



Improving vaccination coverage through community pharmacy services; the COVID-19 experience and implications for policy review in Nigeria

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Introduction

Vaccination coverage is an outcome immunization indicator commonly used in monitoring of immunization programme. Globally, the use of community pharmacies and pharmacists in the delivery of vaccination services has been hampered by several factors, laws and regulations that do not support pharmacists to participate in the delivery of vaccination services.



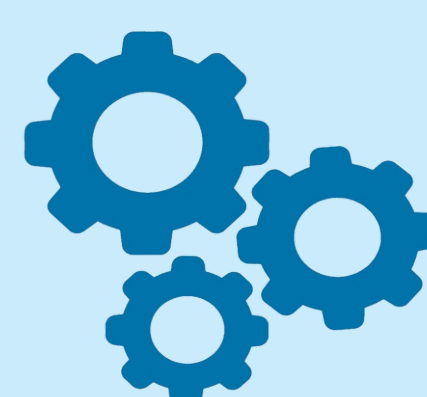
Objectives

- (i) to describe how the involvement of community pharmacies in vaccination services will improve vaccination coverage in Nigeria, using the COVID-19 experience;
- (ii) to explain how their involvement can be adopted in advocating for policy review that would recognize community pharmacists (CPs) in immunization service delivery in Nigeria.



Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional mixed-method (both quantitative and qualitative data) survey design was conducted among CPs in two south-western States in Nigeria.



A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 474 CPs while qualitative data were collected through FGDs, IDI and KI interviews.

Data were analysed with both descriptive and inferential statistics and statistical significance at $p \leq 0.05$.

Results

- (i) Response rate was 86.7%
- (ii) Less than half of the respondents (165, 40.1%) had undergone vaccination training
- (iii) Of the 129 (31.4%) respondents that provide vaccination services, 72 (55.8%) of them administer vaccines in their pharmacies.



