

My day with Oncology Pharmacy - Macedonia

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1. Introduction

Pharmacists from Clinical Hospital "Acibadem Sistina" in Skopje, answered the 17 questions of the survey, which represent the actual situation in the field of Oncology Pharmacy in their hospital. Patients at the Department of Oncology receive an individual treatment plan by a multidisciplinary team of specialists. At the moment, six pharmacists cover the oncological production and they have no additional activities on the ward, except to invest nearly their full working capacity into the manufacturing and logistical process of cytotoxic drugs. Patients care is mainly covered by oncology nurses.

2. Material and method

The 17 questions covered the following fields:

- Profession and workplace;
- Preparing of patient-specific infusions;
- Validation of physician's prescriptions;
- Form of prescription (paper based or by email, fax, phone calls...);
- Average number of prepared medications per day;
- Release of prepared solutions;
- Providing patients with oral chemotherapy drugs;
- Method of ordering oral chemotherapy drugs;
- Patient consultation in medical properties, side effects and handling the cytotoxic drugs;
- Invested working hours at the Department of Oncology on daily basis;

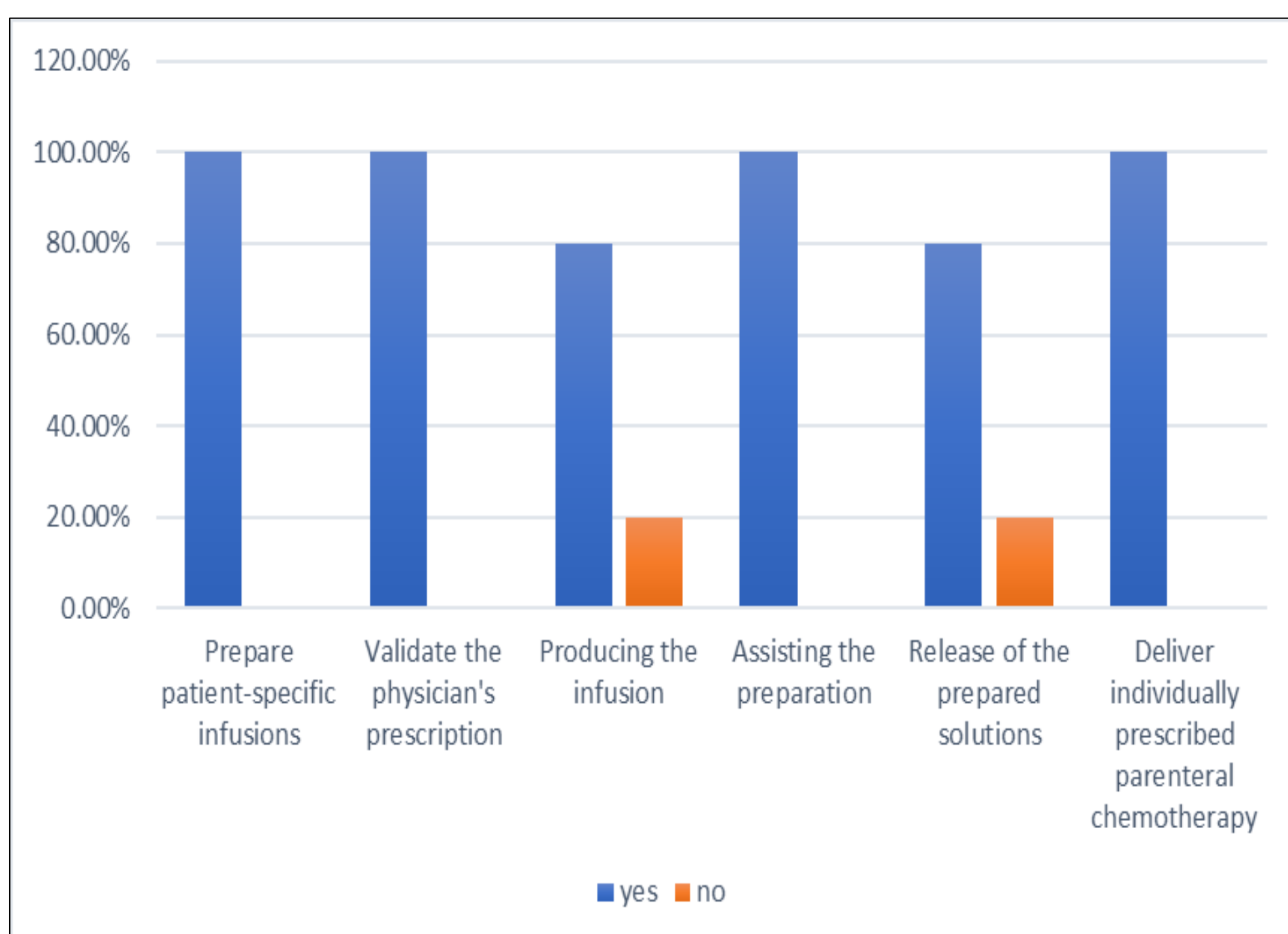


Fig.1: Involvement of the pharmacists in the preparation of cytotoxic drugs

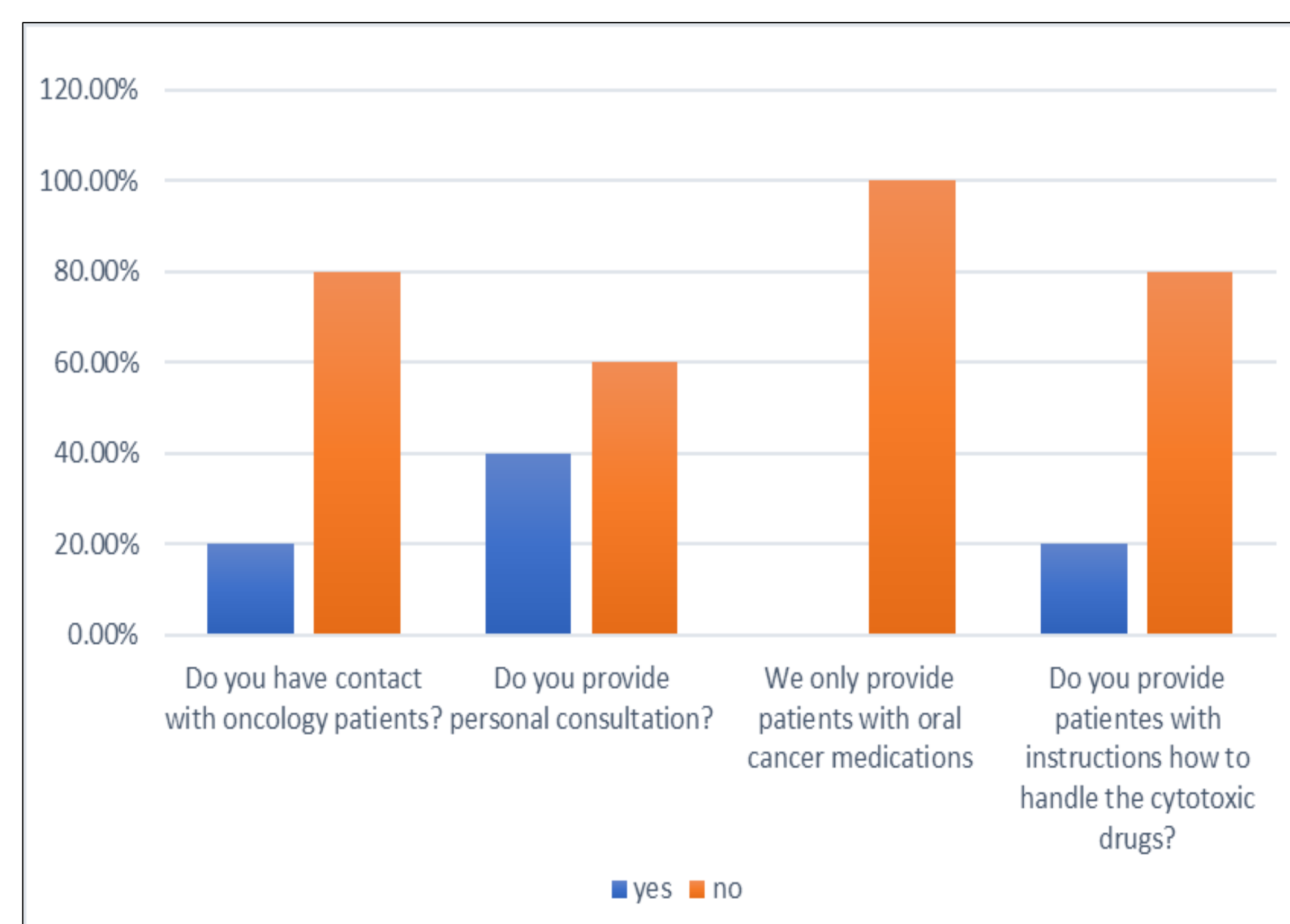


Fig.2: Direct contact with the patient

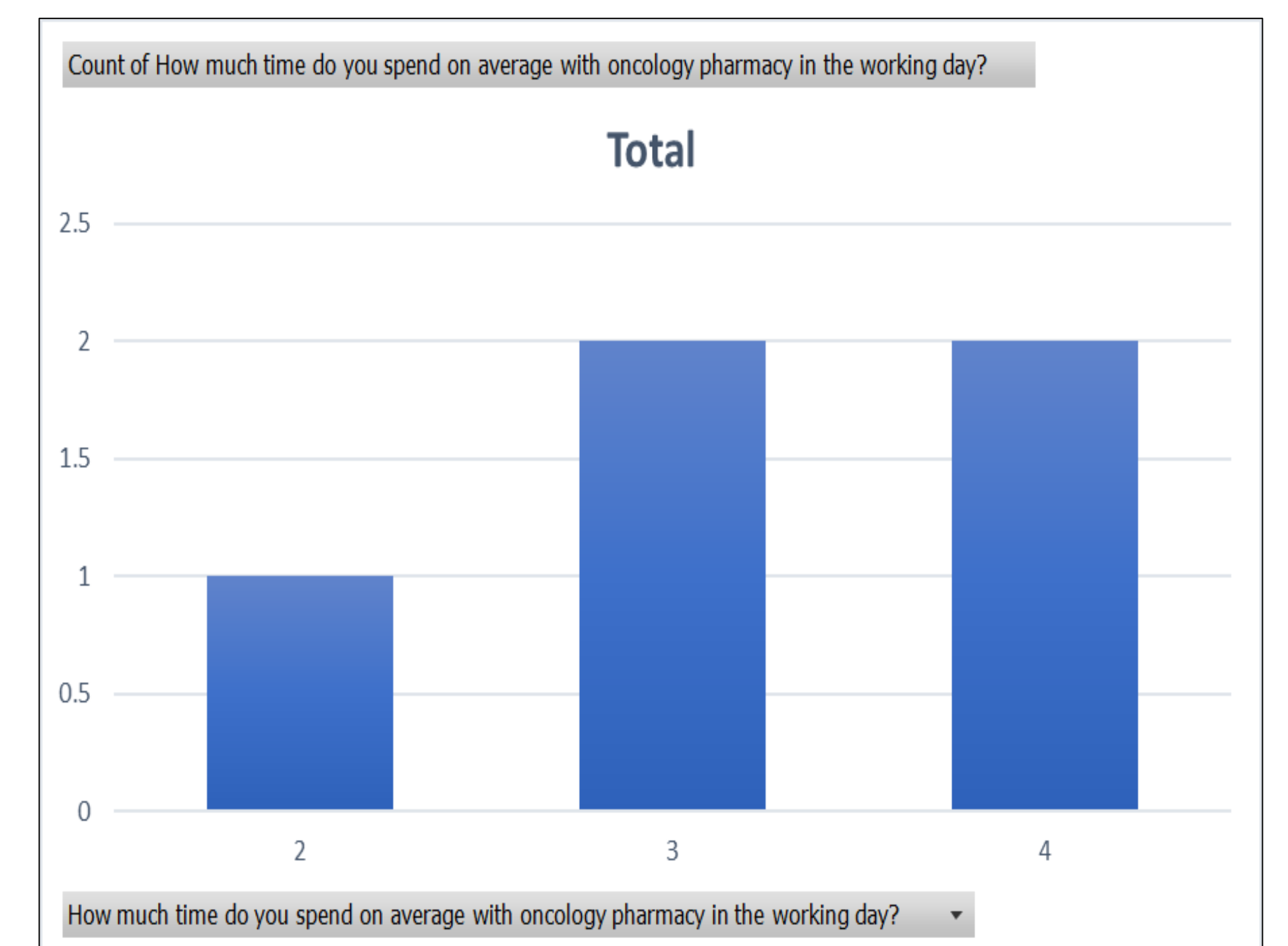


Fig. 3: Time spent in oncology in a working day

3. Results and discussion

- Pharmacists have a crucial part in oncology pharmacy, taking care of chemotherapy safety and cost effectiveness.
- All those who responded to the survey were pharmacists who are working in the hospital.
- Pharmacists are involved in the preparation of parenteral cytotoxic drugs for administration to patients, according to the written regulation.
- The prescriptions are validated by pharmacists and the individually prescribed parenteral chemotherapy is delivered.
- Clinical Hospital "Acibadem Sistina" have a daily production capacity between 1 and 30 i.v. medications, 15 on average.
- Cytotoxic drugs are mainly prepared by gravimetric procedure, because there is no automated system for preparation.
- The cytotoxic drugs are ordered by wholesalers.
- Most of the pharmacists do not have direct contact with the patients and do not provide personal consultations.
- Pharmacists work up to 4 hours daily on average on activities related to the treatment of cancer patients.



Fig.4: Chemotherapy preparation



Fig.5: Care for an oncology patient

Conclusion

To bring the production experts tighter to the ward, to enable dialogs with physicians and care unit and to avoid long transportation, more and more hospitals directly integrate the production module into the oncological outpatient unit. This will provide oncological pharmacists to combine clinical and manufacturing aspects of the therapy. They also need special EUSOP education and training.

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