

Assessing patient compliance towards monitoring needs and prescribed treatment

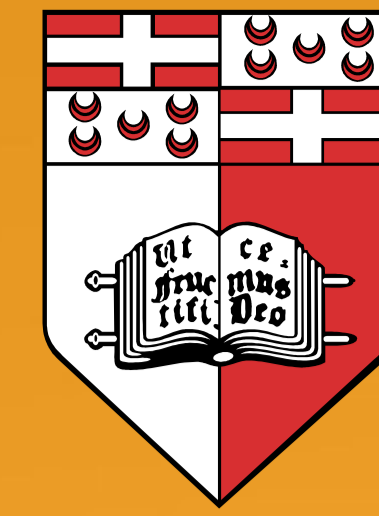
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INTRODUCTION

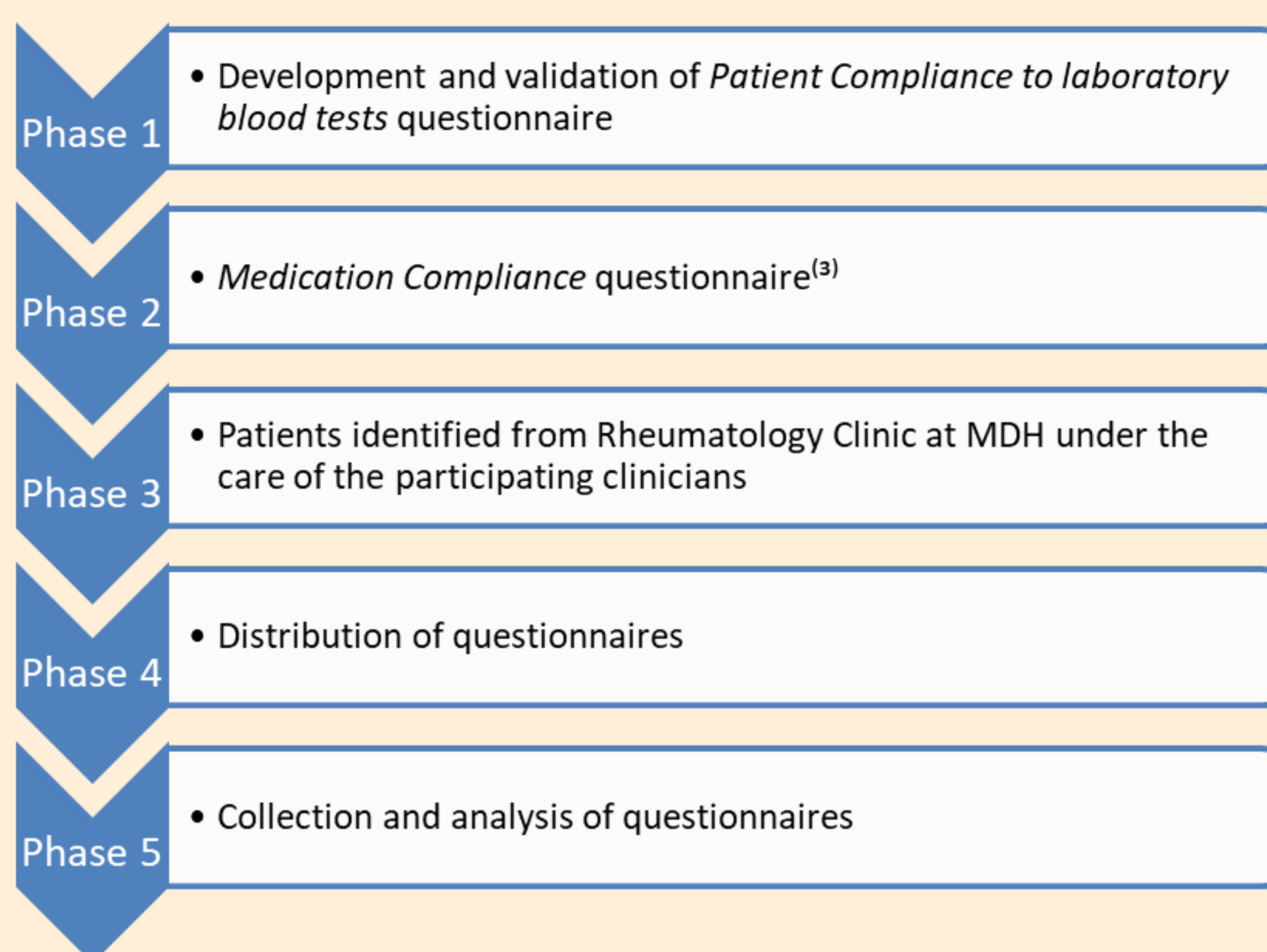
Rheumatology patients are prescribed various disease modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARD) alone or in combination with biological DMARDs. Prescribing and administration of these drugs requires precise monitoring to maximize effectiveness and ensure patient safety⁽¹⁾. Monitoring of patients on DMARDs is an essential part of pharmaceutical care. The pharmacist must work within a multidisciplinary team to ensure further the patients' safety between the primary and secondary care settings⁽²⁾.

