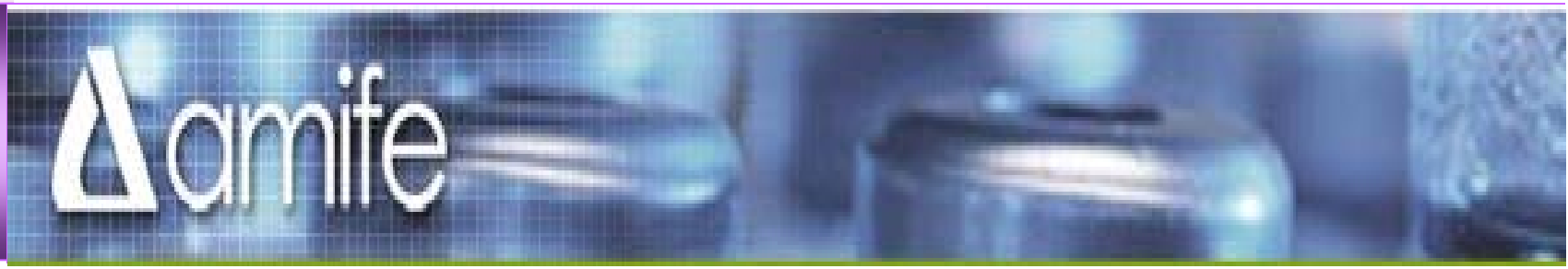
Structure, organization and functions of Medical Information departments within the pharmaceutical industry in Spain: Results of a survey



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Introduction

The pharmaceutical industry has become one of the leading providers of medical information (MI) services

AMIFE Medical Information Working Group was created in 2014, sponsored by AMIFE (Society for Medicine in the Pharmaceutical Industry in Spain) to:

- ✓Establish a network of health information professionals in the pharmaceutical industry in Spain
- ✓Create a space for debate on the MI profession

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Objective

The objective of this study was **to identify the**

- ✓**Structure**
- ✓**organization**
- ✓**functions**

of MI departments in Spain

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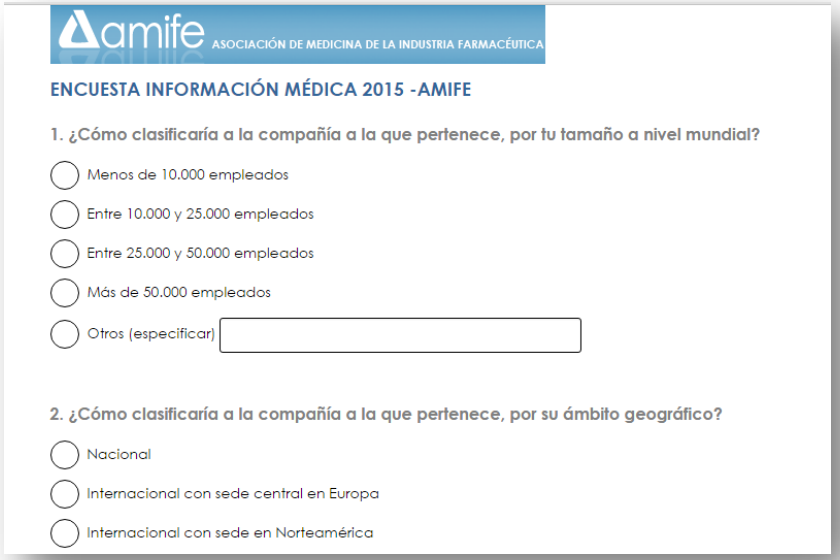
Methods

- ✓ **Local and international pharmaceutical companies** based in **Spain** were invited to participate in the study
- ✓ **March - April 2015**
- ✓ **Online** 23(29)–item **questionnaire** developed by the MI AMIFE Working Group
  - distributed by **e-mail** to the companies

Data were analysed through **descriptive statistics** using response frequencies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ENCUESTA INFORMACIÓN MÉDICA 2015 -AMIFE

1. ¿Cómo clasificaría a la compañía a la que pertenece, por tu tamaño a nivel mundial?

