (not disclosed), 1(2%) sells Postinor 2.

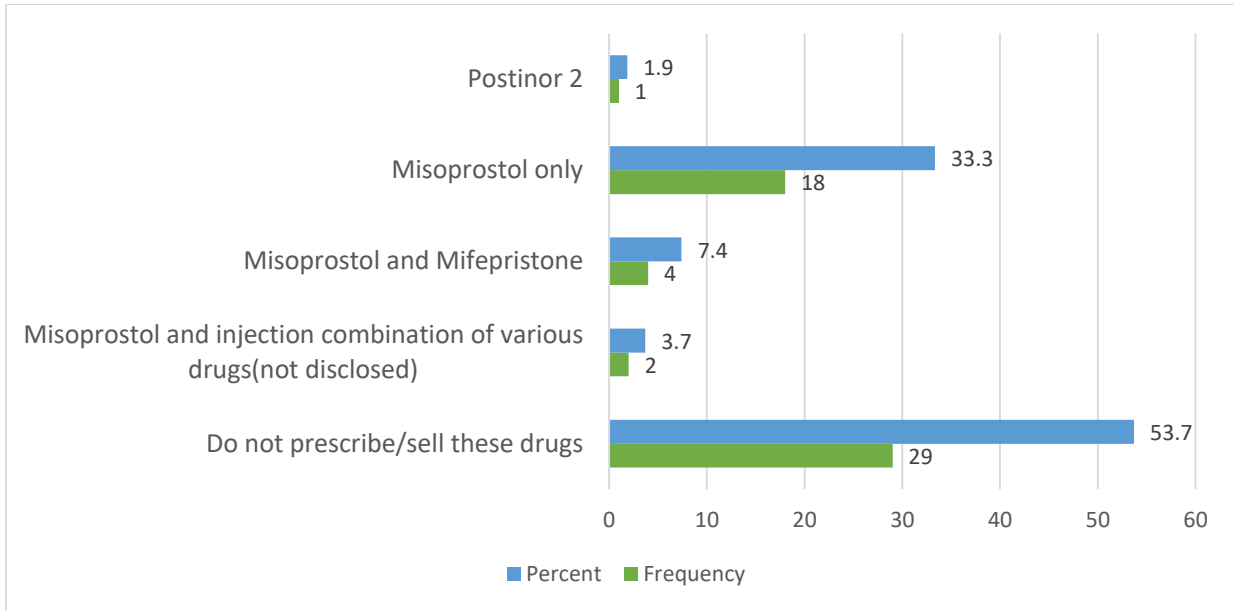


Figure 4: Pharmacies selling/prescribing Misoprostol and Mifepristone

Majority of the participants 20(37%) clients seldom request for abortion pills, 18(33%) of pharmacies clients sometimes request for abortion pills and 16(30%) of pharmacy clients often request for abortion pills.

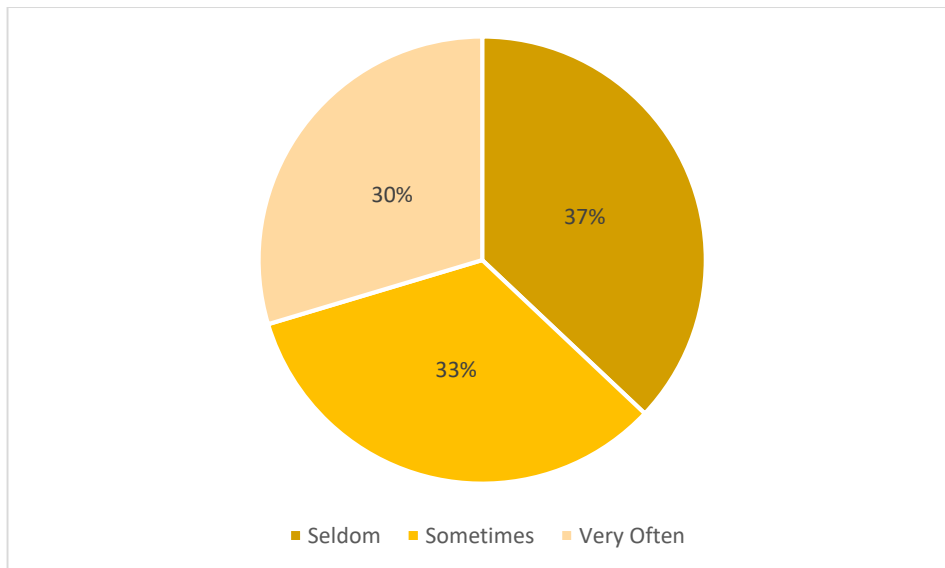


Figure 4: Frequency of demand for abortion pills

Among pharmacies that sell abortion pills, 11(42.3%) sell them to end pregnancy, 5(19.2%) sell abortion pills to make money, 4(15.4%) sell abortion pills depending on the demand from

clients and a few of the participants 3(11.5) will sell abortion pills only to clients who present a prescription.

