

Background and Importance

According to the World Health Organization, 80% of the world's population uses medicinal plants. This allopathy alternative constitutes an accessible and inexpensive source of medicines. However, it is not without risks.

Objectives

This study aimed to : - assess the prevalence of the use of herbal medicine - measure the perception about the use of herbal medicine - identify the most commonly used plants for self-medication among Tunisian patients.

Methods

This is a cross-sectional mono-center study carried out in the largest hospital in Tunisia. The sample size was calculated using EpiInfo[®] software and was estimated to be 250 patients. Outpatients who agreed to participate in the study were face to face interviewed using a pre-validated questionnaire in Tunisian dialect. This questionnaire detailed socio-demographic data and information about herbal medicines' uses. The collection site was the outpatient pharmacy. Statistical analysis was performed using PSPP[®].

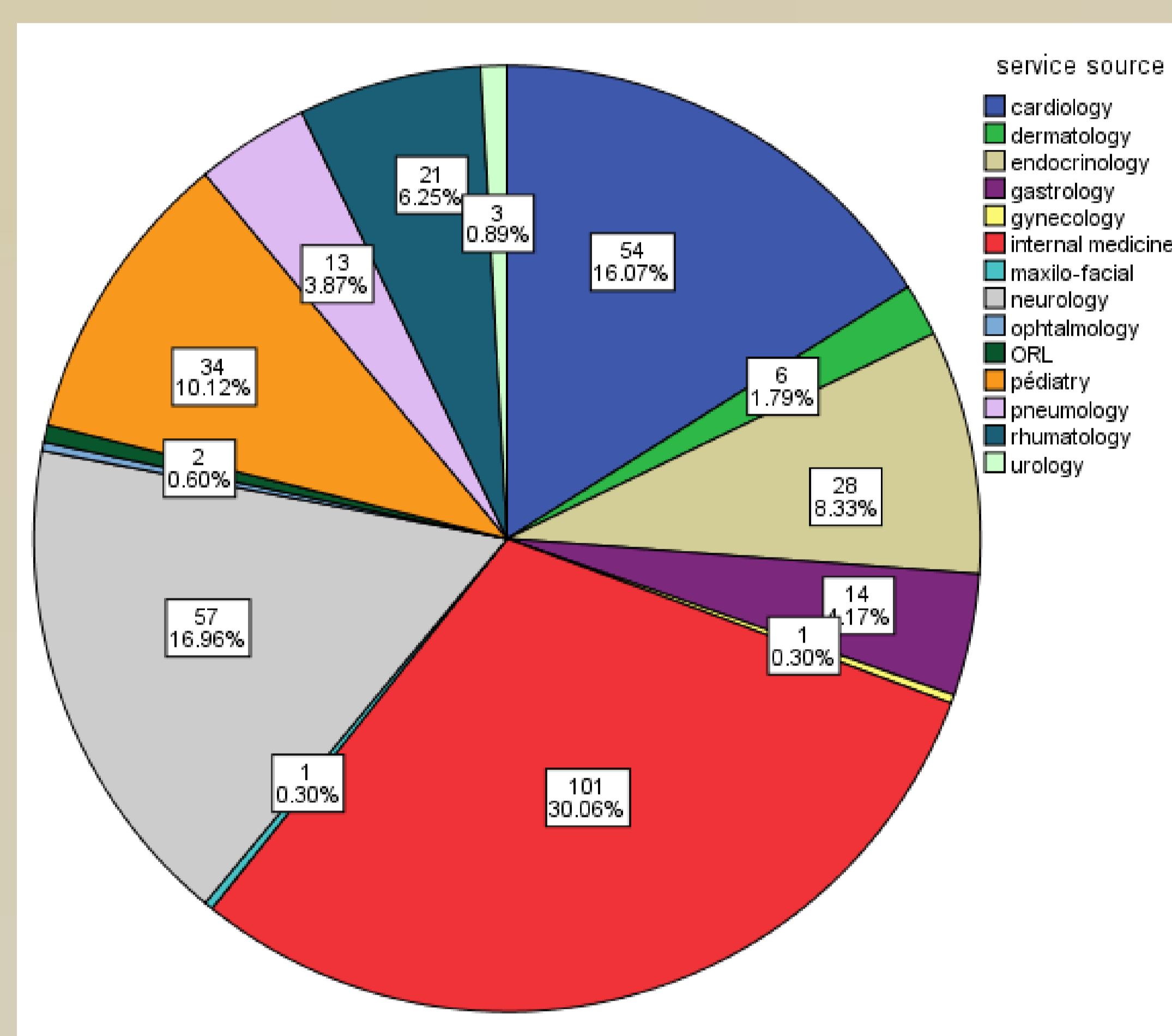
Results

Patients characteristics

Variable		N	%
gender	Male	134	40
	Female	202	60
habitat	Rural	122	36
	urban	214	64
Economic level	low	48	14
	Medium	262	78
	high	26	8
educational level	illiterate	64	19
	primary and more	272	81