- ◯ Menos de 10.000 empleados
- ◯ Entre 10.000 y 25.000 empleados
- ◯ Entre 25.000 y 50.000 empleados
- ◯ Más de 50.000 empleados
- ◯ Otros (especificar) [ ]

2. ¿Cómo clasificaría a la compañía a la que pertenece, por su ámbito geográfico?

- ◯ Nacional
- ◯ Internacional con sede central en Europa
- ◯ Internacional con sede en Norteamérica

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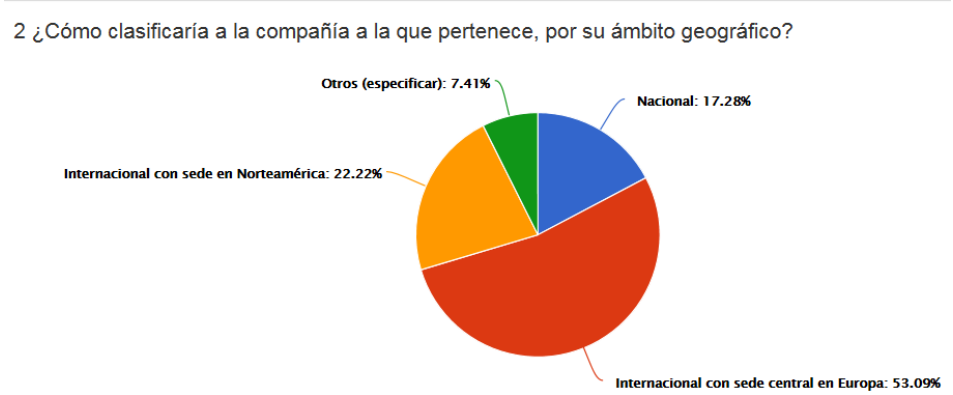
e-encuesta.com

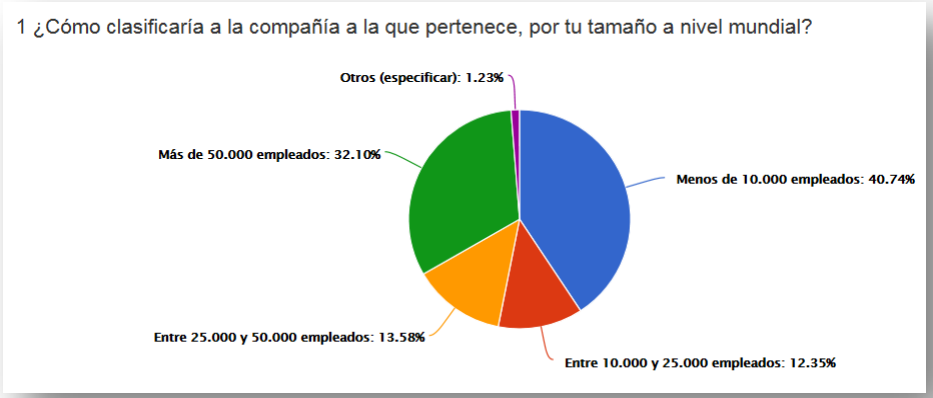
Results

81 responses

75% - Multinational companies
53% - Multinational Europe-based companies



41% < 10,000 employees
32% > 50,000 employees



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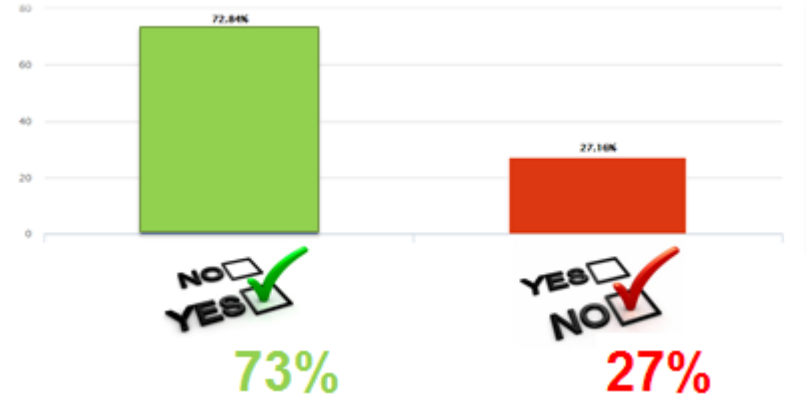
Results

