Rheumatologist Survey on Medical Cannabis: Results from the Ontario Best Practices Research Initiative (OBRI)

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BACKGROUND

With the recent legalization of cannabis in Canada and easier access, it is important to understand whether rheumatologists who see patients with chronic pain and chronic inflammatory disease are assessing its use and what sources of medical cannabis information would be of benefit to them in their practice. The Canadian Rheumatology Association has recently published their position statement on medical cannabis use in rheumatic disease, http://rheum.ca/resources/publications/.

OBJECTIVES

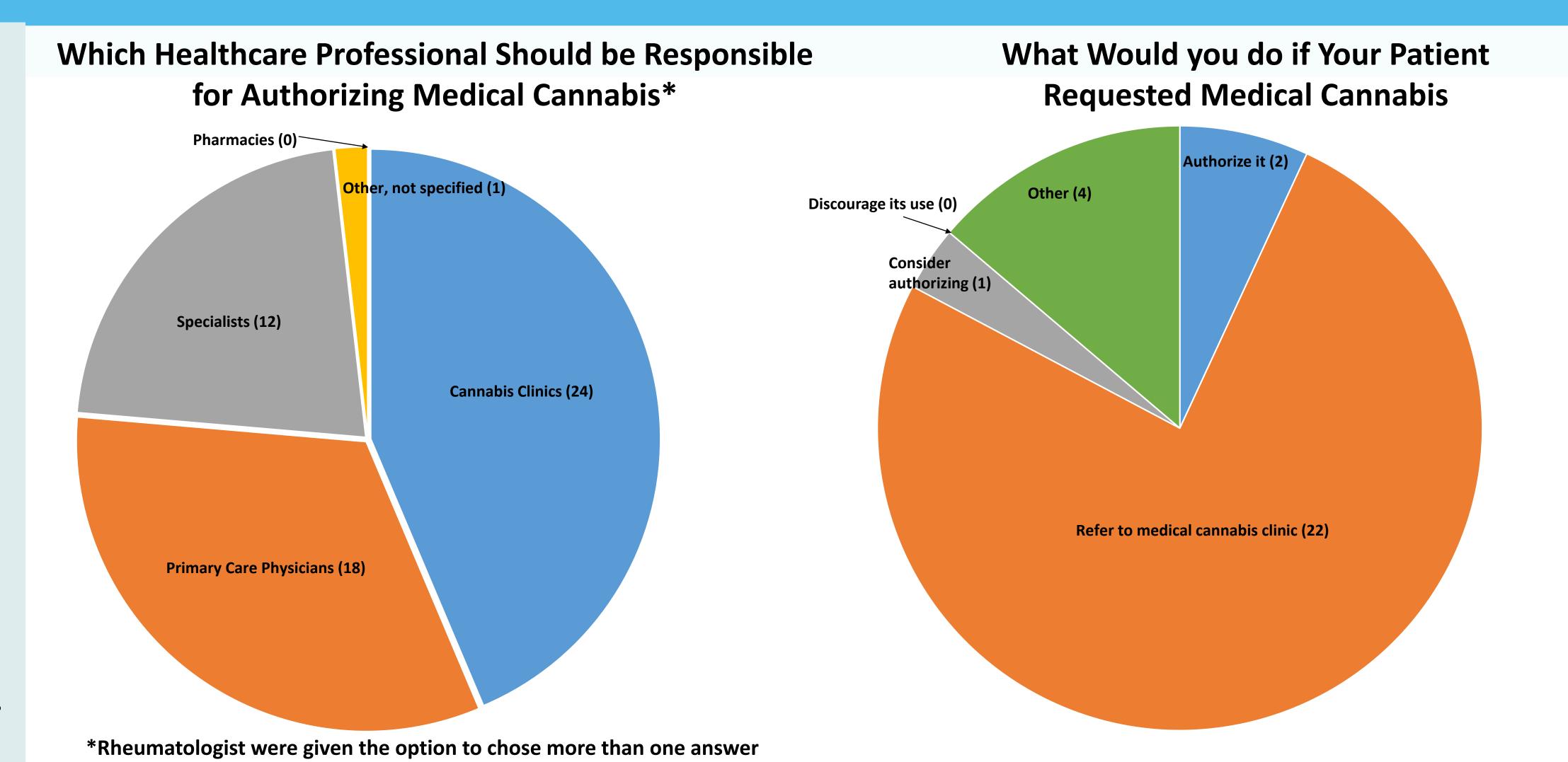
To assess rheumatologist's knowledge of medical cannabis and their comfort level with authorizing it's use.