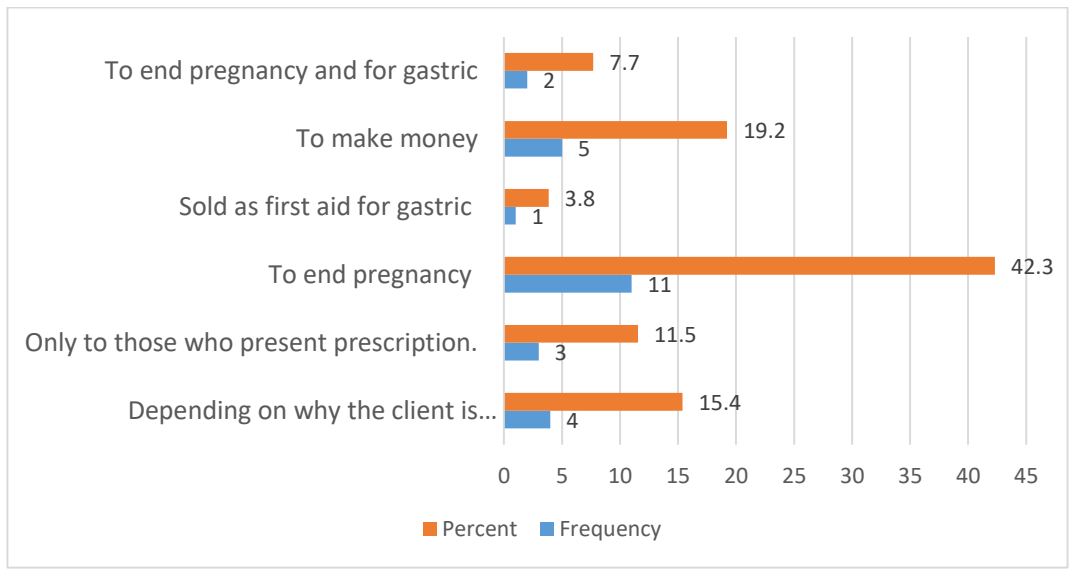


Figure 8: Reasons why pharmacies sell abortion pills

Most of the participants 34(91.9%) sell abortion pills to clients in their first trimester of pregnancy.

