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An Assessment of Knowledge, Attitudes & Practices of Pharmacists in Trinidad & Tobago on Planetary Health

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Introduction

- Planetary health is readily gaining significance since it addresses the catastrophic effects of climate change, infectious diseases, loss of biodiversity and competition for resources internationally.
- Pharmacists are more accessible in lower-income countries such as T&T so they are most suitable to become advocates for planetary health to promote environmental consciousness and conservation.
- Through the education and implementation of such practices, it can reduce the medical waste in the environment to decrease the harmful effects that planetary health addresses.

Objective

- How can pharmacists implement a change in pharmacy practices by applying the knowledge, attitudes and practices associated to planetary health?



Methodology

- The study was conducted from Dec 2021-May 2022.
- 260 online questionnaires were distributed to assess the knowledge pharmacists had, their attitudes towards planetary health and their willingness to incorporate such practices.
- Results obtained from anonymous Google forms were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics.
- Correct answers were given a score of 1, incorrect answers were given a score of 0. A pass/fail system was used with 75% being a passing score.
- Informed consent was obtained. Participants were allowed to reject to answer or withdraw at any time.

Results

Chart 1: Participants' Score with regards to Knowledge Questions

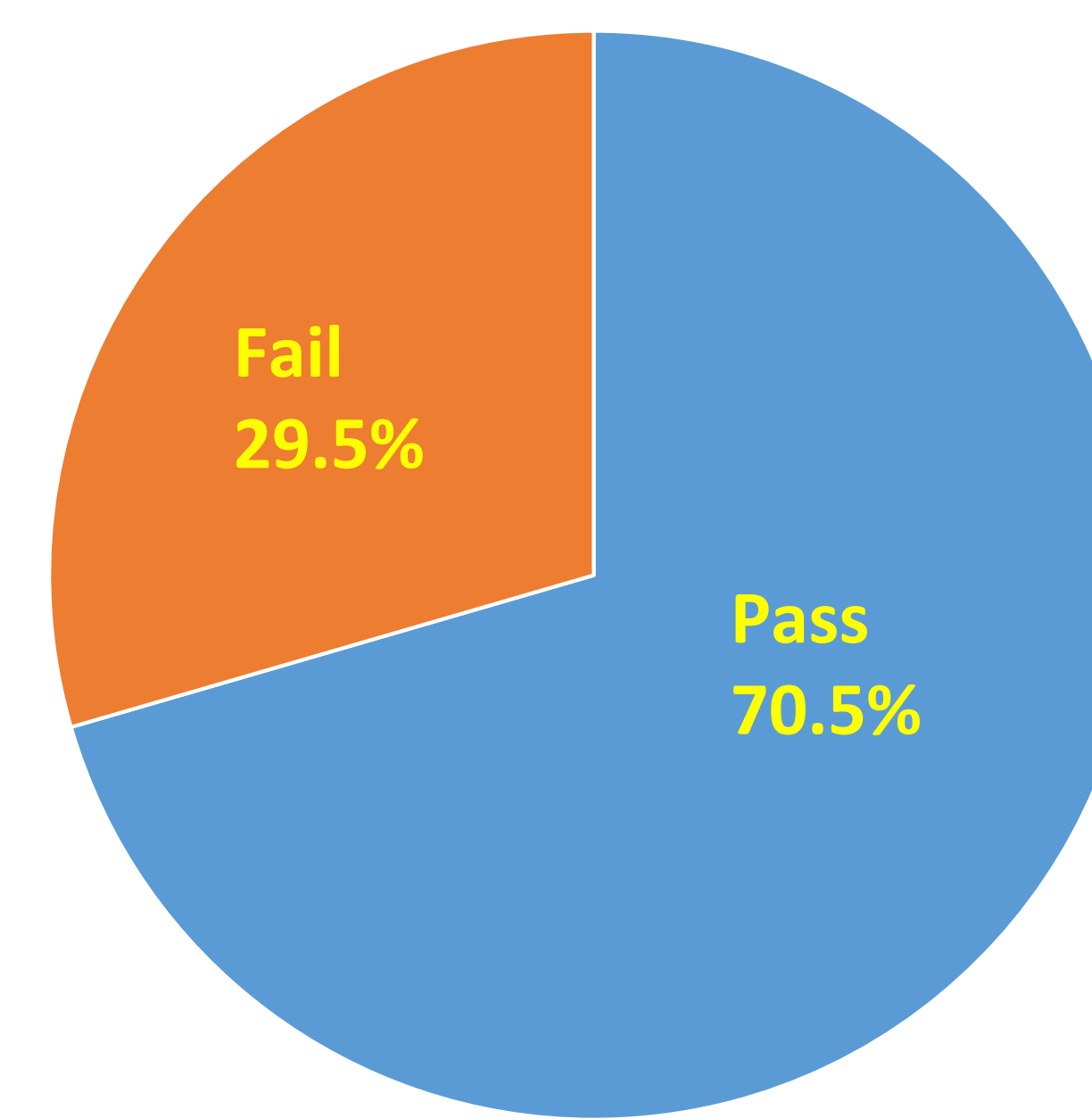


Chart 2: Participants' Score in regards to Attitude Questions

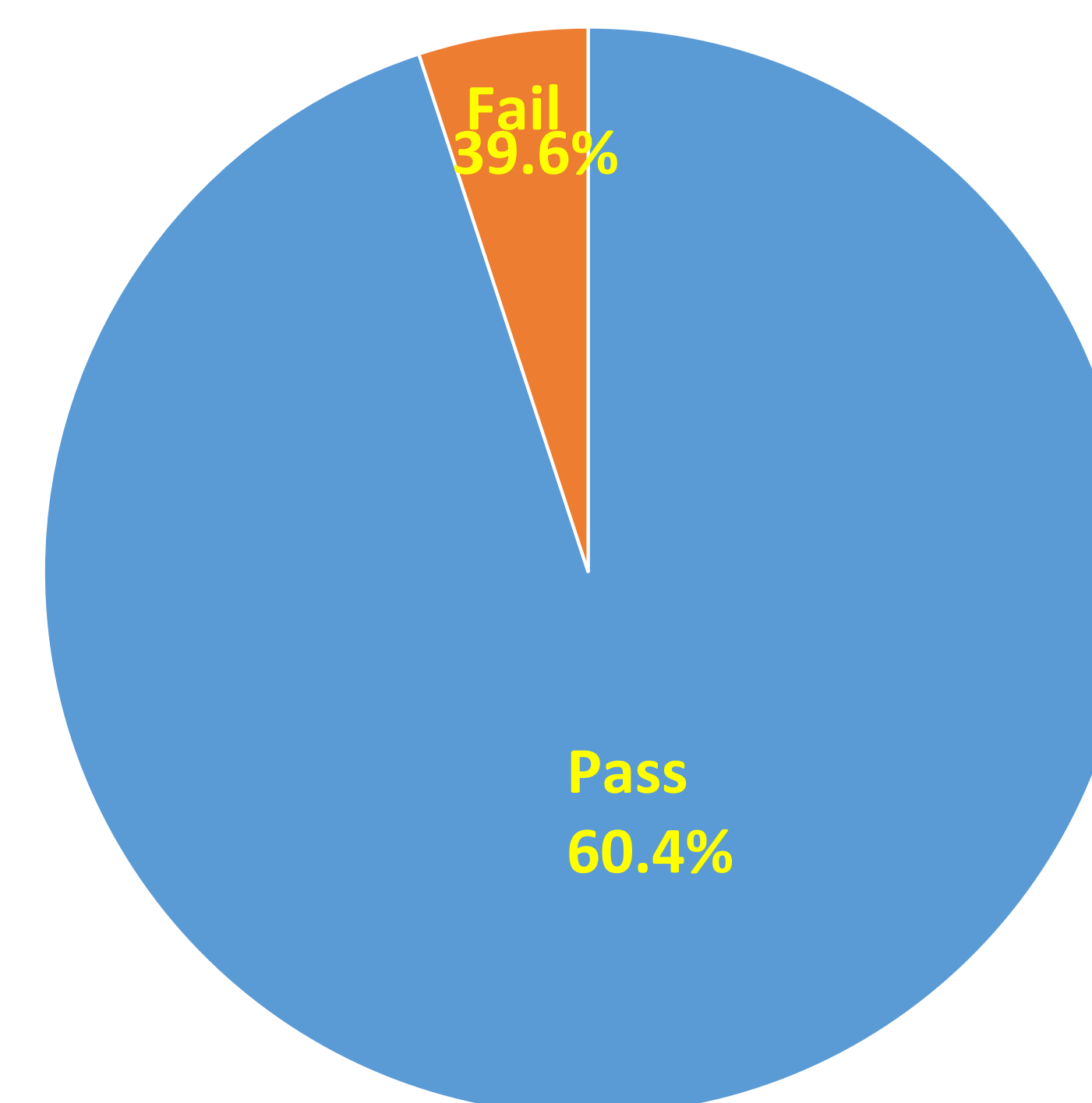
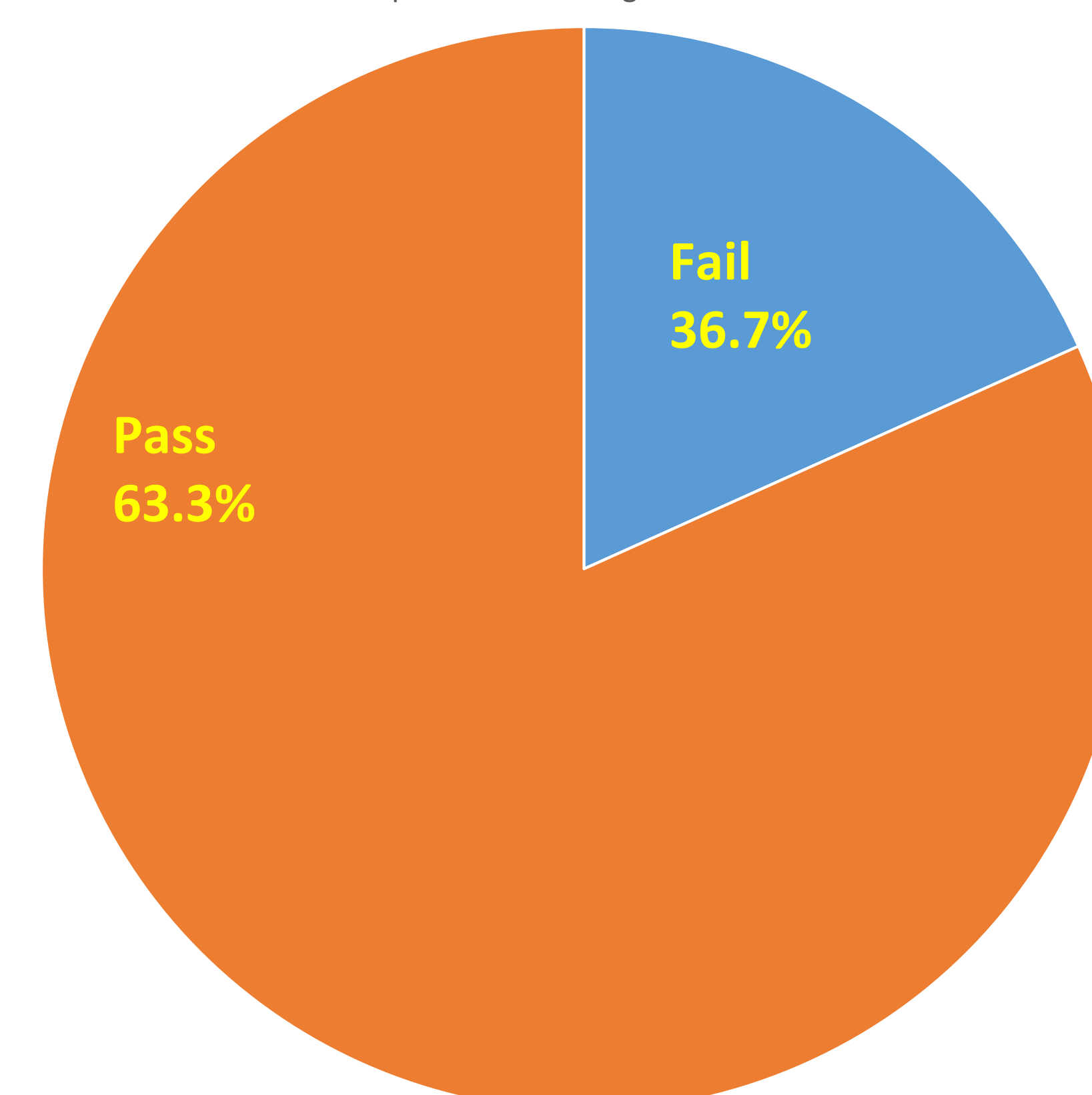


Chart 3: Participants' Score in regards to Practice Question



Discussion

- Pharmacists acknowledge their role in reducing such consequences associated with planetary health such as replacing plastic use with cardboard and polystyrene boxes, prescribing drugs with reusable eco-friendly dispensing bags, switching from metered dose inhaler to non-propellant inhaler and reducing plastic use for prescriptions and possibly grading drugs based on environmental effects.
- Pharmacists agreed practices such as prescribing appropriate dosage of drugs, encouraging returning of unused drugs, prescribing less environmentally damaging drug if the option exists, avoiding prescribing multiple drugs and instead finding one that helps wider range of symptoms and teaching proper drug disposal are eco-friendly practices.
- Pharmacists agreed the multiple benefits of enforcing associated planetary health practices included reduction of medical wastage, preventing further ozone depletion, helping to improve climate change and global warming, and contributing to a cleaner, more sustainable environment and most importantly reducing the exacerbations of climate dependent illnesses and diseases greatly affecting patients' well-being.

Conclusion

- Pharmacists generally possessed adequate knowledge on planetary health, their attitudes towards the topic were found to be promising and they were willing to welcome such practices
- This was least seen however, in age groups under 30 and with pharmacists possessing less than 10 years of experience.

References

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