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A STUDY OF PHARMACY-BASED TICK-BORNE ENCEPHALITIS VACCINATIONS

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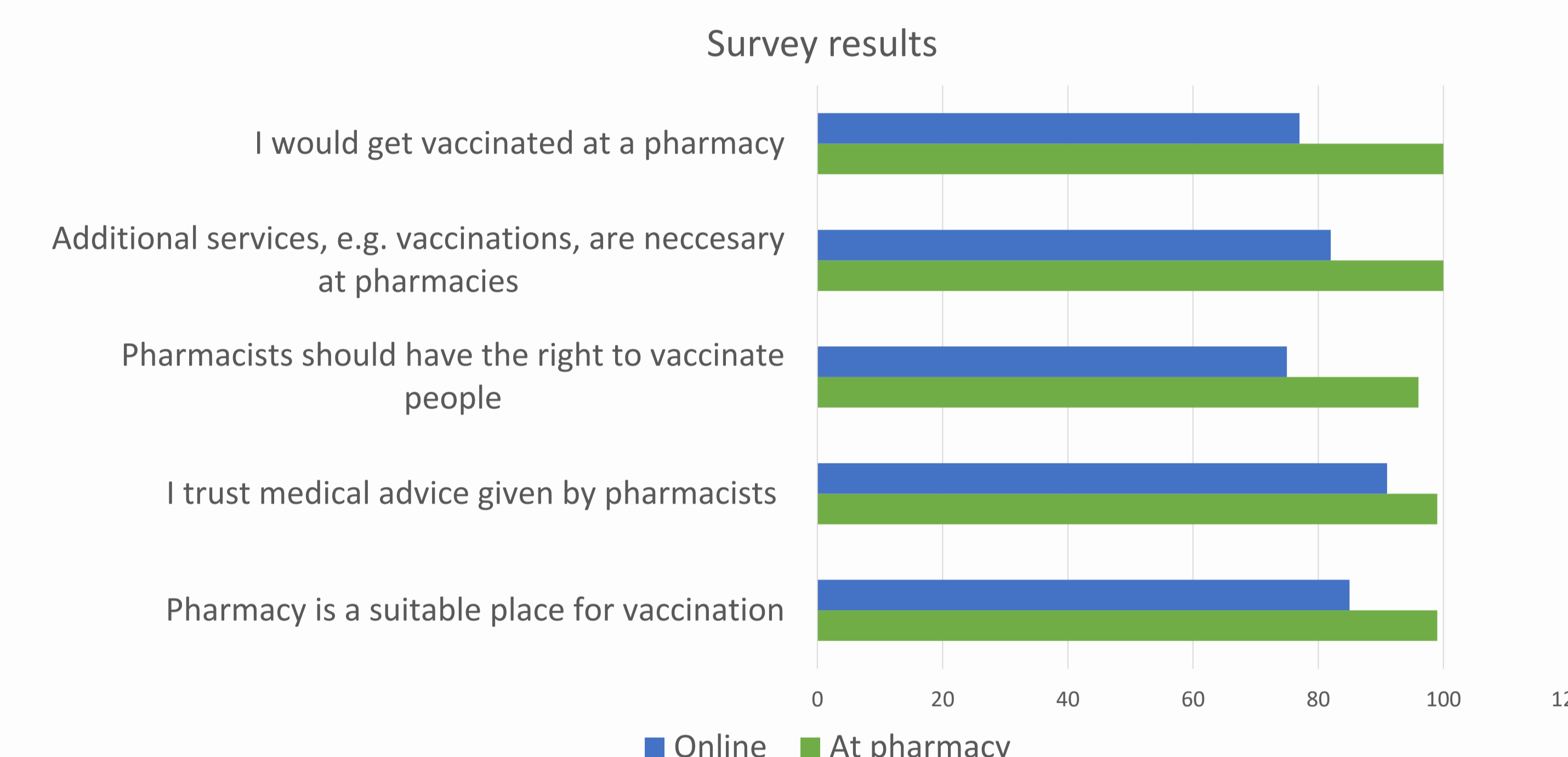