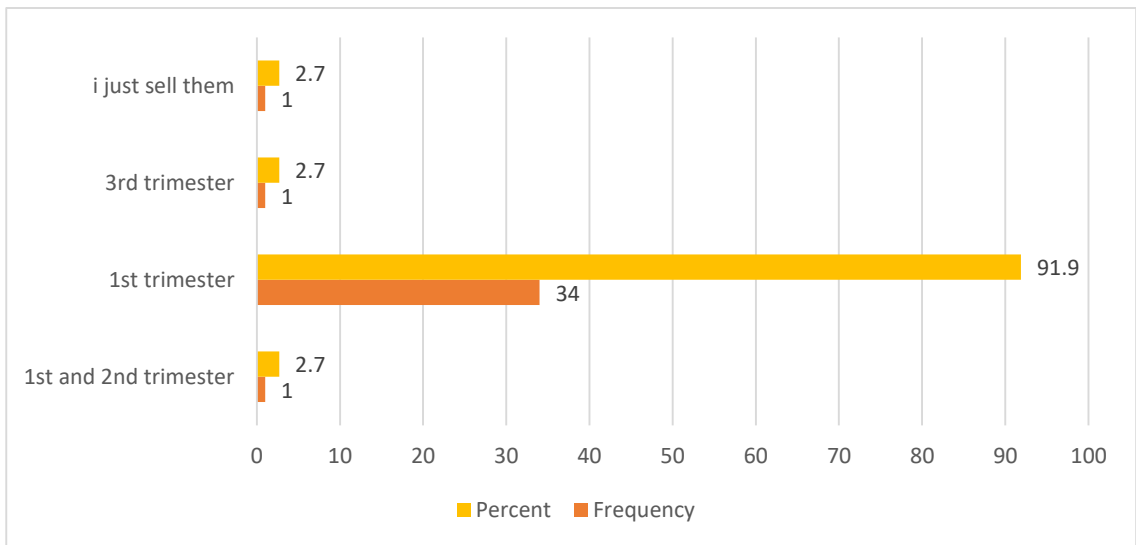


Figure 9: Prescription of abortion pills base on duration of pregnancy

Majority of the pharmacists 16(47.1%) denied to disclose information on how they prescribe these pills and 8(23.5%) sell on prescription(as demanded by clinicians).

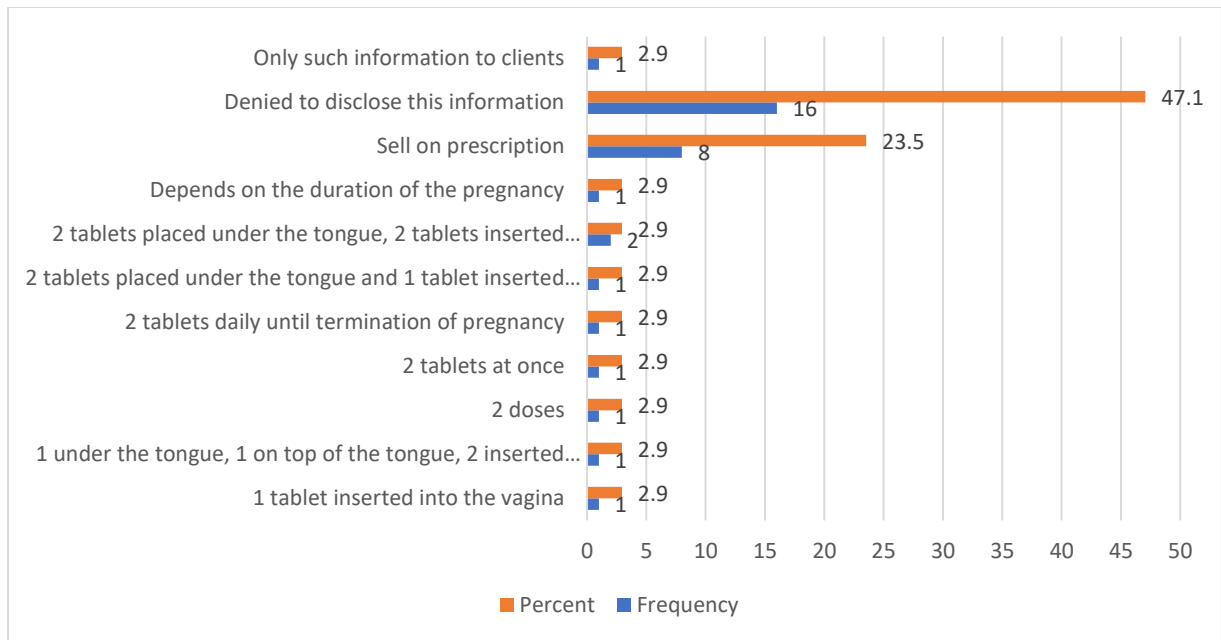


Figure 10: How abortion pills are prescribed by pharmacies

Majority of participants 39(72.2%) reported that clients requesting for pills are within the ages 20 years to 30 years, 10(18.5%) of the participants reported that clients requesting for pills are aged 20 years and below and a few of the participants 3(5.6%) reported that clients requesting for pills were aged 30 and above .