Most respondents noted having a MI department in their company (73%)

- ✓with ≤ 5 employees (94%) (mean 1 – 2)
- ✓33% established > 10 years ago
- ✓part of the Medical Department (85%)

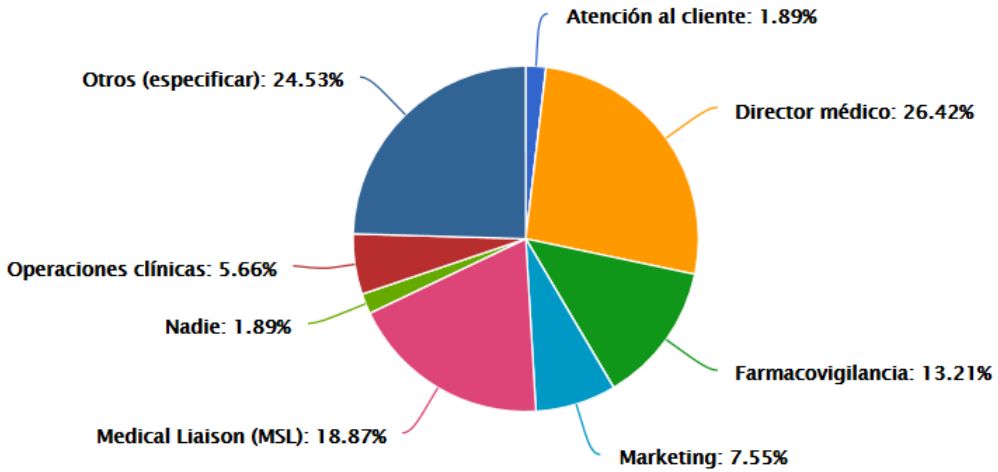
Is there a MI Department in your company?



Results

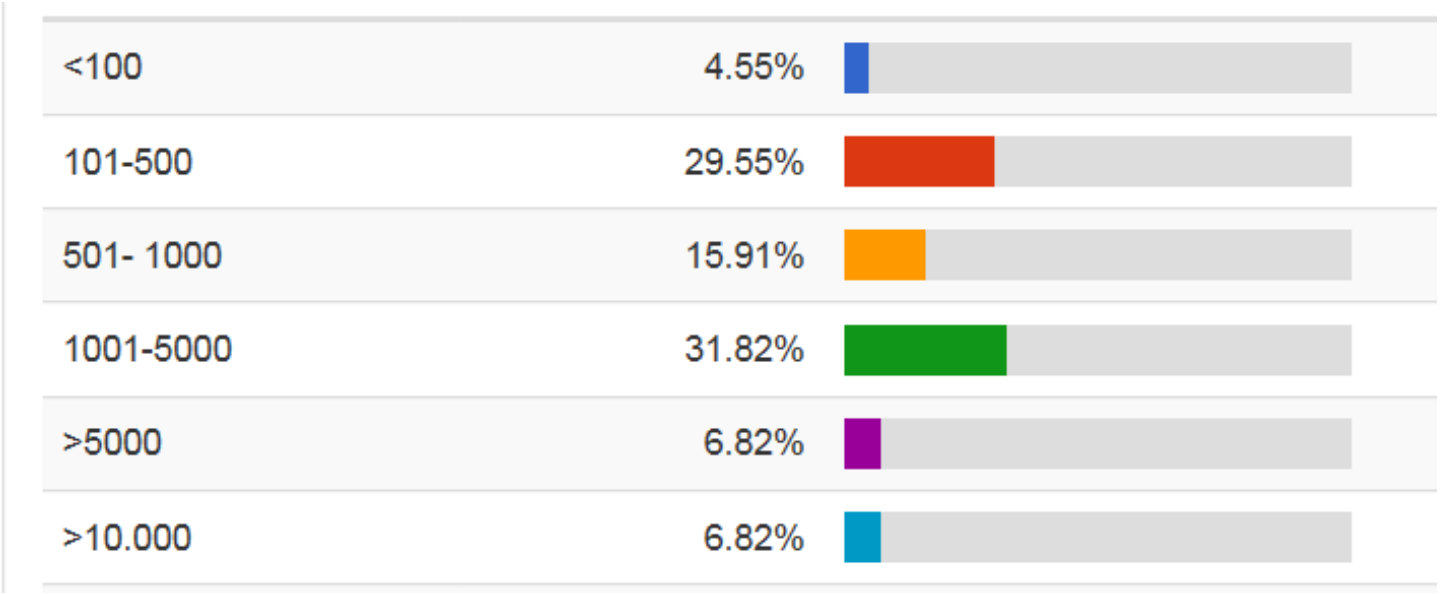
If there is not a MI department in the company:
Who does the MI functions?

