

Assessing the Value of a Dental Plain Language Glossary to Effectively Disseminate Health Information Among Non-Dental Health Professionals

Melissa Harmel & Amy Hoang

Mentors: Lisa Bress, RDH, MS and Mary Ann Williams, MSLS

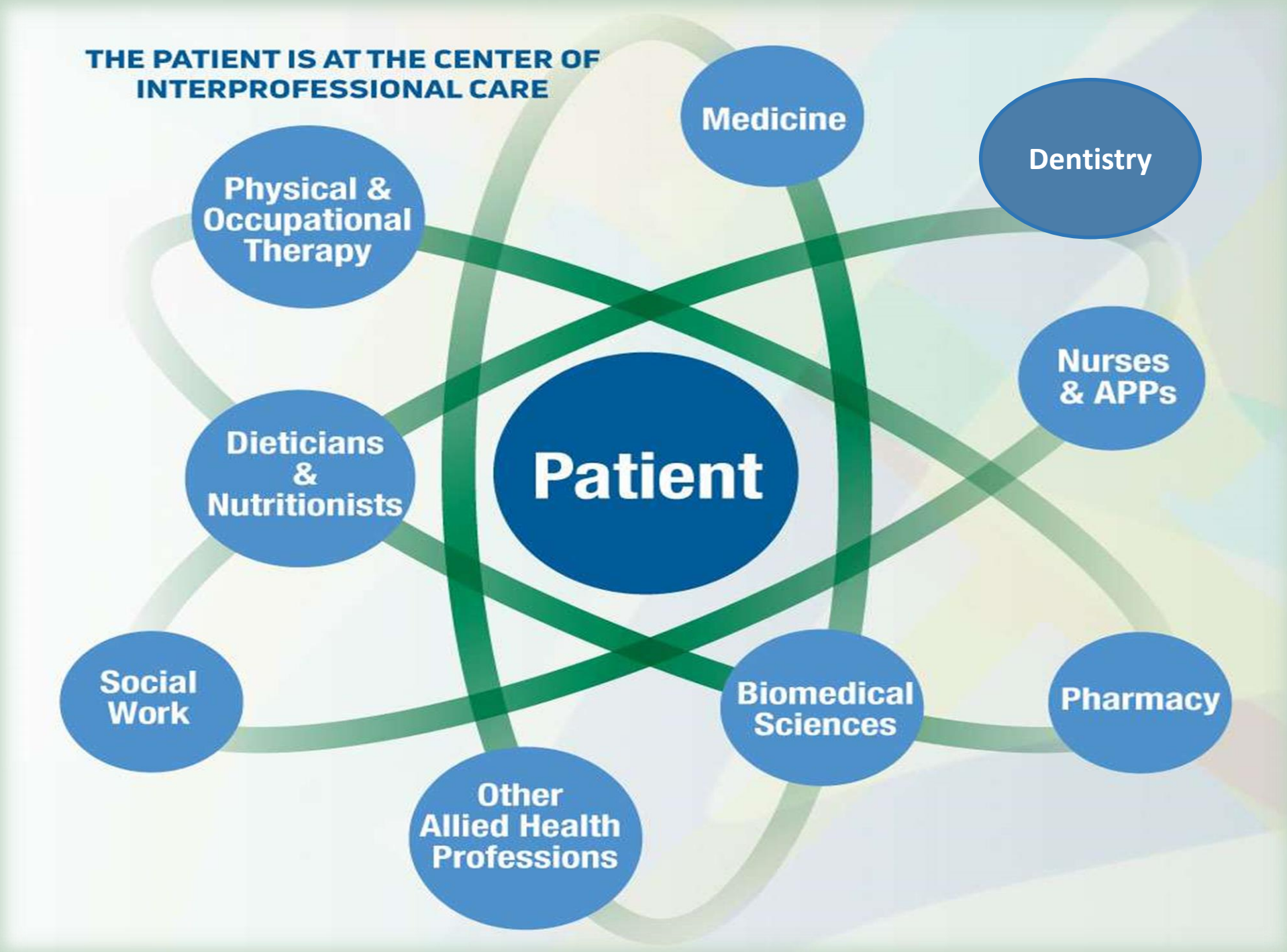
Introduction

Referrals to dental homes from health providers outside dentistry are essential for patients to achieve improved oral health and therefore overall health. However, the oral health literacy among non-dental students at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) schools in low.