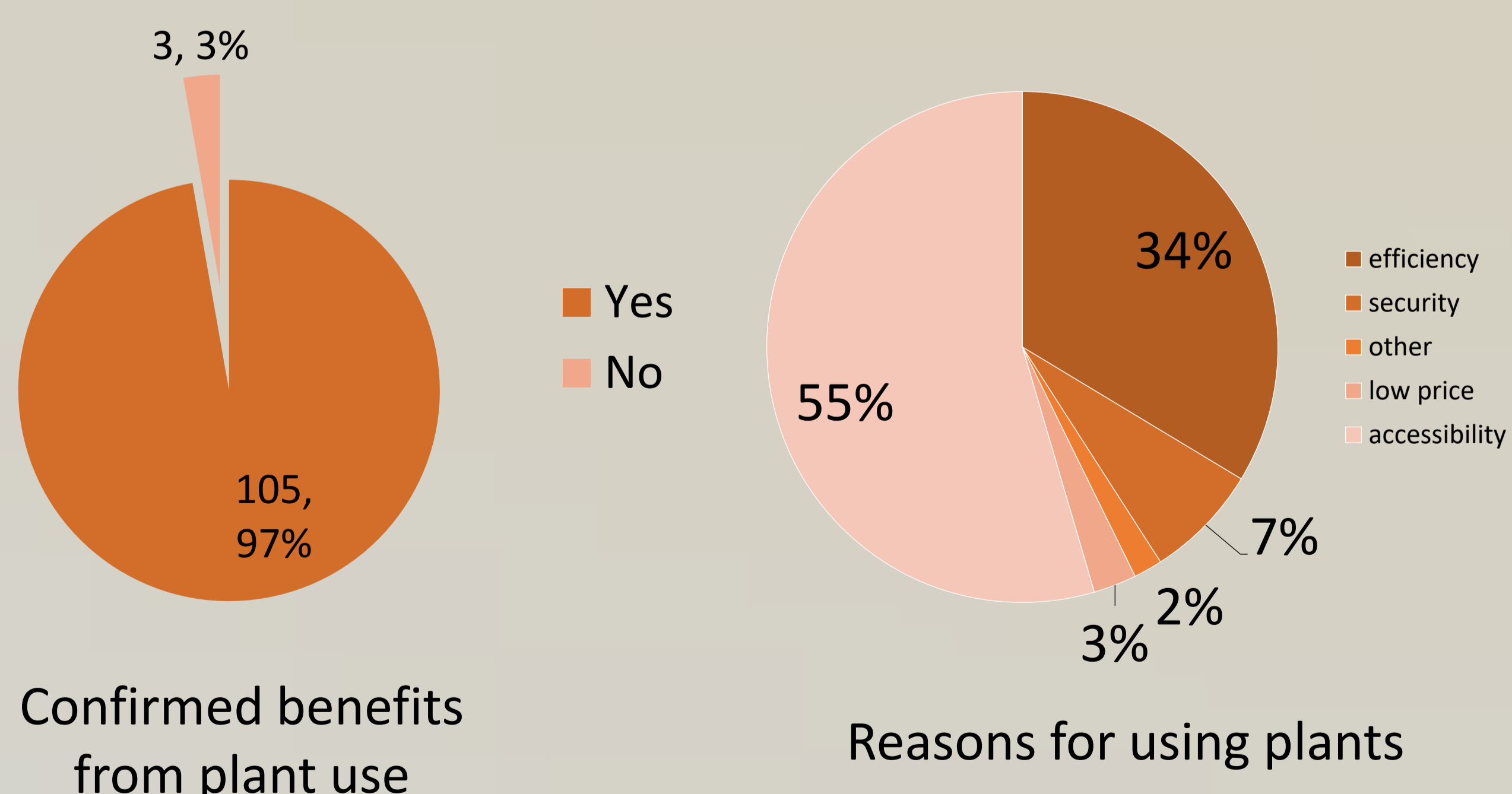
Variable	mean ± SD
Age (year)	52 ± 13
proximity of care (km)	28 ± 15
Number of pathologies	1.5 ± 1

