

Nurses' online information use and literature searching skills: a survey in SBBL network

Chiara Formigoni ¹ , Idalia Gualdana ² and Diego Fornasari ³

¹ Chief Librarian, *St. Anna Hospital ASST Lariana, Como, Italy*,
² SBBL Coordinator, SBBL Lombardy Biomedical Librarian System Network, Milan, Italy
³ SBBL Director, SBBL Lombardy Biomedical Librarian System Network, Milan, Italy
Corresponding author: Chiara Formigoni, chiara.formigoni.como@gmail.com, chiara.formigoni@asst-lariana.it

Introduction. Healthcare literature is growing exponentially, and health professionals, including nurses, need to possess basic literature searching skills to retrieve information for clinical decision making. The dissemination of the Evidence-based Practice (EBM) and the growing interest in institutional and society guidelines/pathways represent an opportunity to increase the access to databases (1)(2). However nurses and nursing students declare numerous difficulties, including lack of time, language gap, limited skills in literature search (3)(4).

The growing emphasis on evidence-based practice and the key roles played by library and information services means that it is important to investigate the ways in which library services contribute to nursing care quality (5-19). The SBBL (Sistema Bibliotecario Biomedico Lombardo) is a network connecting biomedical libraries within the Lombardy Region in northern Italy. It was established in 1994 by the regional government, as a virtual library including the libraries of public and private hospitals, health and drug research institutes and universities.

Objectives. The purpose of this study is to report on an evaluation of how often and from what location nurses access the online library resources, as well as the types of information they seek and the impact on health outcomes for patients.