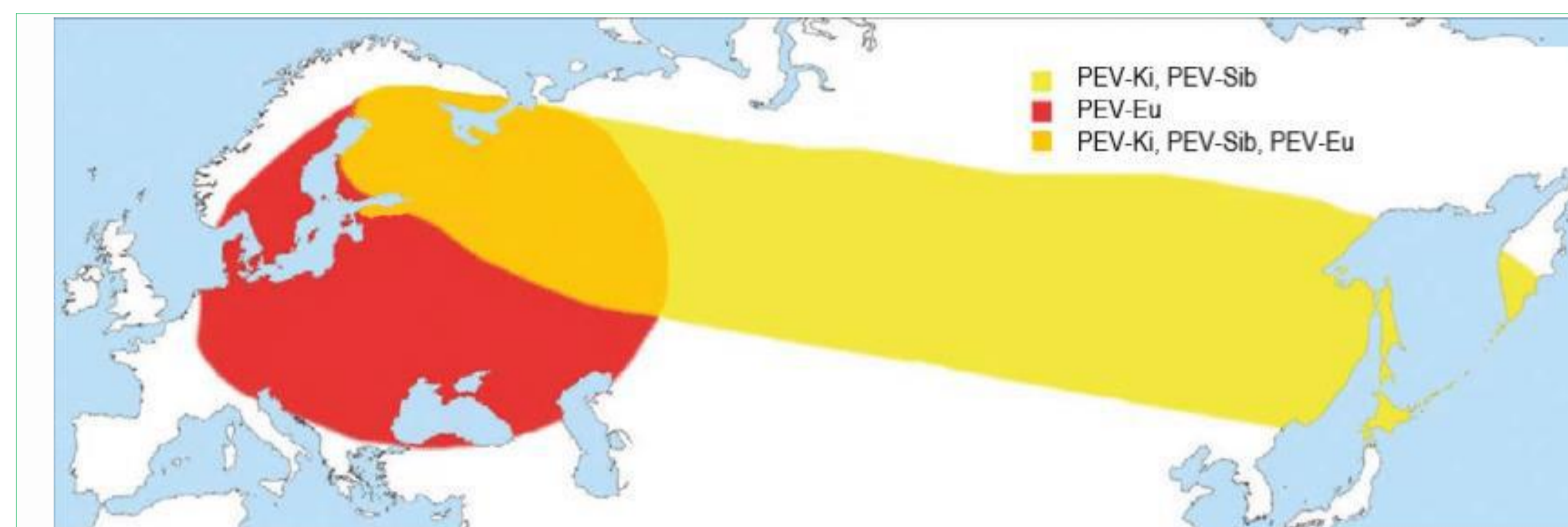
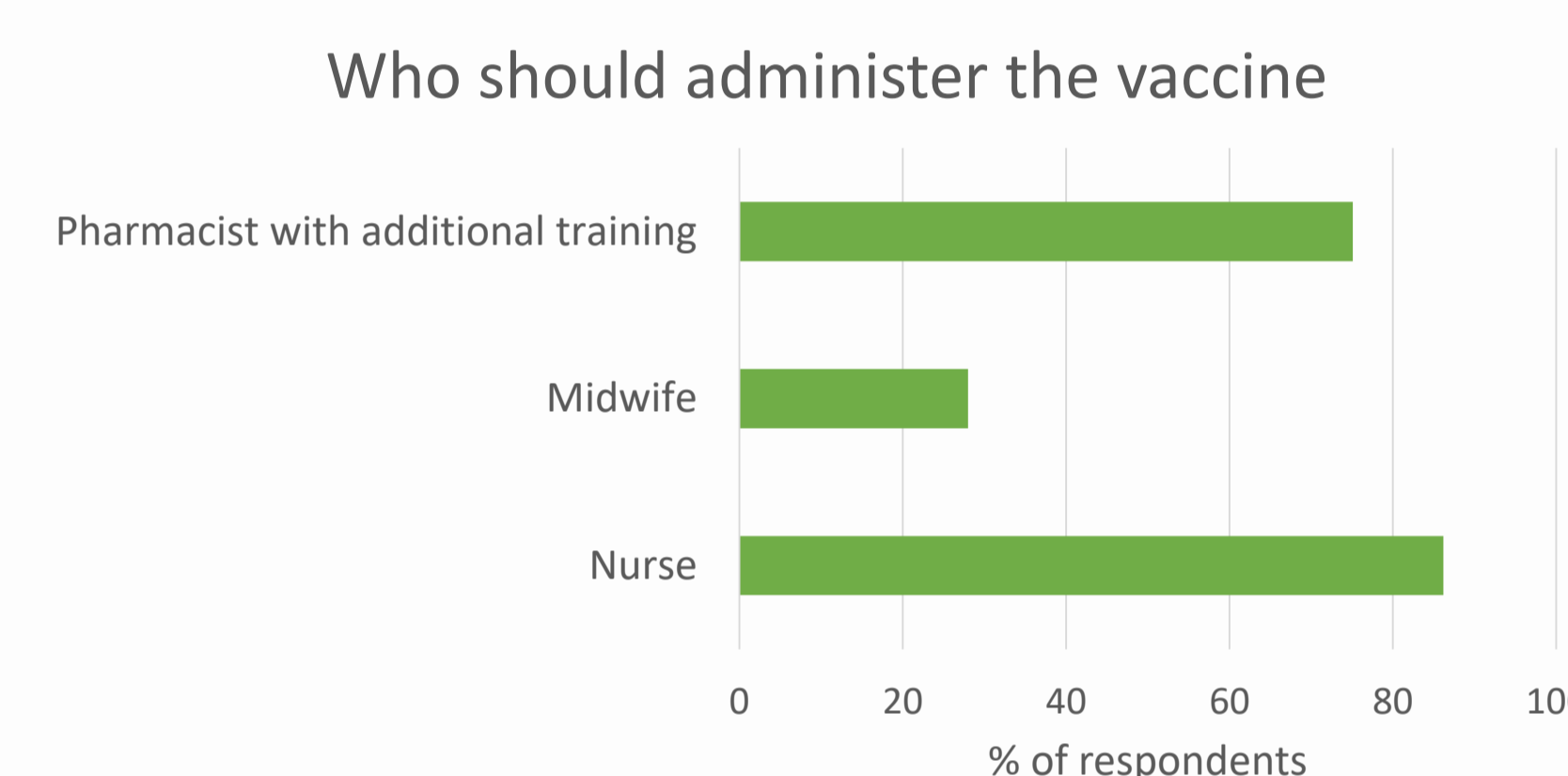
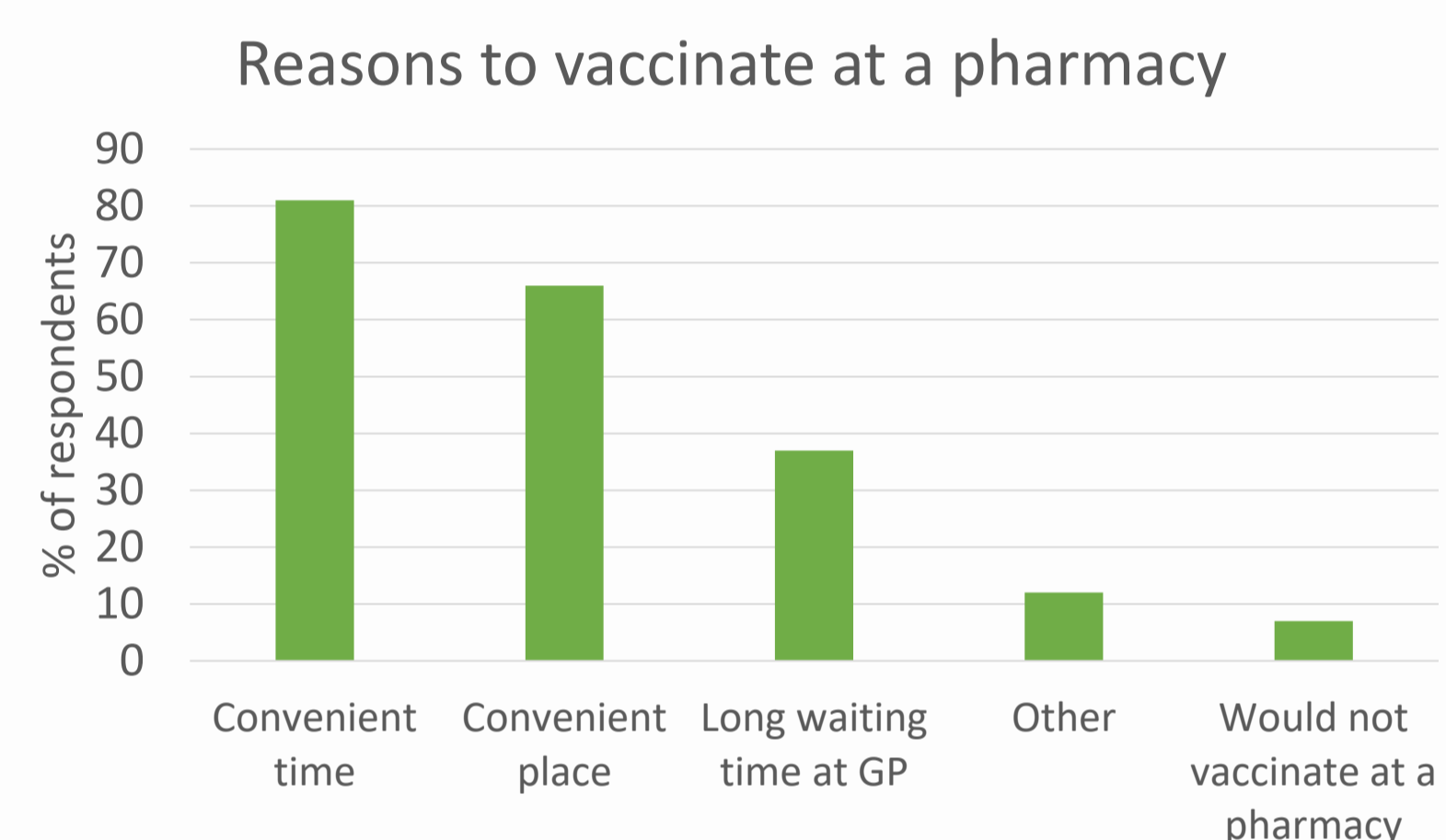