Involved healthcare units

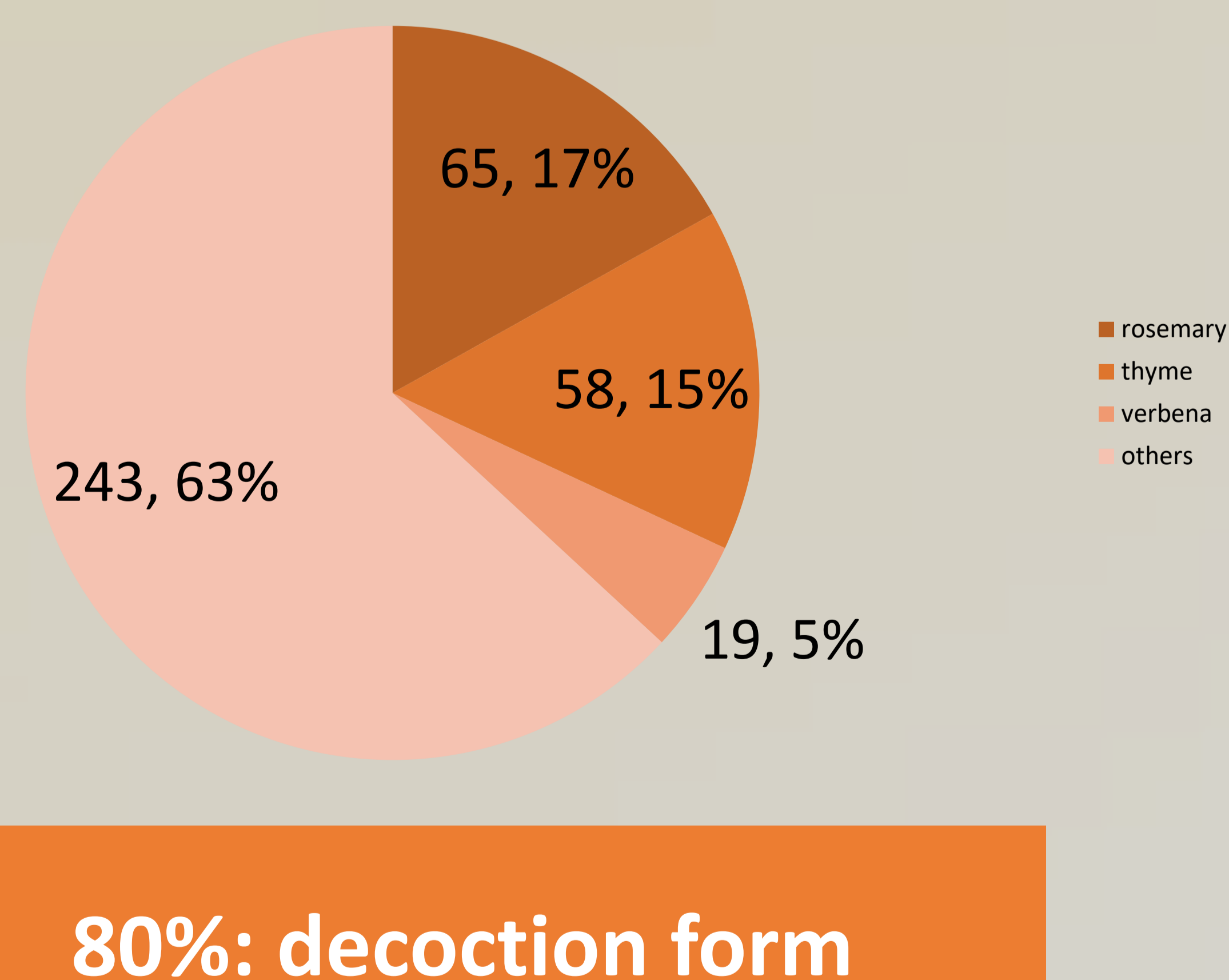


arguments for the use of plants

32% confirmed the use of plants



Used plants



80%: decoction form

Conclusions

This study showed a high prevalence of herbal medicines use among Tunisian patients. Aromatic plants were the most used for therapeutic purposes. Although patients strongly believe in the efficacy of these products, it is essential to ask the question regarding their safety.

References

World Health Organisation Mental Health Global Action program (mHLGAP). 2002. http://who.int/medicines/publications/traditional/trm_strategy14_23/en/index.html. Accessed 23 Oct 2021.