Table I

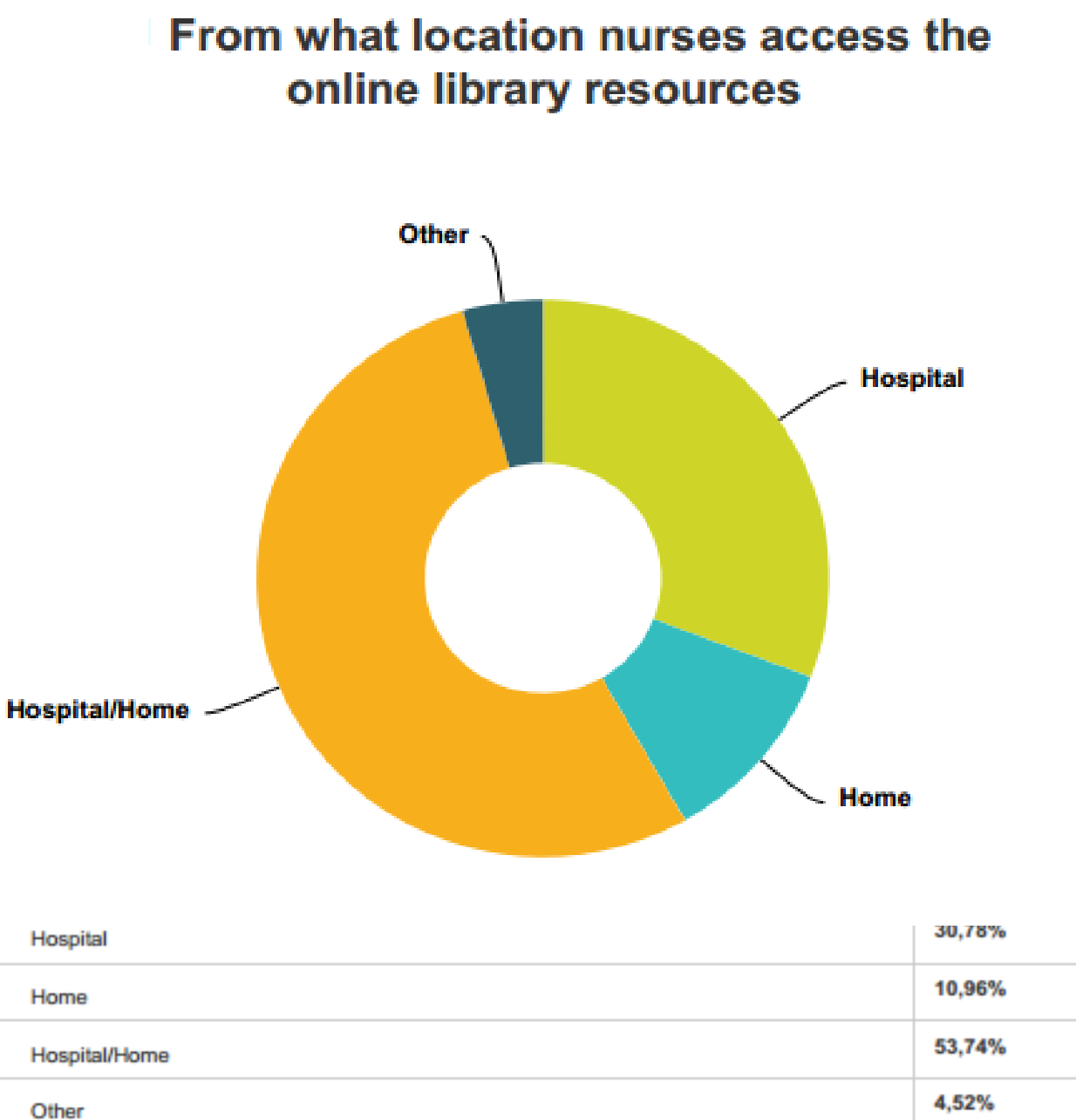


Table III
Do you have attended training sessions or Continuing Medical Education courses about online information retrieval?

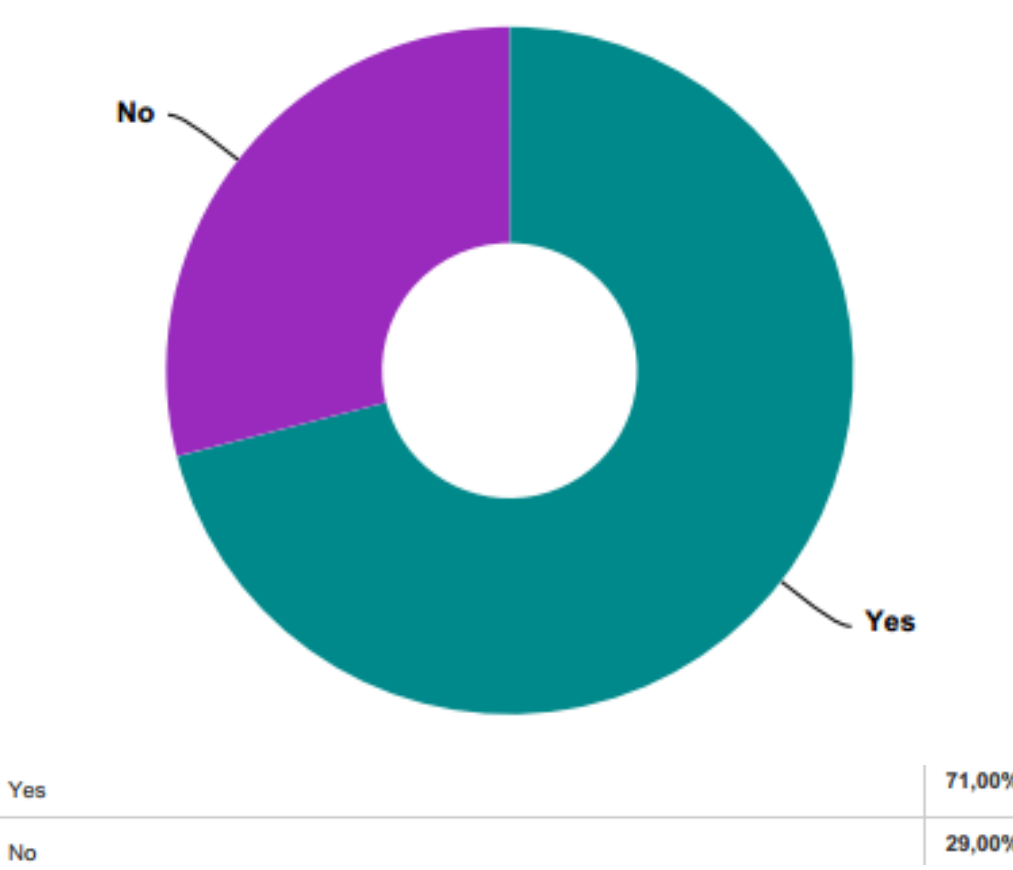


Table II
How often do you seek information?