Results Cont'd

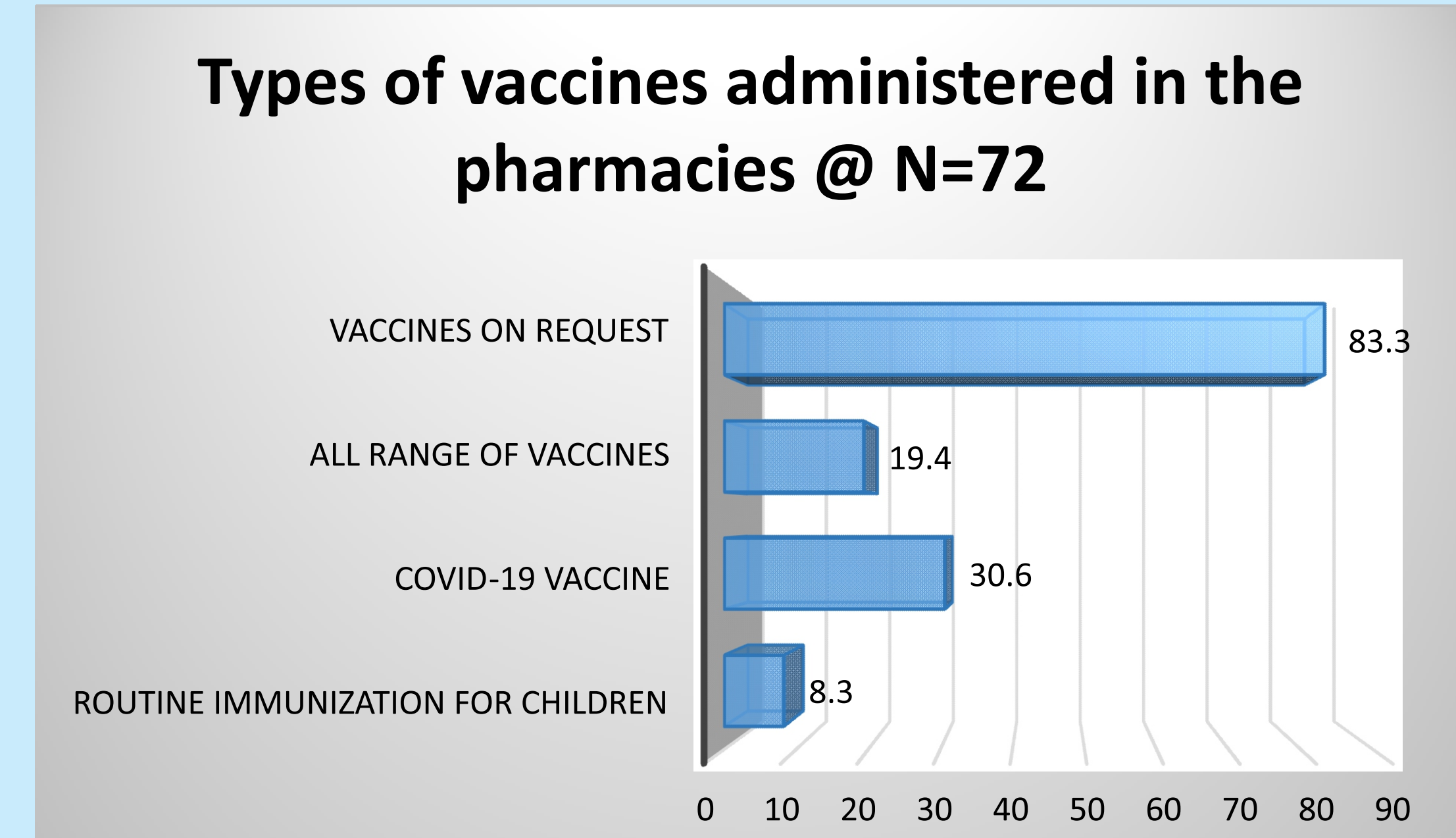
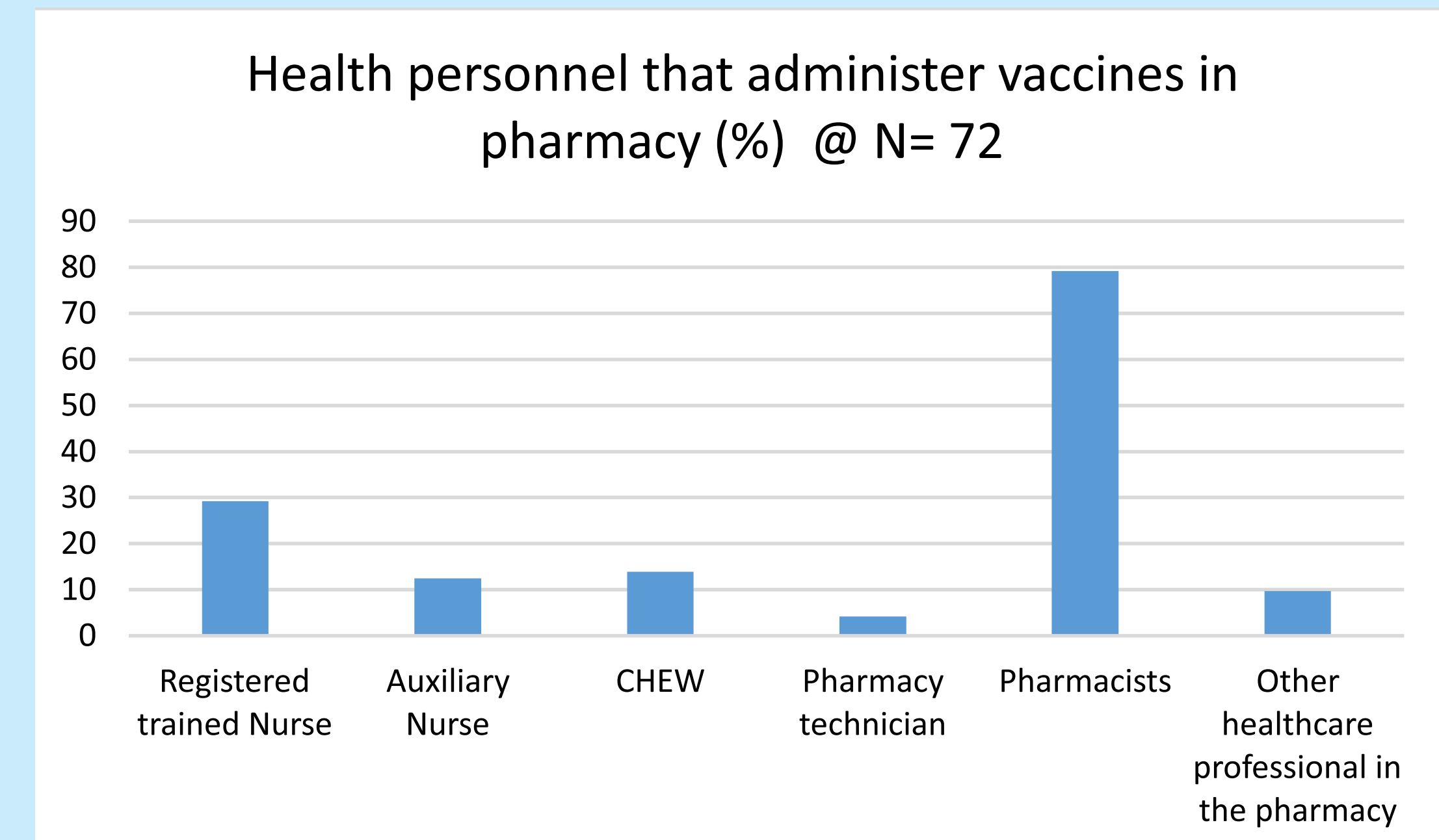
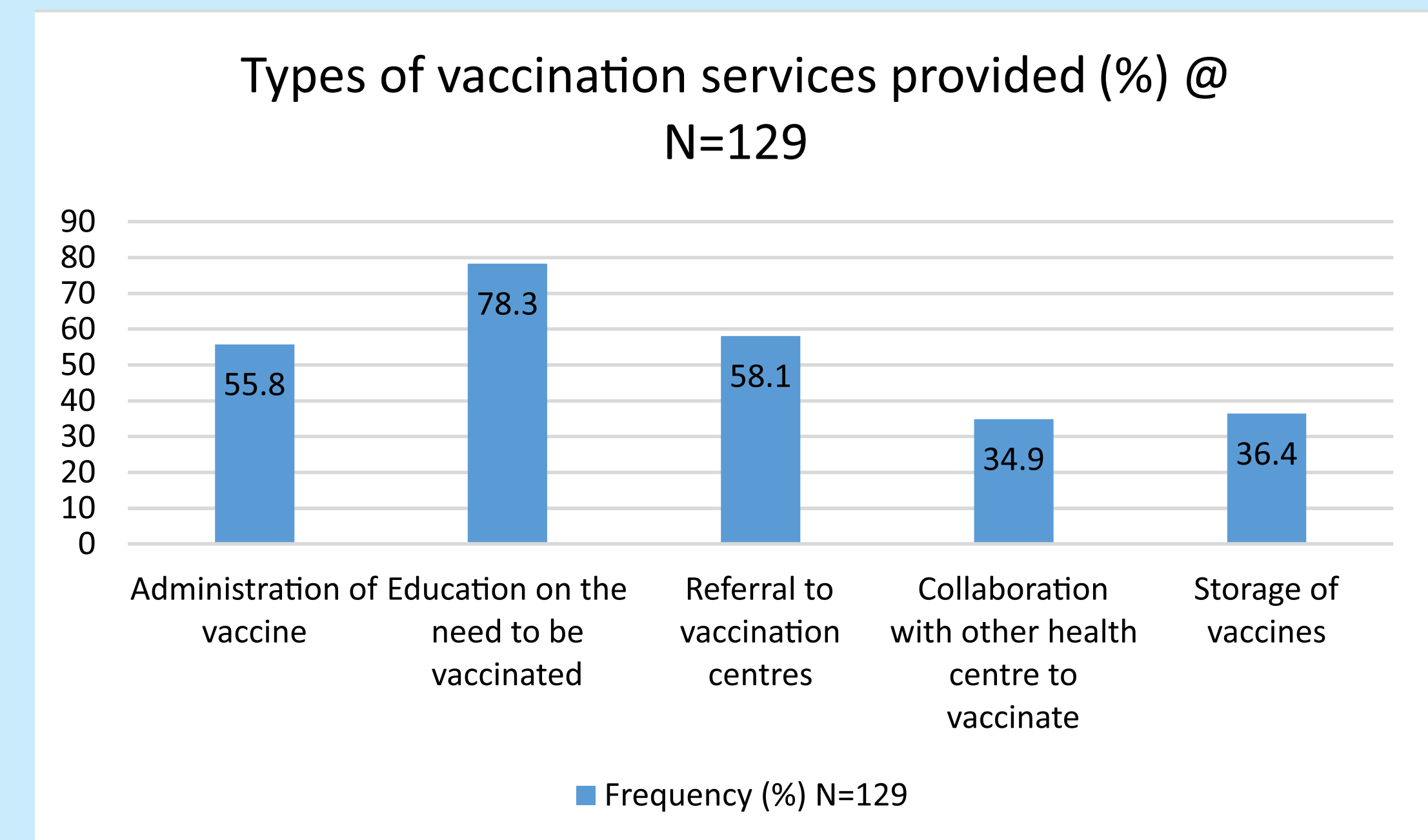
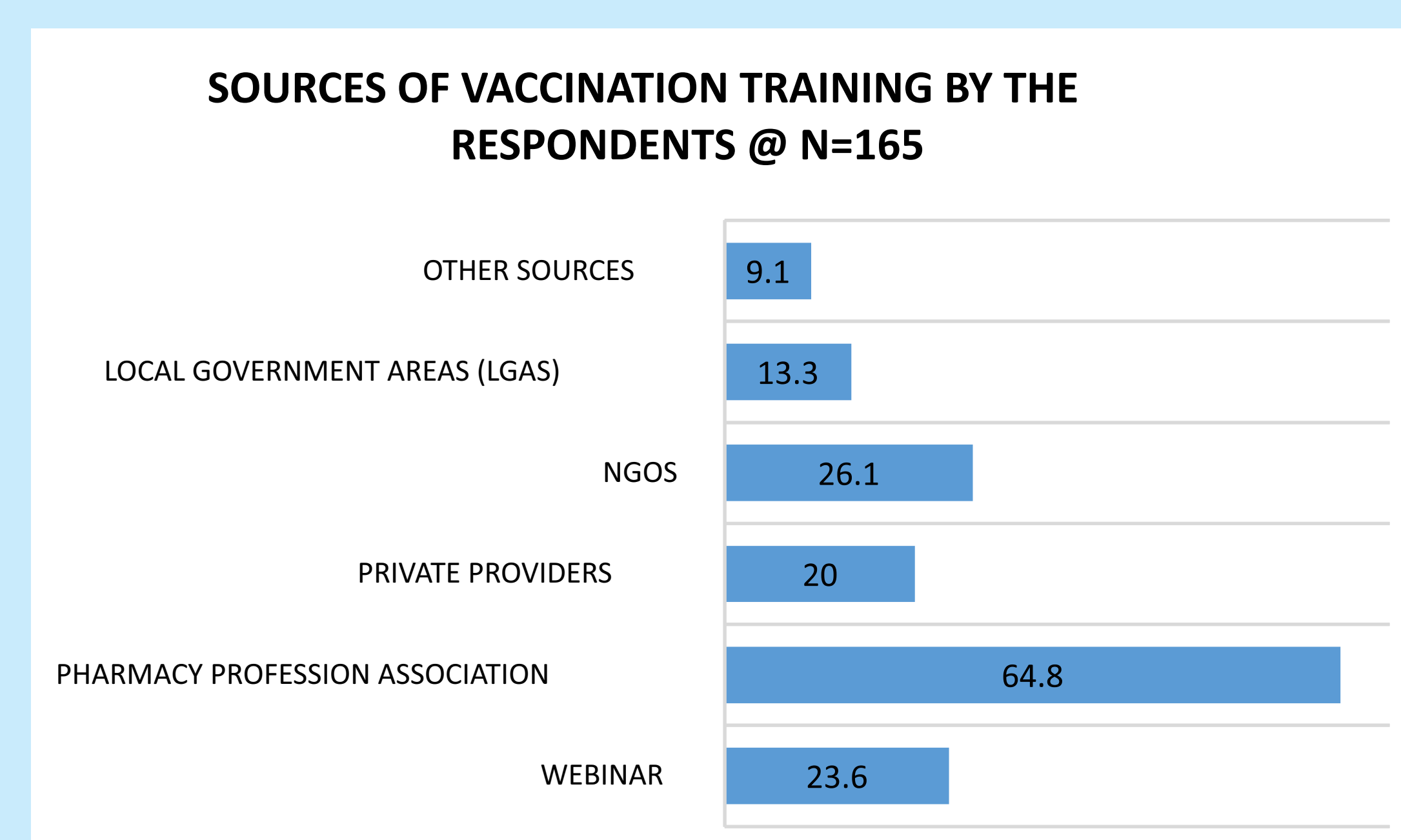
Out of the 72 respondents that administer vaccines in their pharmacies; 45(62.5%) were administering vaccines before their involvement in COVID-19 vaccine administration; 57(79.2%) of the health personnel who administer vaccines in the pharmacies were pharmacists; 60(83.3%) of them administer vaccines on request; 22(30.6%) administered COVID-19 vaccines only; and Only 7(10%) of the respondents had administered over 500 doses of covid-19 vaccine in their pharmacies



Initiatives of the pharmacy association leaders include advocacy to policymakers to recognise CPs as PHC centres, continuous training of members, and establishment of Vaccine Advisory M&E Committee (VAMEC) for self-monitoring of members administering COVID-19 vaccine.

Key informant interview revealed that

- (i) No existing law gives CPs the approval to administer vaccine though there is an understanding with the NPHCDA that needs to be formalised
- (ii) Having community pharmacies as vaccination centres after certification will promote access, improve coverage and eventually reduce disease burden
- (iii) The National Council of Health (NCH) needs to approve CP inclusion into the vaccine policy in Nigeria



Conclusion

- ✓ The training of CPs through the pharmacy association had increased the number of respondents' involvement in vaccination services in Nigeria
- ✓ The involvement of the CPs in COVID-19 vaccination had increased number of clients' vaccinated in Nigeria
- ✓ Recognition of CPs as PHC providers will remove barriers to provide vaccination services by the respondents
- ✓ Government and policymakers need to support the inclusion of CPs as vaccinators through legal framework and policy in Nigeria



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Acknowledgement

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