If health professional students outside of the School of Dentistry cannot effectively communicate dental terminology, how can they effectively refer their patients to dental care services?

Objectives

The objective of this study is to measure oral health literacy levels of professional students across the University of Maryland, Baltimore campus and determine if a plain language glossary would be helpful for non-dental students.



Methodology

Commonly-used dental terms retrieved from our plain language glossary were used in a survey to assess levels of understanding from UMB health professional students.

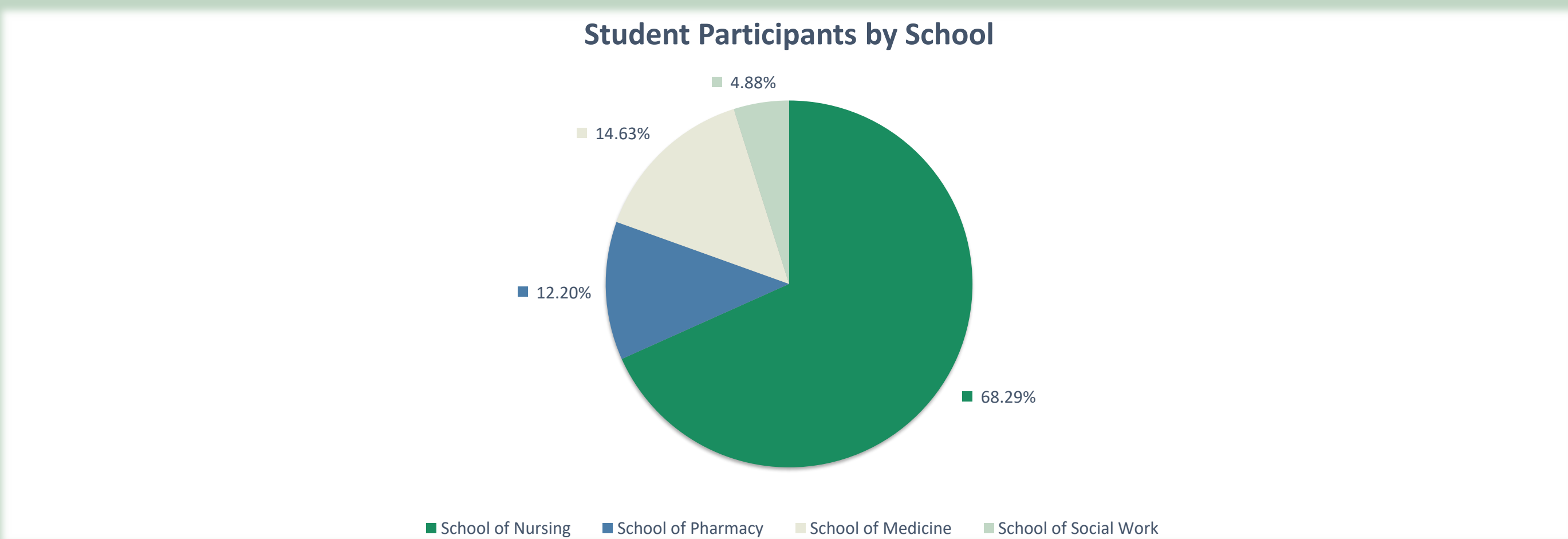
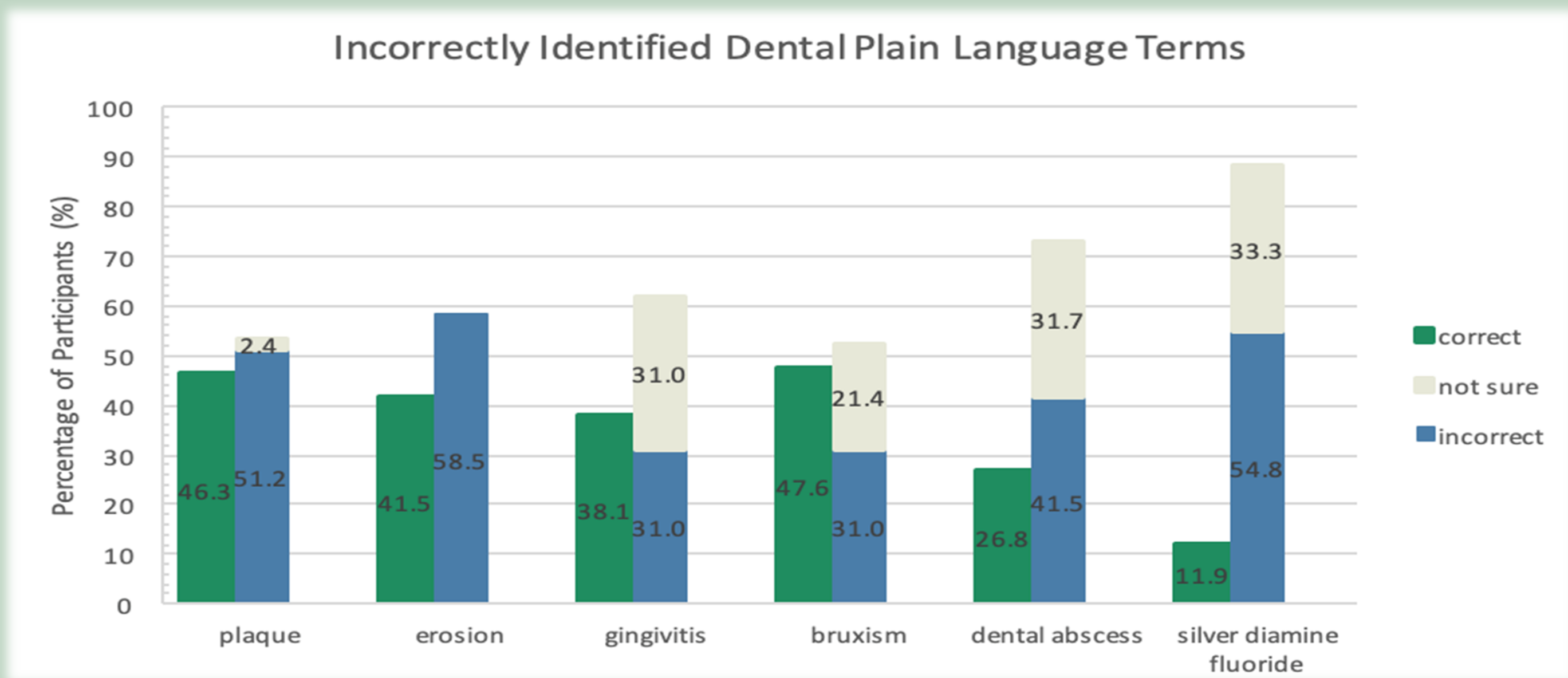
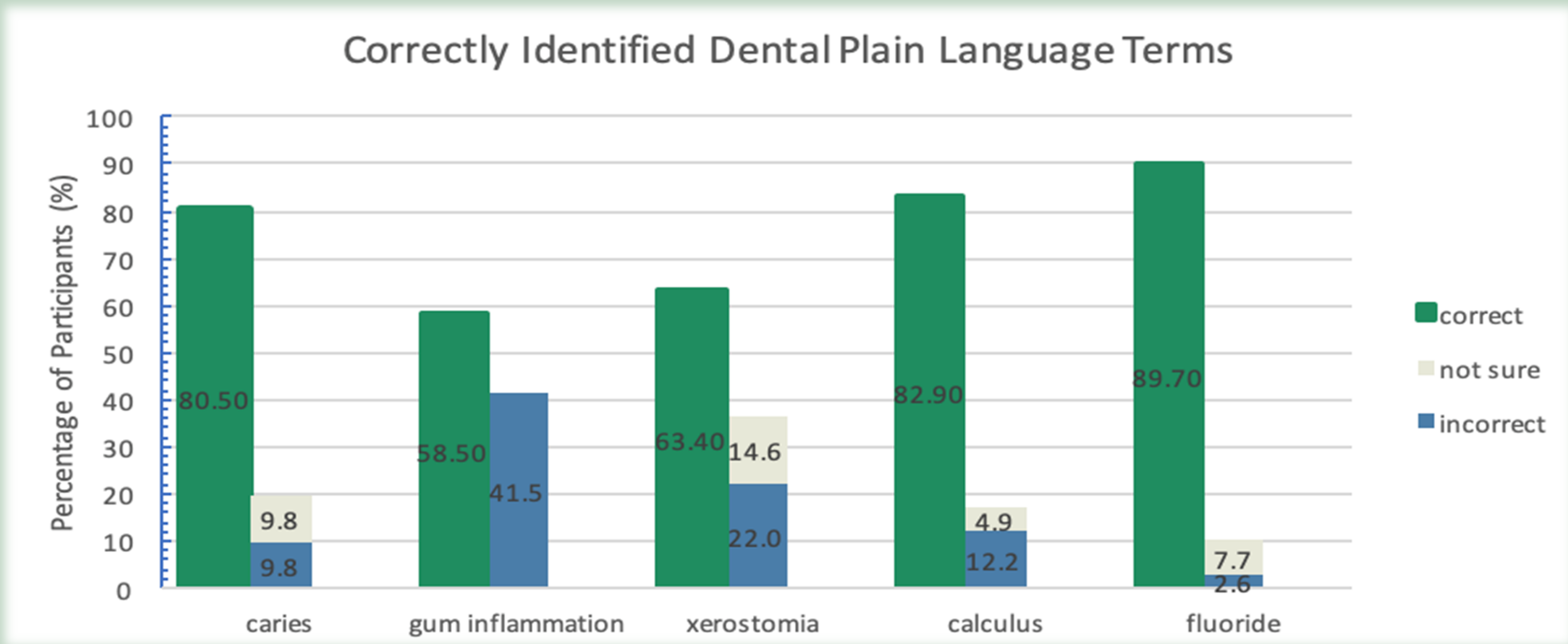
A convenience sample of **41** students responded to the dental terminology survey consisting of 11 questions.