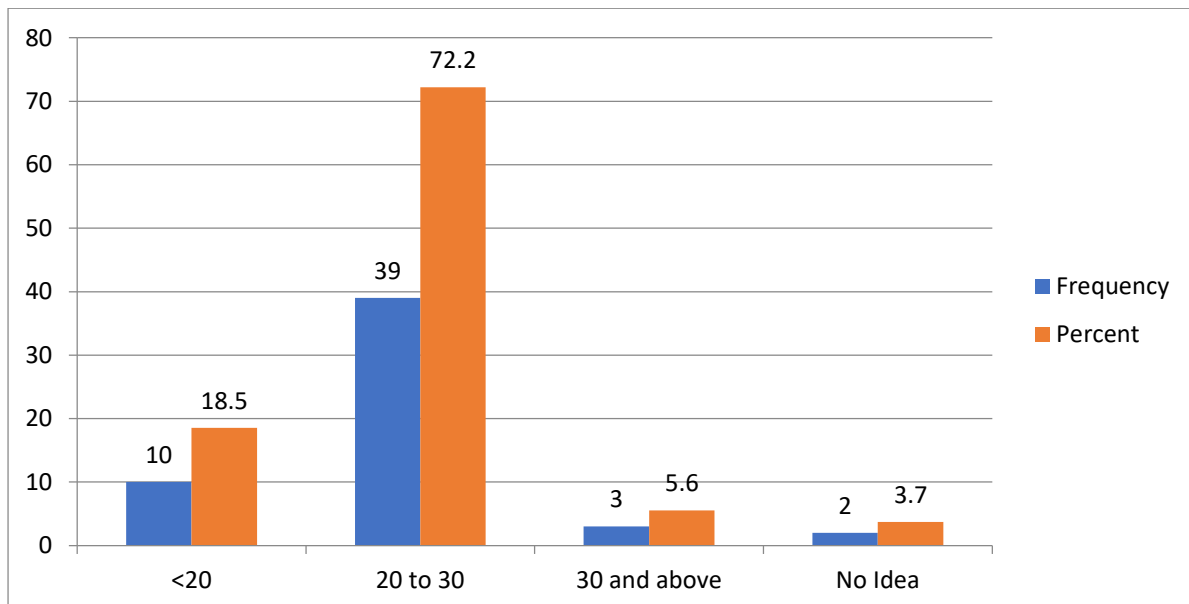


Figure 11: Age groups of clients requesting the drugs more

Majority of participants 7(25.9) sell abortion pills at 1500FCFA per pill.

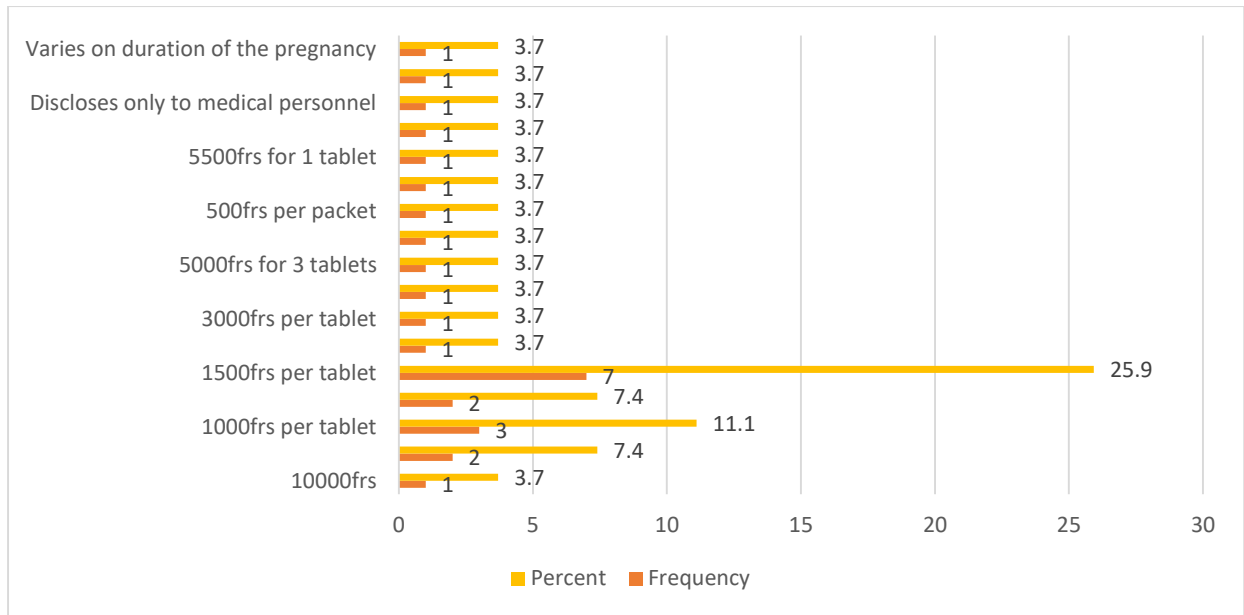


Figure 12: Cost of abortion pills

11(42.3%) of participants buy abortion pills from other drug stores in Douala and 9(34.6%) buy abortion pills from bigger drug stores within Buea.