- ✓Medical director (26%)
- ✓Medical science liaison (19%)
- ✓Pharmacovigilance (13%)
- ✓Marketing (7%)
- ✓Clinical Operations (6%)



Results

Number of enquiries per year (mean)

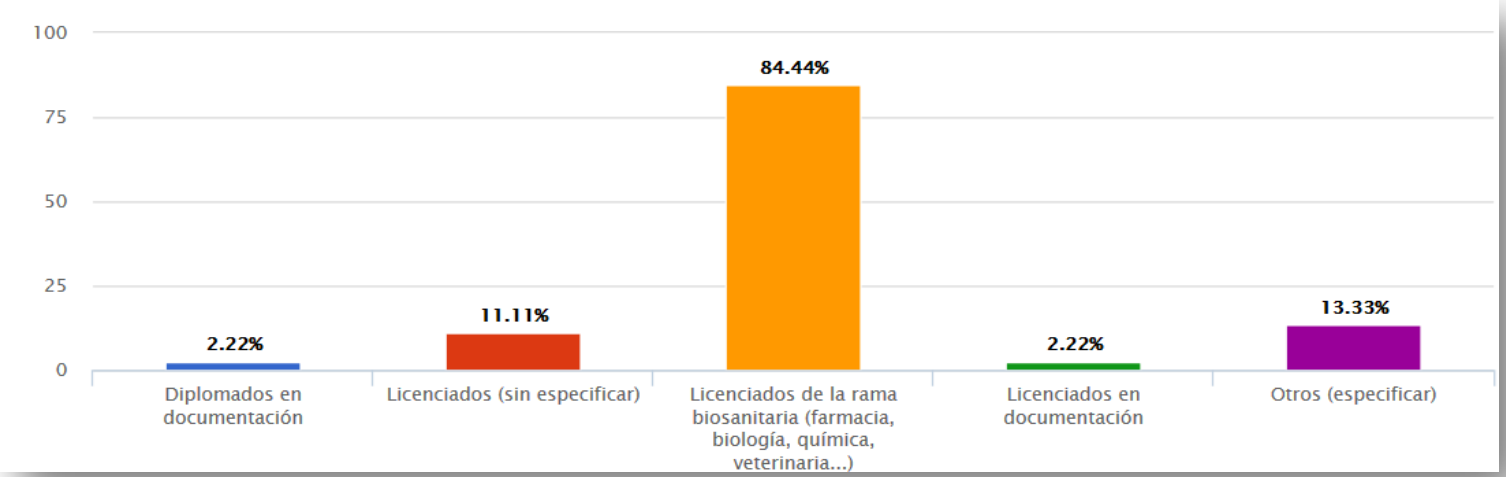


Results

Background of the MI Officer/Expert

Degree in health sciences (84%):