METHODS

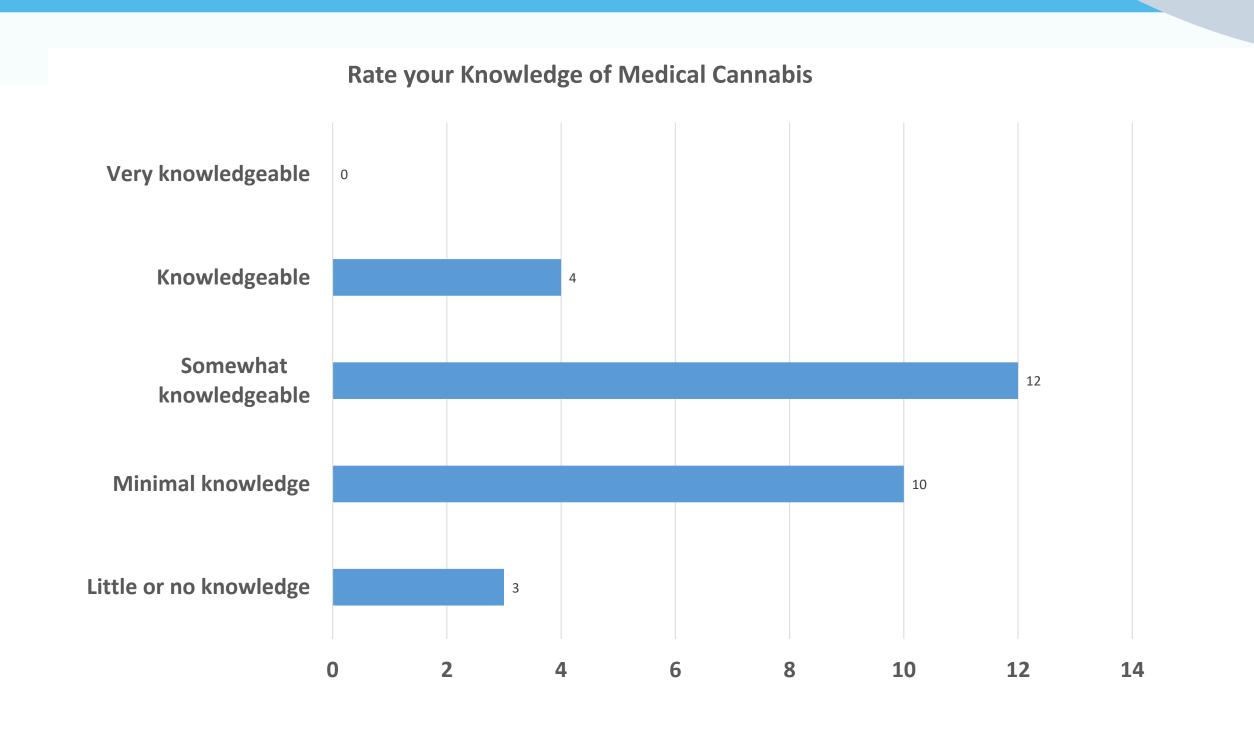
- Rheumatologists participating in the Ontario Best Practices Research Initiative (OBRI), a registry of RA patients followed in routine care in Ontario, Canada, were sent an email with a link to the medical cannabis survey.
- Survey questions were created by the OBRI, in collaboration with their Clinical and Patient Advisory Committees (OBRI CAC and PAC).
- After the initial email, a second and third email reminder to complete the survey, were sent one week apart.

RESULTS

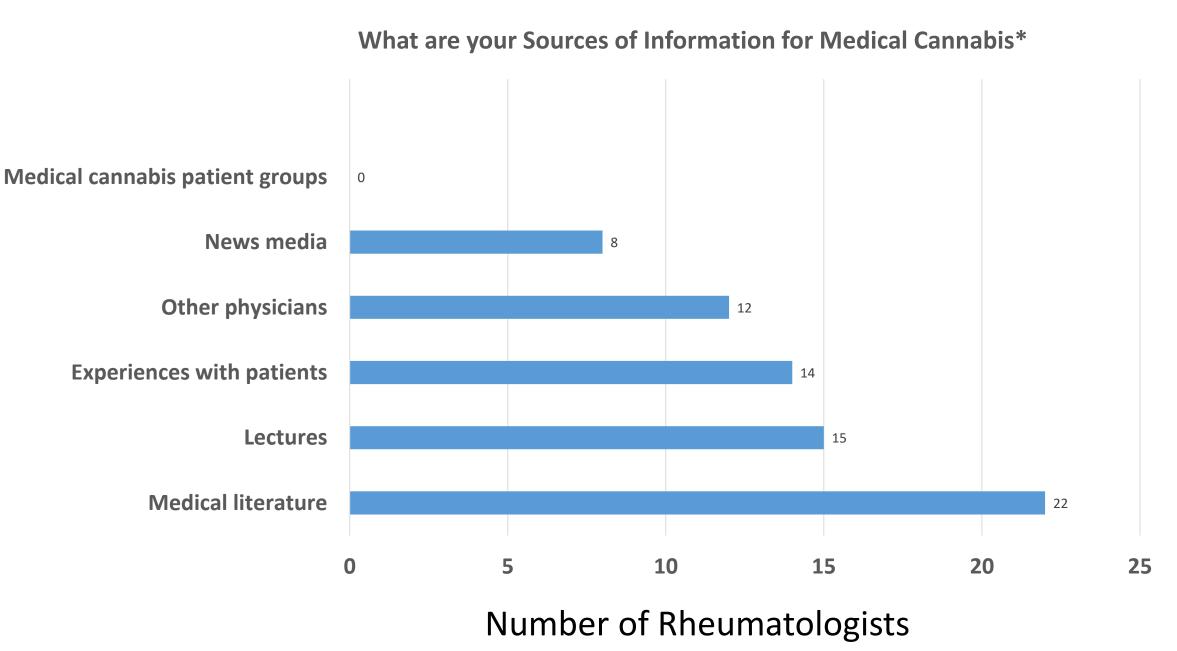
- 29 out of 66 (44%) rheumatologists completed the survey between January 15 – May 3, 2019.
- 66% of the rheumatologists who completed the survey were female. 41% were between the ages of 41-59 years, 31% were ≤ 40 years of age and 28% were ≥ 60 years of age.
- The survey responders were evenly distributed with respect to community versus academic practices (45%) community, 41% academic, 14% both)







Number of Rheumatologists



*Rheumatologist were given the option to chose more than one answer

CONCLUSIONS

- Most rheumatologists in Ontario are routinely assessing the use of medical cannabis by their patients.
- While the majority of rheumatologists are not authorizing medical cannabis use, they are also not discouraging use in their patients.
- More research is is needed to increase rheumatologists' knowledge and comfort level with medical cannabis use.
- The OBRI is currently surveying patients attending rheumatology clinics, in Ontario, to better understand the use of medical cannabis in this population.

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