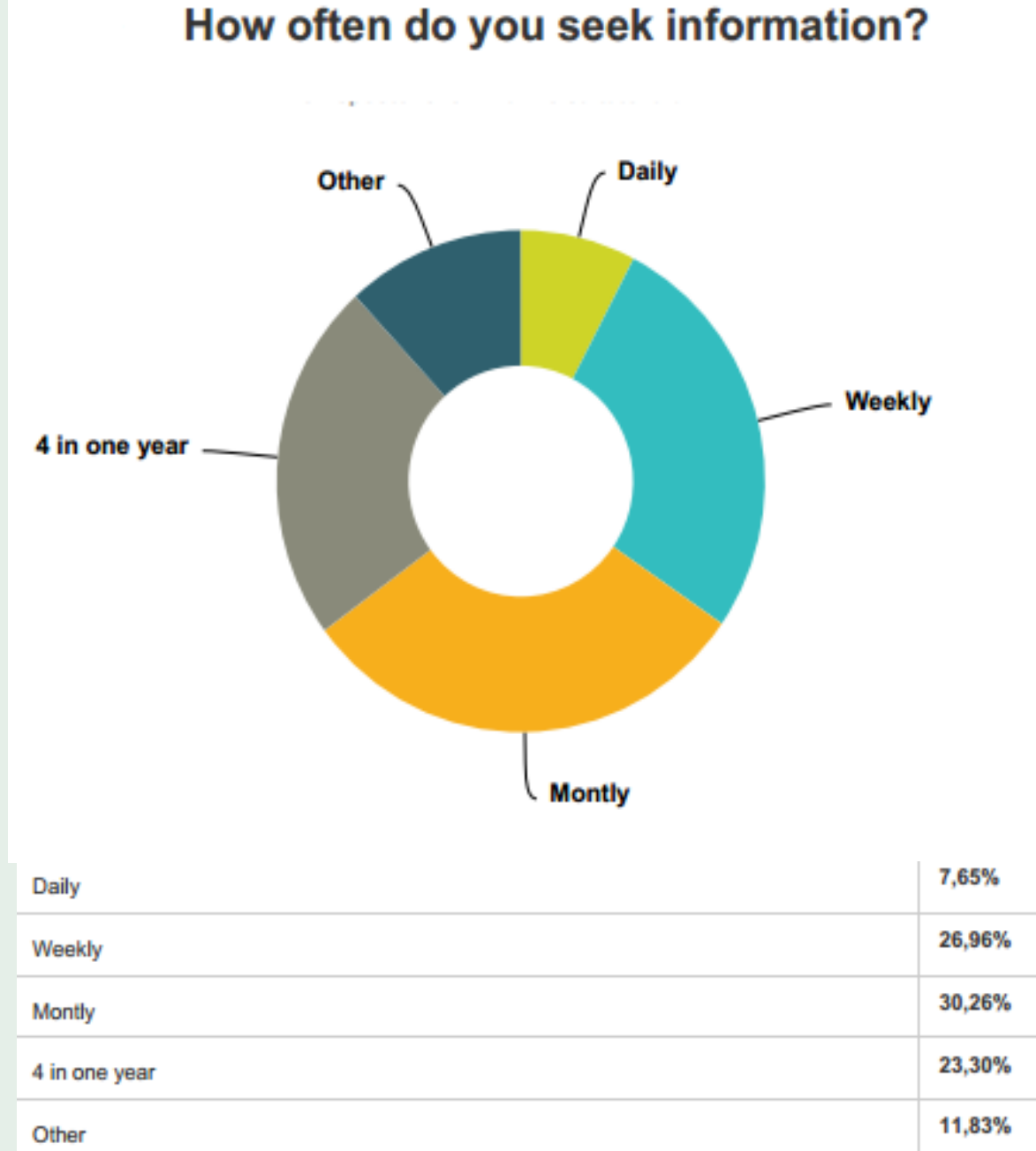