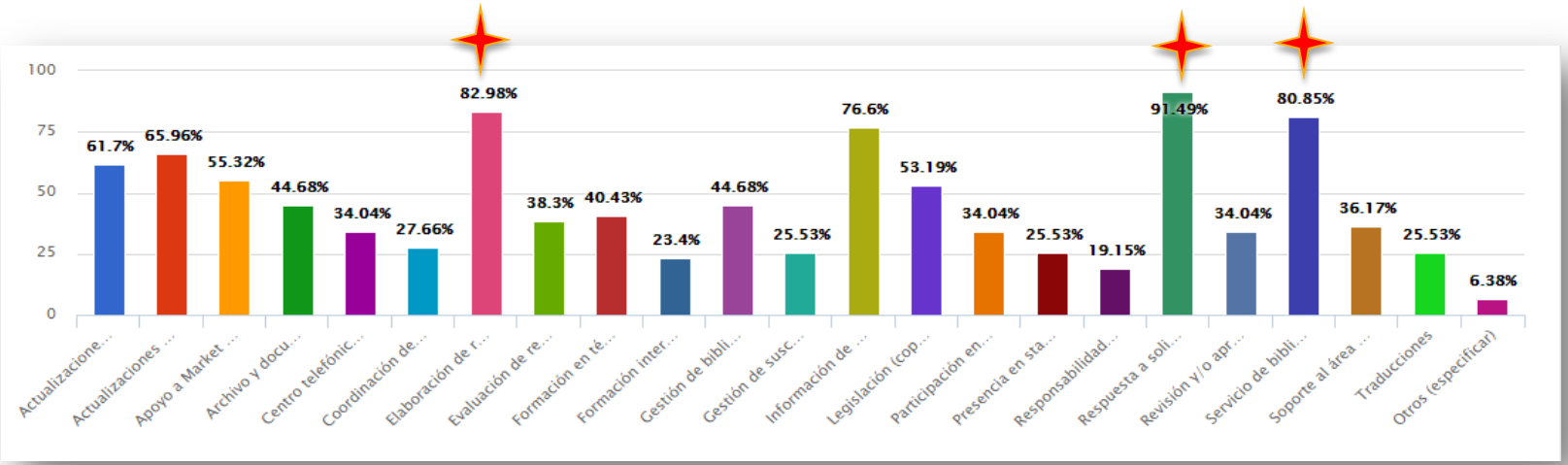
- ✓Pharmacists (28%)
- ✓Biologists (21%)
- ✓Physicians (14%)



Results

Tasks performed in MI departments:

- ✓Handling requests/enquiries for information on drugs (91%)
- ✓Preparation of written responses (83%) (content creation)
- ✓Bibliographical services for external costumers (81%) (databases' searches)



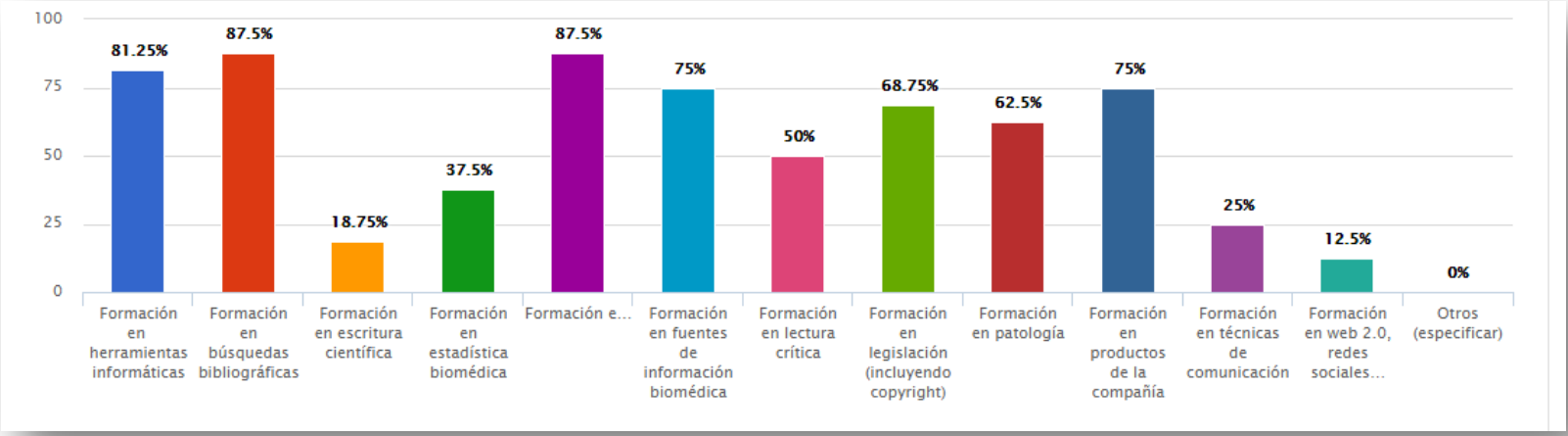
Results

Training/development plans for MI professionals:

- ✓64% did not have a specific training program in MI
- ✓36% had a specific program

Most frequent topics:

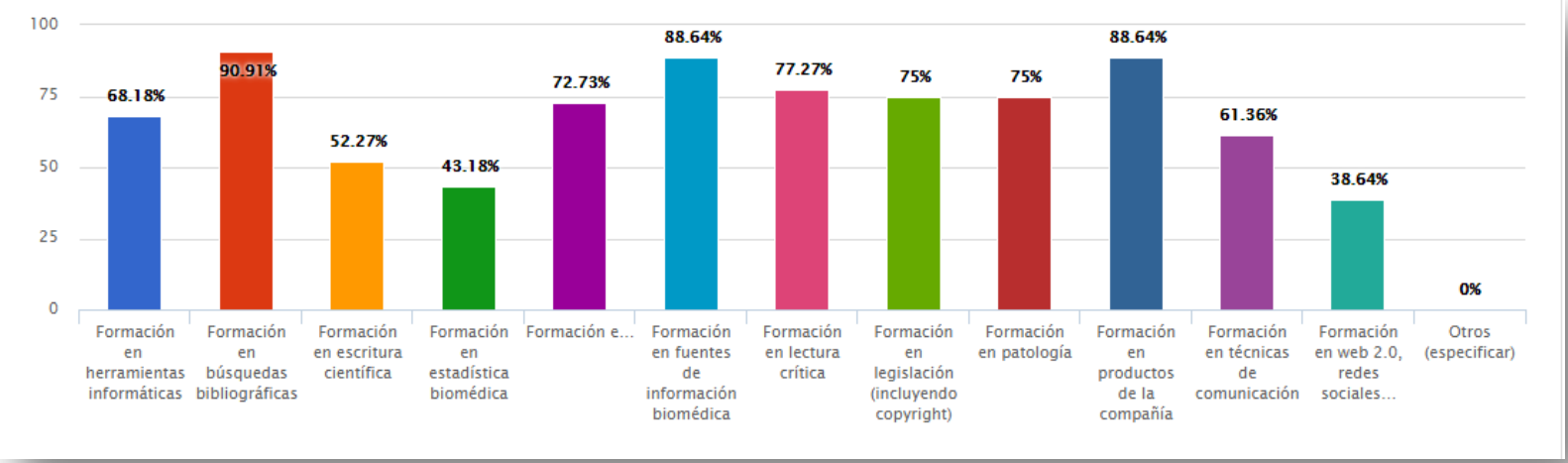
- ✓Bibliographical searches
- ✓Pharmacovigilance
- ✓IT tools
- ✓Company products/drugs
- ✓Biomedical databases, resources…



Results

Topics that need training in MI departments:

- ✓Bibliographical searches
- ✓Biomedical information sources
- ✓Products/drugs of the company
- ✓IT tools
- ✓Critical reading
- ✓Law/copyright…