AIM

- To assess patient compliance towards monitoring needs of rheumatology patients who are on methotrexate.
- To assess rheumatology patients compliance to prescribed treatment for methotrexate.

METHOD

- A questionnaire, entitled *"Patient compliance to laboratory blood tests"* was developed and validated to assess patients' compliance towards blood investigations in relation to methotrexate.
- A validated medication adherence questionnaire entitled *"Medication Compliance"* was used to assess the patients' compliance towards their prescribed treatment.
- Both questionnaires were distributed to 24 methotrexate rheumatology patients attending the Rheumatology Clinic at Mater Dei Hospital (MDH) and agreeing to participate in the study.
- Questionnaires were analysed by investigator using IBM SPSS Statistics version 24.0



RESULTS

All patients were compliant towards monitoring visits including laboratory investigations. The majority of the patients, (n=23) were aware that liver and kidney function tests together with a full blood count formed part of the baseline monitoring tests. Nineteen patients inform their general practitioner that they are on methotrexate and 13 patients inform the pharmacist of their methotrexate treatment when buying medications. Ten patients reported they rarely miss the dose. The most common reason for non-compliance was forgetfulness (n=5). When asked of the subsequent actions of forgetfulness, 4 out of the 5 patients, took the dose as soon as they remembered.

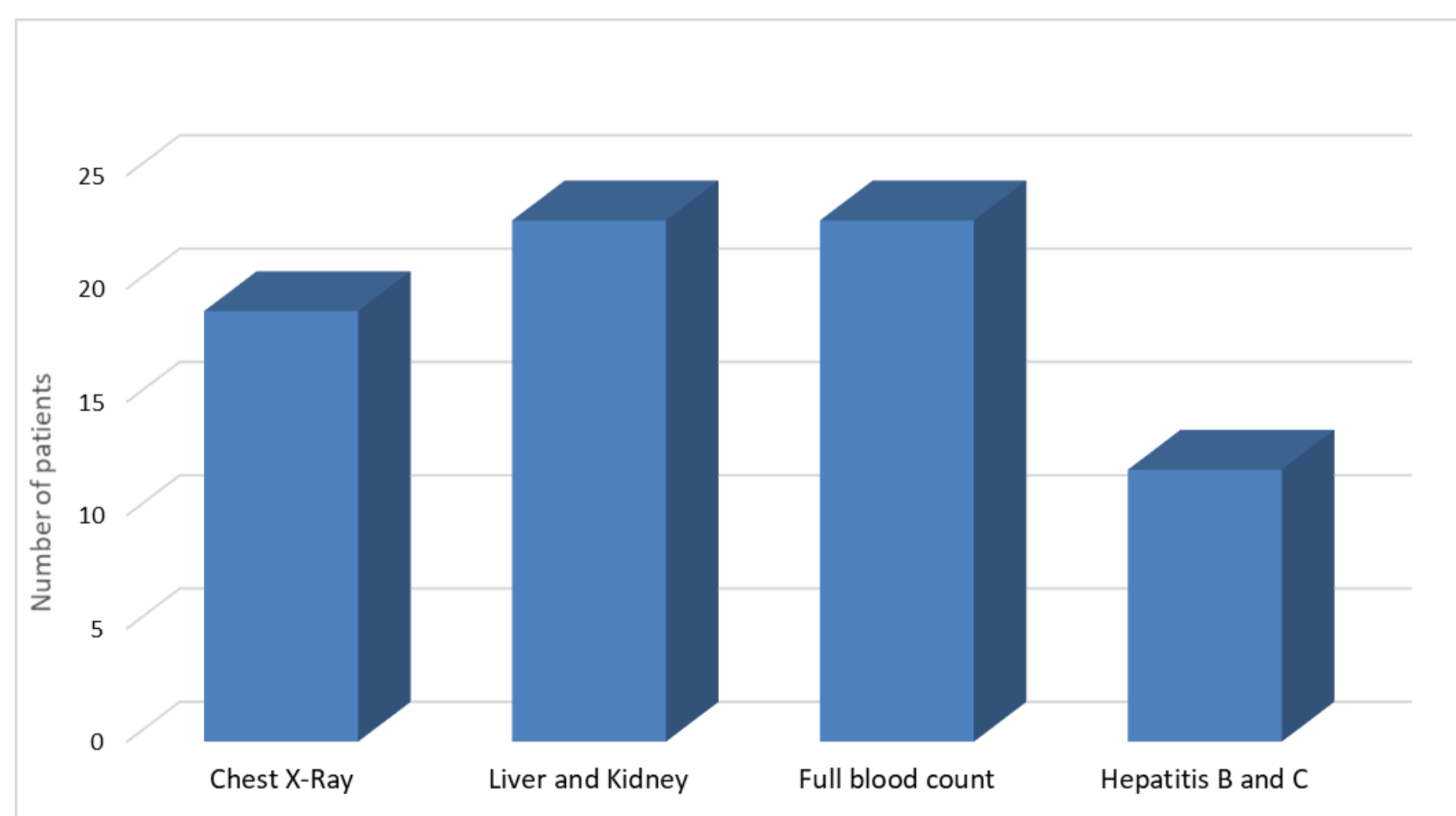


Figure 1: Patient knowledge on baseline monitoring (n= 24)