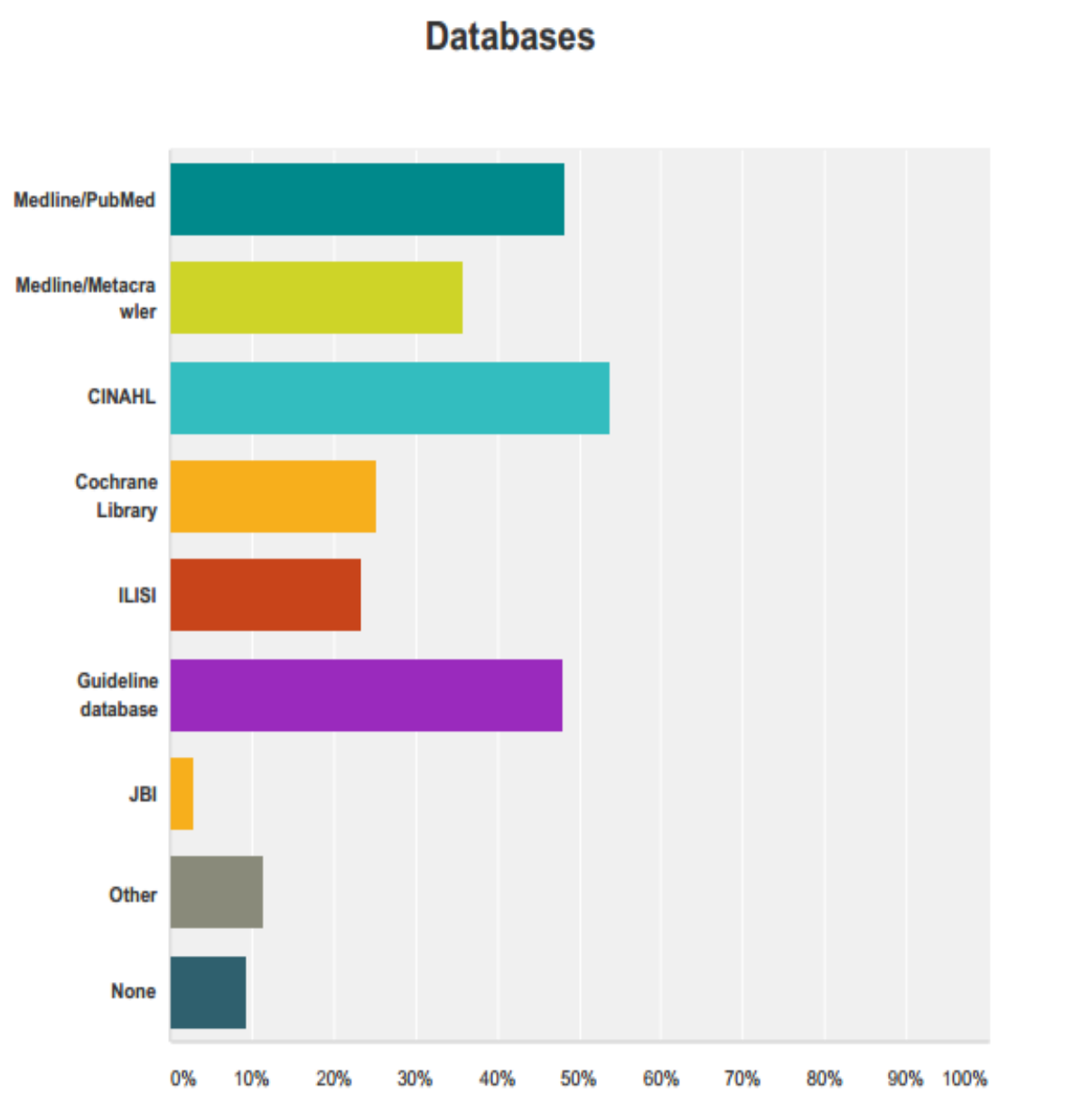