Descriptive statistics were used in analysis of data.

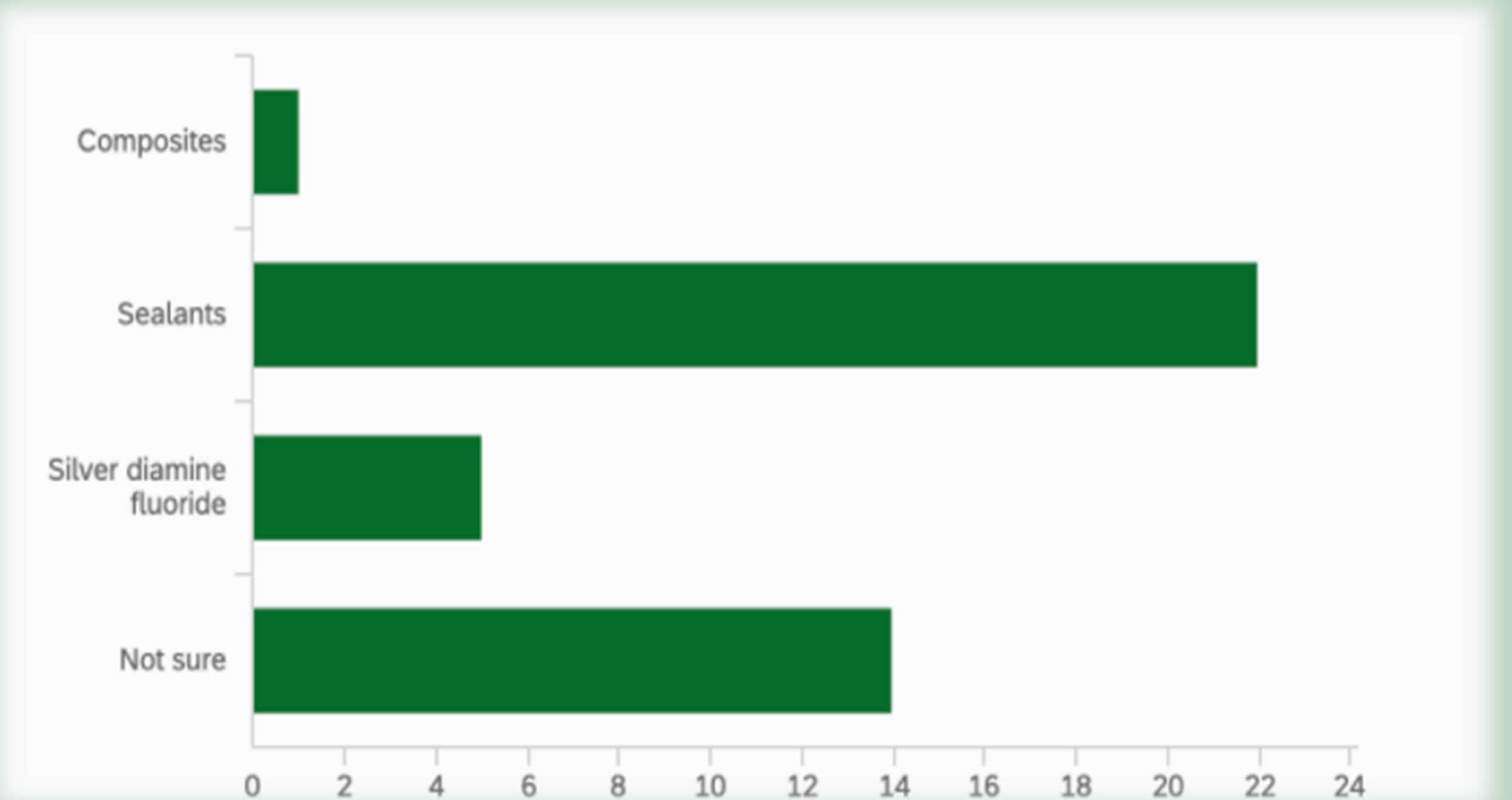
IRB determined the project did not meet the definition of human subjects' research on 1/21/22.

Results

The majority of students (>50%) answered 5 out of 11 questions correctly. **69%** of students reported they would utilize a dental plain language glossary to help identify concerns when providing an oral exam and communicate findings to patients.



Sample Question: Which of the following will arrest an area of active tooth decay **to prevent it** from getting larger?



Conclusion

The results of our study indicate a need to increase oral health literacy among Non- Dental health care providers to improve oral health and therefore overall health for their patients.

A dental plain language glossary could help increase the oral health literacy of health care professionals outside of dentistry.

A larger full-scale study is needed to validate these results.

References

The importance of interprofessionalism: Clinical care. Medical College of Wisconsin. (2019, August 1). <http://www.mcw.edu/mcwknowledge/mcw-stories/the-importance-of-interprofessionalism-clinical-care>

Brach, C., & Harris, L. M. (2021). Healthy people 2030 health literacy definition tells organizations: Make information and services easy to find, understand, and use. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 36(4), 1084–1085. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-020-06384-y>