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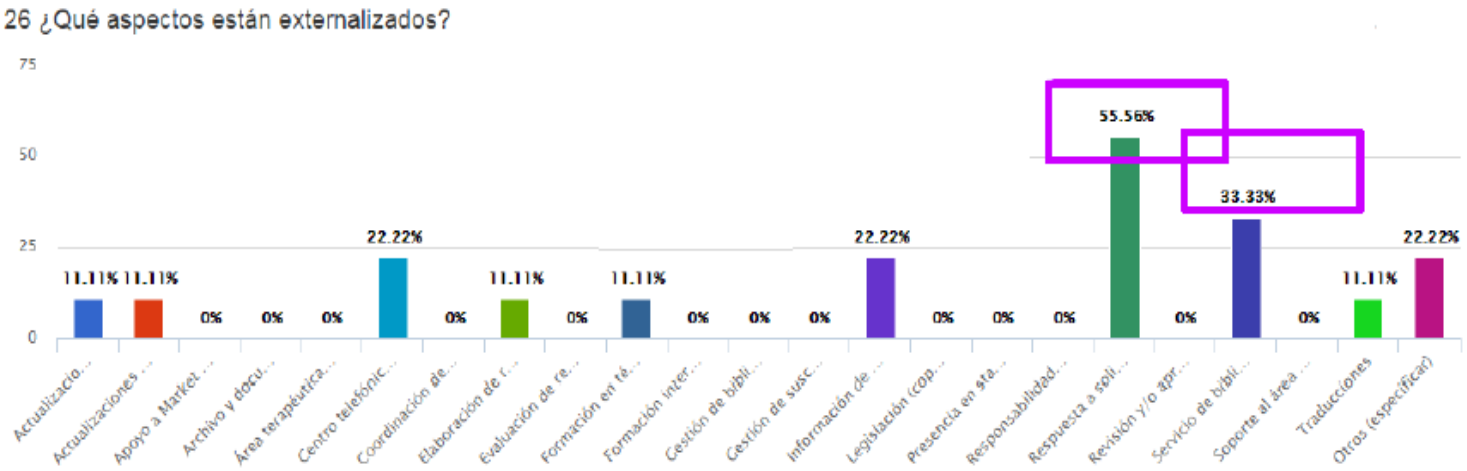
Results

Externalization of MI services:

- ✓No: 76%
- ✓Partially: 22%

Most frequent externalized services:

- ✓Unsolicited enquiries on drugs
- ✓Bibliography (publications, bibliographical searches)



Results

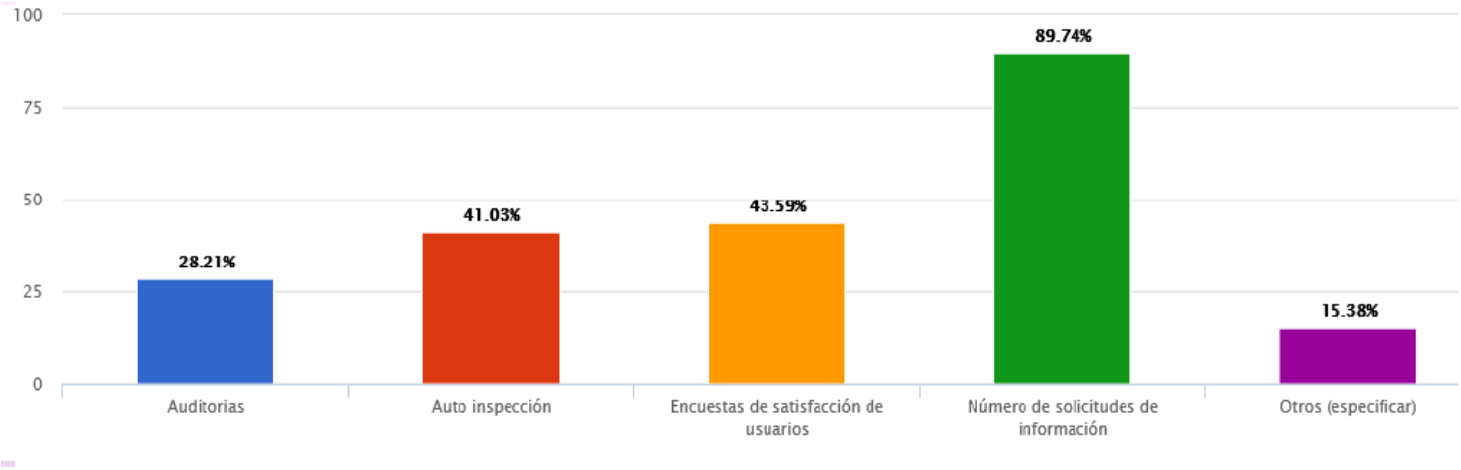
Specific software

- ✓To track requests/enquiries/consultations: 80%
- ✓To manage standard responses: 71%