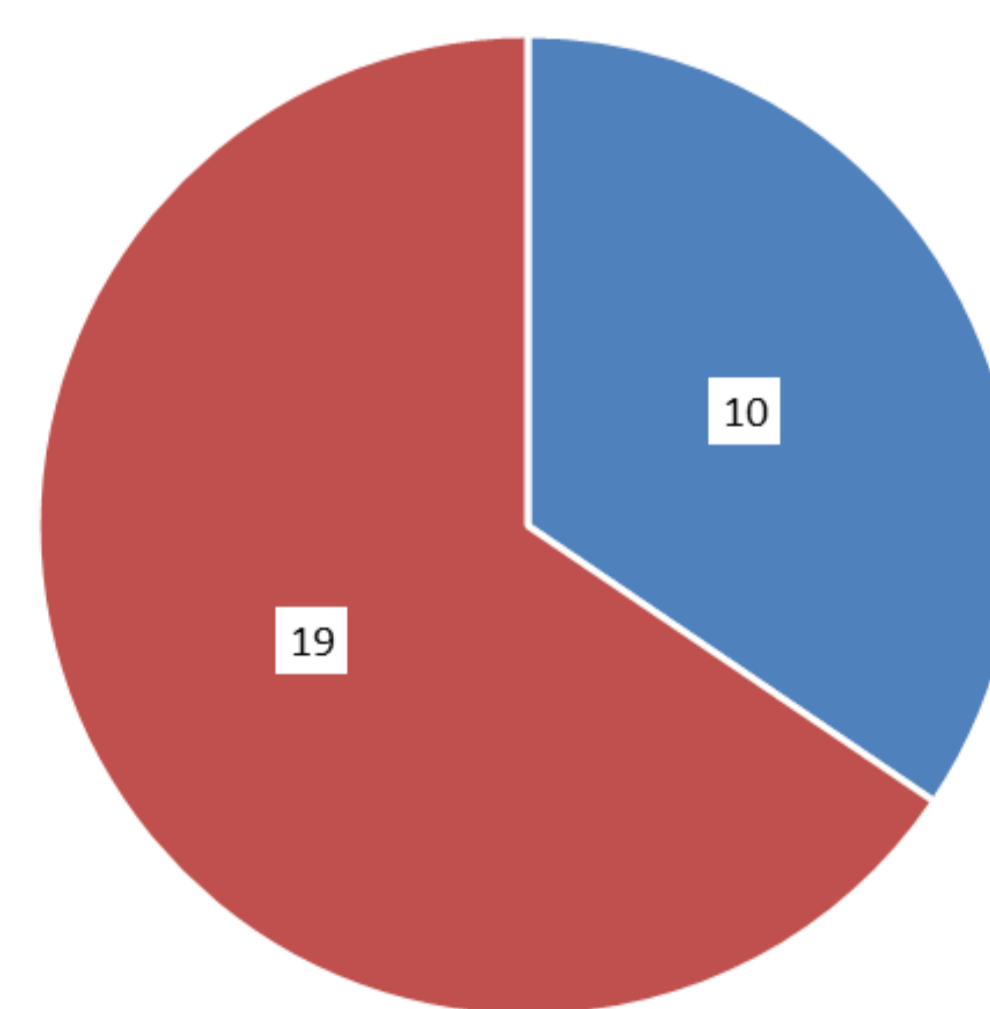


Figure 2: Number of patients who rarely miss a dose compared to those who never miss a dose

CONCLUSION

Patients are compliant with the monitoring needs. Providing tools to overcome forgetfulness which hinders compliance to treatment is an opportunity for pharmacists to ensure effectiveness of treatment.

References:

⁽¹⁾Highton J. Harrison A. Grainger R. Rheumatoid Arthritis-monitoring of DMARDs. *Best Practice Journal*, 2008: BPJ 17 (pg 22-26).

⁽²⁾American Society of Health System Pharmacists. ASHP guidelines on a standardized method for pharmaceutical care. *Am J Health-System Pharm*. 1996;53:1713-1716.

⁽³⁾Zammit L. Compliance Issues in Hypertensive Care [project]. Msida (Malta):University of Malta; 2005