INTRODUCTION

Tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) is a viral disease that can damage central nervous system and cause neurological disorders, with symptoms including nausea, hearing loss, paralysis and disruption of balance and memory. Over 10,000 patients are hospitalized annually as a result of contracting TBE, whereas the only effective prevention method is vaccination. Estonia is an endemic area for the spread of TBE. Offering vaccinations in pharmacies increases the amount of protection against illness as pharmacies can be more convenient and accessible for the patient.

METHOD

The survey was conducted during 2 weeks within the TBE vaccination in May 2019 at 3 pharmacies in Tallinn that participated in the 2019 TBE campaign. Online questionnaire was conducted 10 months later. The questionnaire consisted of 13 multiple choice and scaled-response questions, it was voluntary and anonymous, including only adults who were actively receiving a vaccination at a participating pharmacy.



AIM/S

The aim of the study was:

- To evaluate the accessibility of TBE vaccination service;
- To evaluate the people's readiness to use vaccination services in pharmacies;
- To acquire knowledge about society's perception of pharmacists as vaccination providers.

RESULTS

Almost half of the respondents were vaccinated against TBE for the first time and vaccination is not readily available to approximately 40% without a pharmacy. An online survey revealed that 52% of respondents found it difficult to visit a doctor during working hours, and about 33% of respondents stated that they did not have good access to general practitioner services. The pharmacy service was readily accessible to about 97% of the respondents, and 96% agreed with the statement that the provision of vaccination services in pharmacies would make the vaccination service more accessible. Most respondents were interested in vaccination services in pharmacies and claimed that pharmacists should have the right to vaccinate people. If possible, most respondents would receive vaccination in a pharmacy.

Nearly all (99%) of the participants considered the pharmacy vaccination services necessary and would use these services in the future. 60% of the online questionnaire respondents stated that vaccination services should be allowed in all pharmacies who are willing to provide it, especially in rural areas where health care services are scarcely provided.

CONCLUSION

It is important to broaden vaccination services across all pharmacies in order to increase the accessibility of vaccines, raising additional awareness of the impact and preventative measures against infectious diseases. Pharmacies can have an important role in vaccination campaigns and in raising awareness among general public of the benefits and availability of vaccinations for diseases such as TBE.

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