Table IV



Methods. This transversal study has been performed using an anonymous online survey submitted to a specific sample of nurses and nursing students, registered in the Lombardy Biomedical Librarian System, during the period November – December 2015. The recruited sample, referred to an hospital setting, is composed by 1.150 nurses and nursing students. The questionnaire has eight sections and has been designed thinking about the Rochester Study model (20).

Results. Completed the online form 897 nurses, representing 71% of the sample. More than 53% say they consult online information both from the work and from home (**Figure I**), 26,96% say they find documentation at least several times a week, 7,65% daily and 30,26% monthly (**Figure II**). Claim to have participated in training events 71% of the sample (**Figure III**).

CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature), Medline/PubMed and Medline/Metacrawler, using the SBBL platform, designed with a friendly and easier interface application linked to the NLM Italian MeSH (coordinated by ISS - Istituto Superiore di Sanità) and guideline databases are the most common used databases (**Figure IV**).

The electronic resources are mainly used for retrieve informations useful in filling the knowledge clinical gaps (90,39%), to keep updated the current procedures, the protocols and the operating instructions (43,44%), provide clinical information to patients/family/caregivers (41,22%) (**Figure V**).

Access to and use of library-provided information resources improves patient outcomes 73,75%, handling patient care situations differently 48,98%, improve the team working (41,22%), avoid the adverse events, and save time 36,78%, it's essential to find evidence-based literature (64,14%) (**Figure VI**).

Table V

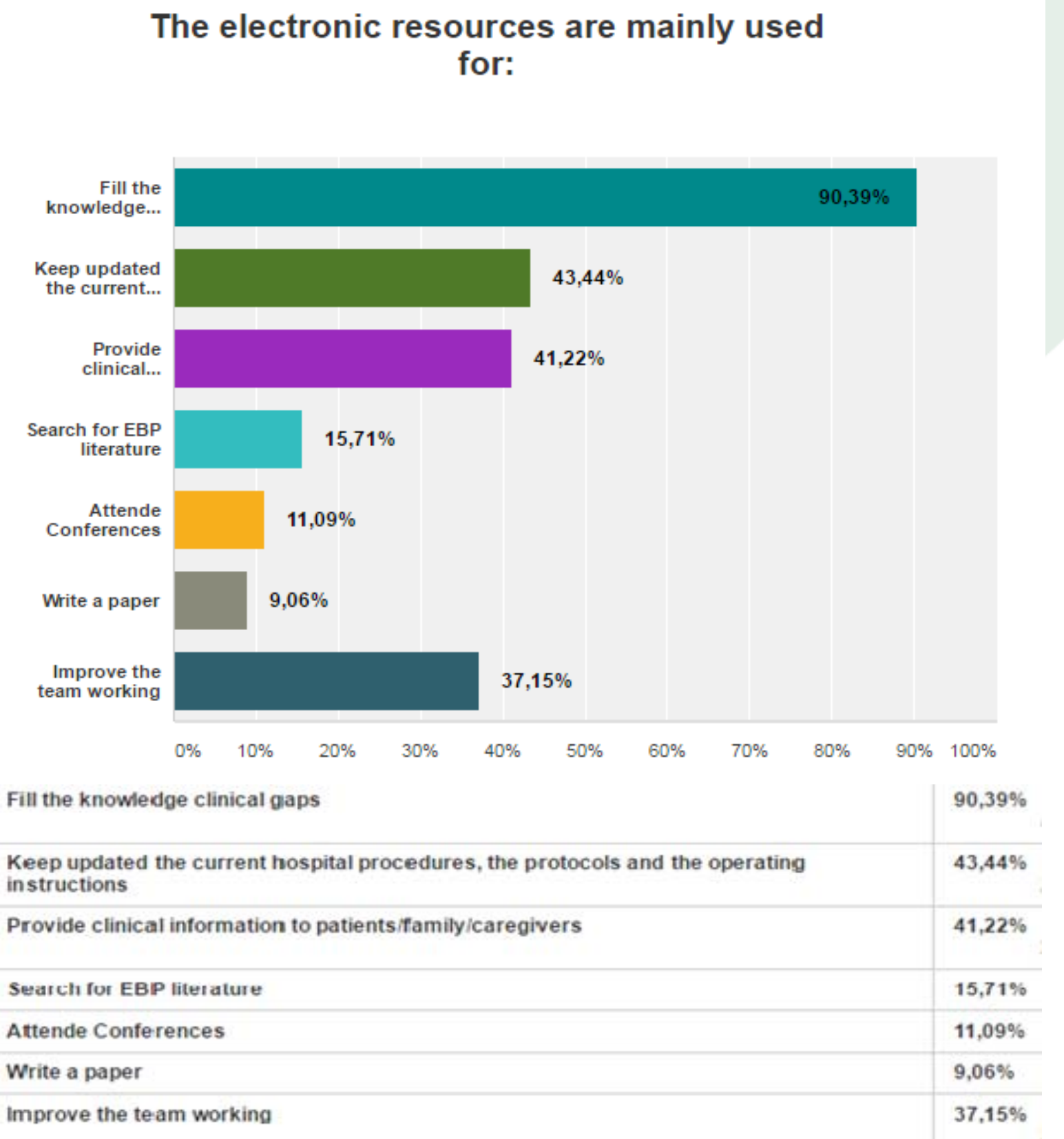
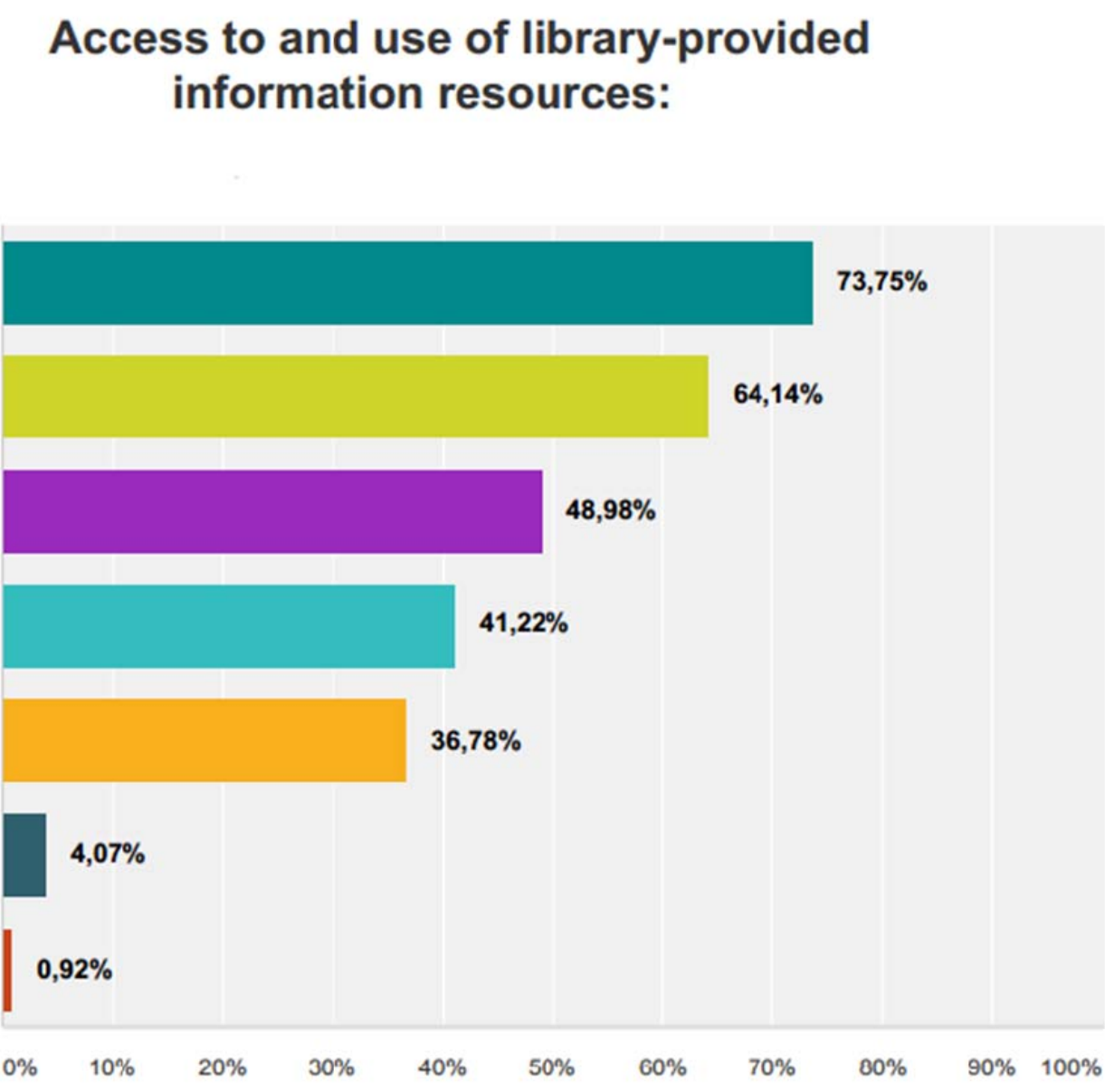


Table VI



Limits. The number of participants in the data collection mainly belongs to only one hospital.

Conclusion. The online information retrieval is linked to the competences acquired through training sessions or Continuing Medical Education courses. The level of nursing professional qualification was significantly correlated with computer confidence and information quality checking. Separate multivariate analyses revealed that access to and use of library-provided information resources had positive relationships with key nursing and patient outcomes, including changes in advice given to patients, handling patient care situations differently, avoiding of adverse events, and saving time. Although the study did not gather extensive detail on the nature of these situations, our findings suggest that more in-depth qualitative research would provide additional useful insights regarding the value of library and information services in nursing and patient care.

Key words: *Libraries, Medical; Library Services; Health Literacy; Nursing Informatics; Nursing Research; Nursing Students*

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