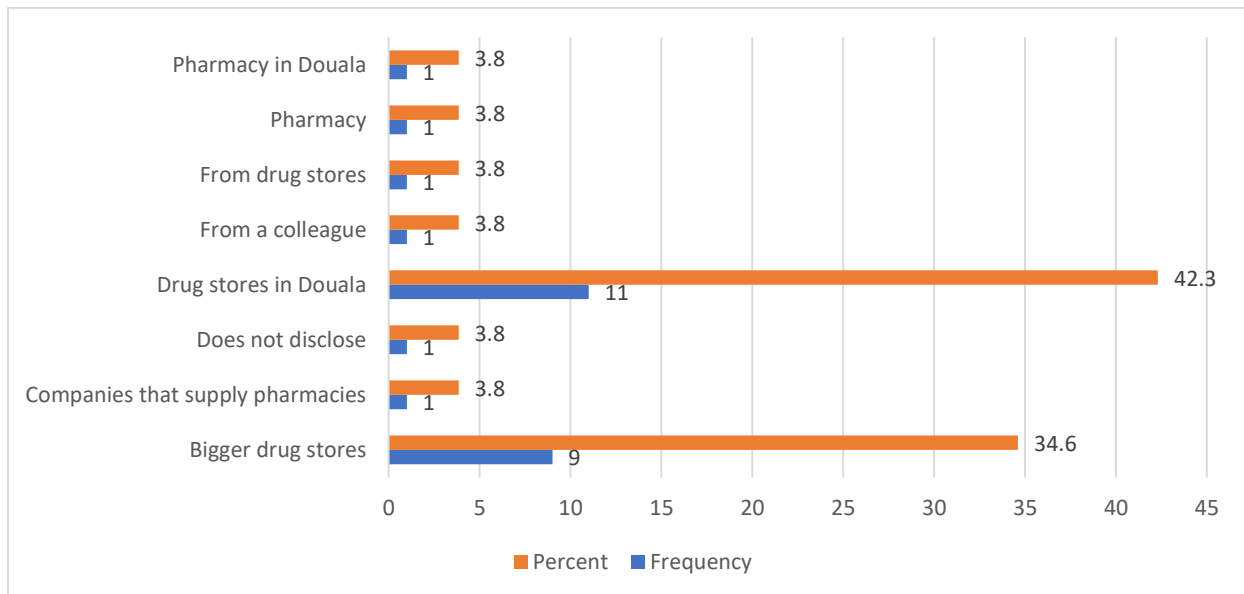


Figure 13: Where pharmacies buy abortion pills

53(98%) of the participants have never received complaints from clients after selling/prescribing the pills within the past three months

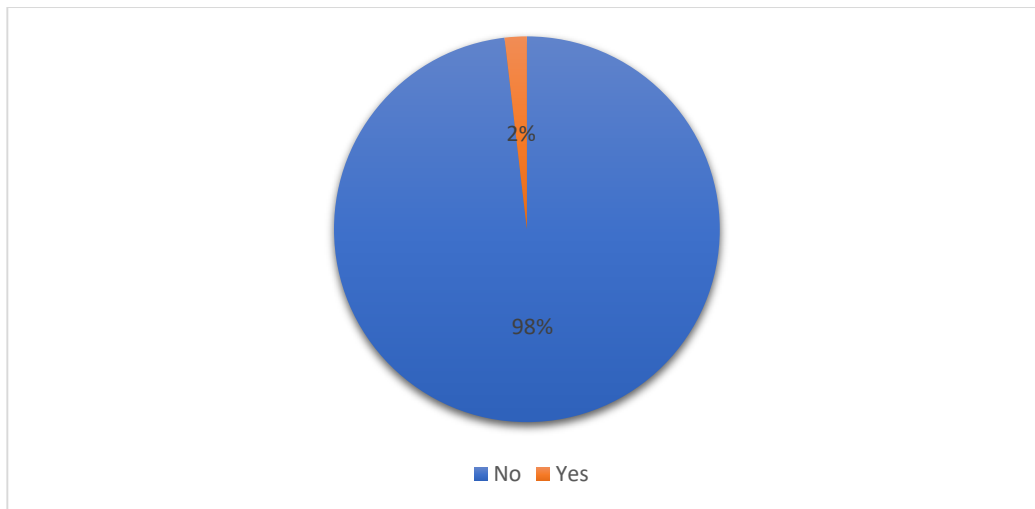


Figure 14: Complains received from clients in the past 3 months

Participants received complaints on incomplete abortion and severe cramp pains after clients used the pills.