Performance metrics

Metrics / Key performance indicators: 87%

- ✓Number of enquiries: 90%
- ✓Customers satisfaction: 44%

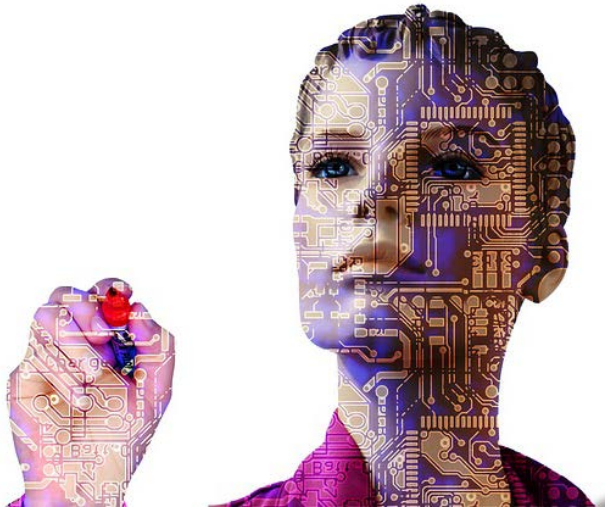


Discussion - Conclusions

How does a MI officer/expert looks like in Spain?

- ✓ Health sciences graduate
- ✓ “Multitask” employee
- ✓ Works in a small team, in the Medical Department

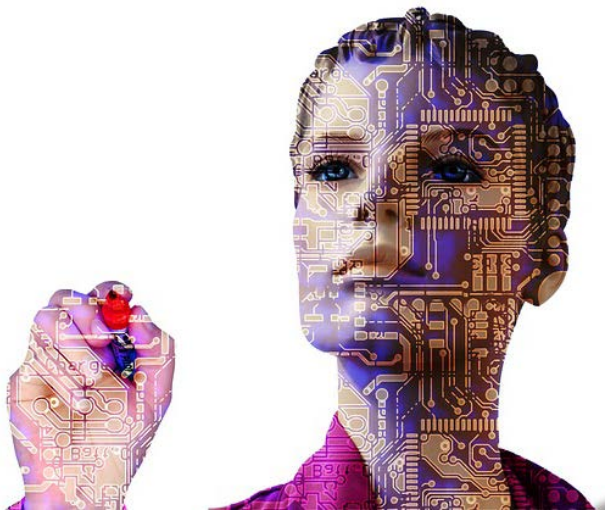
- ✓ Is able to find, evaluate, disseminate, write, translate, train, …
- ✓ Has a good knowledge of IT tools, databases, law/copyright topics, pharmacovigilance, …



Discussion - Conclusions

This survey allowed to have

- ✓ an overview of the current MI departments of pharmaceutical companies in Spain
- ✓ a better characterization of their functions and responsibilities



Discussion - Conclusions

What has **changed** and **not changed** in the last 10 years?[1]

Changed

- Size of the MI Department has been reduced (3-6 to 1-2)
- Professional background has changed (more health science degree and less Information specialists)
- Bibliographic services reduced
- Content creation responsibility increased
- Decrease in activities like phone calls, review/approval of promotional material, training and evaluation of MI tools, and library management
- More companies have a job description for MI professionals

Not changed

- MI reporting to Medical area
- Quality measures: response time, customer satisfaction and audit
- Provision of MI tools (knowledge and management systems)

[1] Tabuenca Cortés M, Casas Gálvez I, Fragoso de Castro J, Oyagüez Martín I. Grupo de Información Médica de AEFI. La información médica (IM) en el entorno de la industria farmacéutica en España. Congreso AEFI. 2005.

Opportunities – Next steps

- ✓ Interesting MI professionals profile
- ✓ Training and development
- ✓ Explore new organizational solutions
- ✓ Networking

- ✓ Publication of a guide of good practices in MI (2016)

AMIFE MI Working Group

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