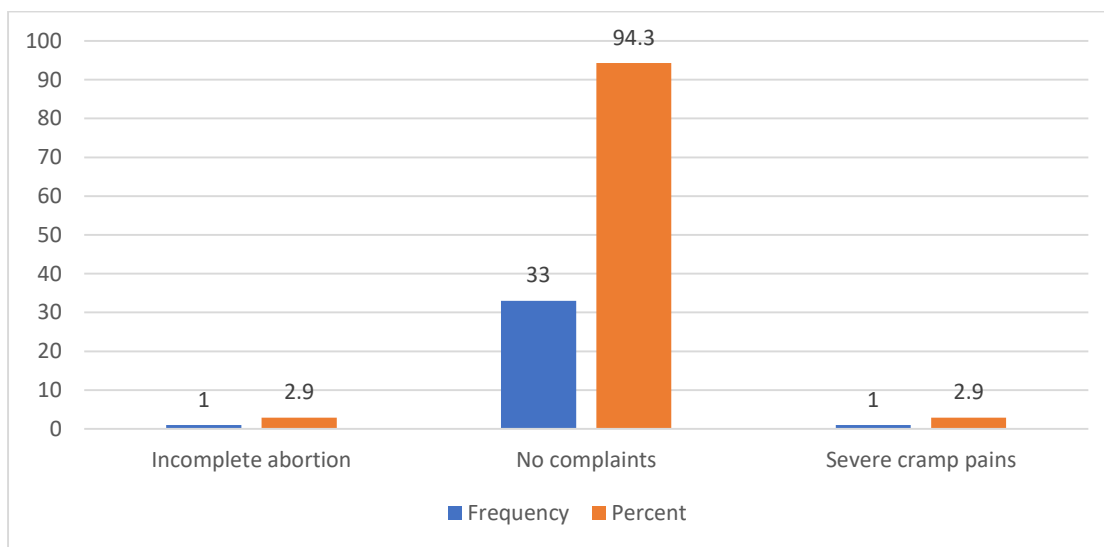


Figure 15: Common complaints received

Most of the participants, 37(69%) had no knowledge on the WHO protocol on the use of Misoprostol on self-managed abortion.

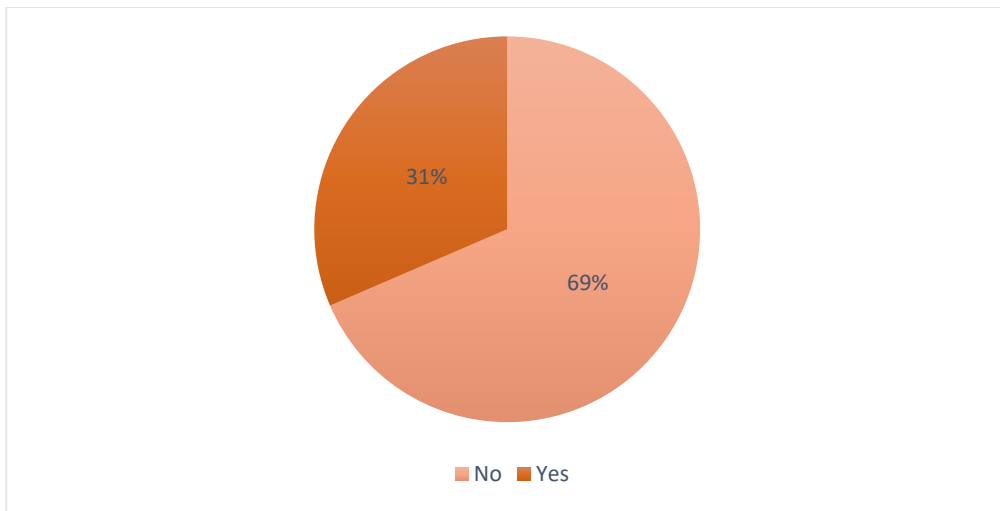


Figure 16: Participants’ knowledge on WHO protocol on the use of Misoprostol on self-managed abortion

Majority of the participants 49(91%), have never been trained on the use of Misoprostol for self-managed abortion.

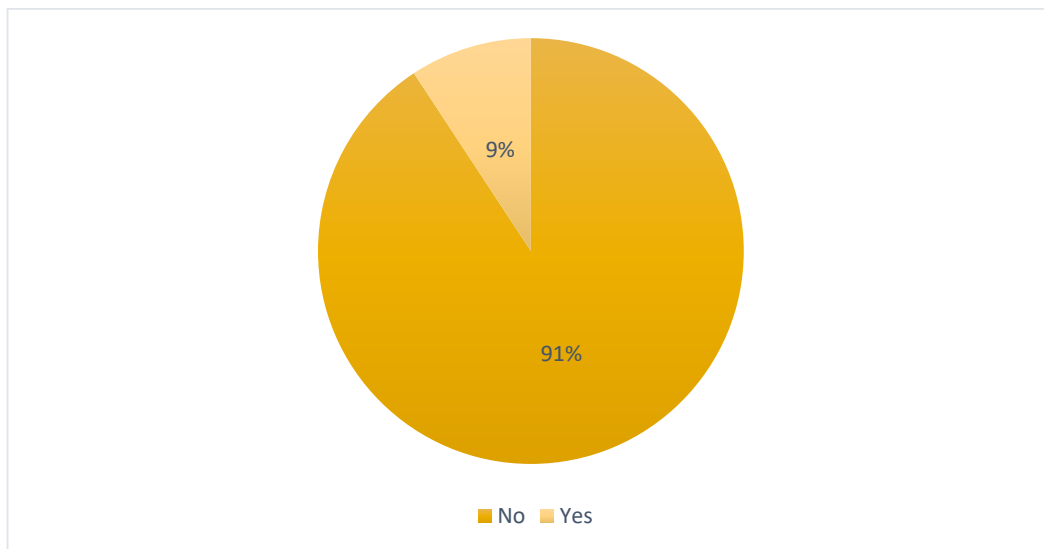


Figure 17: History on attending a training on WHO protocol on self-managed abortion

A few of the participants 12(22%) were willing to attend a training on WHO protocol on self-managed abortion.

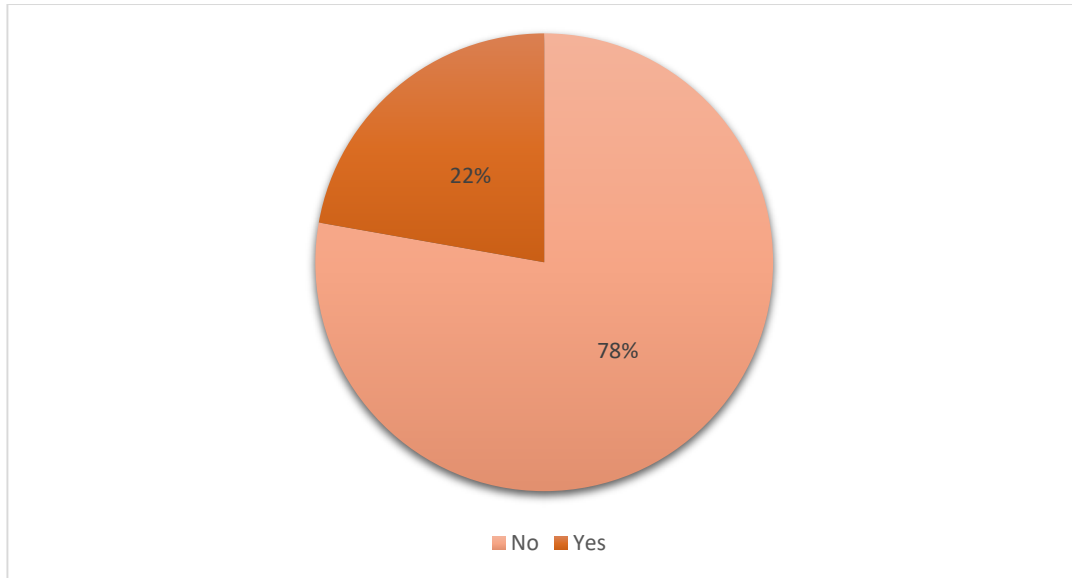


Figure 18: Willingness to attend a training on WHO protocol on self-managed abortion.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Pharmacy attendants and owners should be trained on the WHO protocol for self-managed abortions.
2. A partnership should be established with trusted suppliers (eg) DKT for pharmacies and drugstores to ensure the quality and price of pills
3. Restrictions on the sale of abortion drugs should be liberalized so as to make accessibility easy for pharmacies
4. To CBOs; partner with friendly pharmacies to ensure confidentiality, availability, affordability and the correct prescription of the pills.