

Evaluating Patient Perceptions and Preferences of Biosimilars in South Korea

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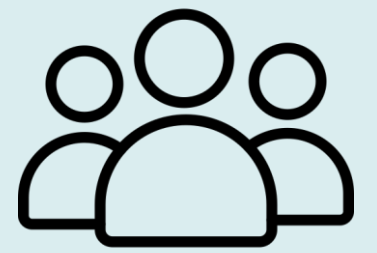
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1. Introduction

- Biologic drugs have become dominant pipelines in the pharmaceutical industry.
- The high cost of biologics poses a threat to the sustainability of healthcare budgets. This issue can possibly be addressed by adopting biosimilars.
- Biosimilars, named for their similarity to originator biologics in terms of quality, safety, and efficacy, provide cheaper alternatives to originator biologics, delivering almost identical clinical health outcomes and thereby increasing patient accessibility to biologic drugs.
- The limited awareness and understanding of biosimilars among patients often impede their timely uptake.
- This cross-sectional survey aims to evaluate the perceptions, preferences, and experiences of Korean patients regarding biosimilars.

2. Methods

I. Recruiting



Ankylosing Spondylitis Patient Association



Ewha Womans University Medical Centers at Mokdong and Seoul hospitals

QR code linked to the survey were displayed on bulletin boards within disease-specific centers that frequently prescribe

- ✓ Cancer outpatient center
- ✓ Inflammatory bowel disease center
- ✓ Rheumatology center

II. Survey

- Conducted from November 2023 to June 2024
- Web-based survey consisted of up to 28 questions
- Received approval from the Ewha Womans University Institutional Review Board (IRB ewha-202309-0028-04).

III. Selection Criteria

1. Aged 18 years or older
2. Fluent in reading, listening, and speaking Korean
3. Reported having any medical condition

3. Results

Figure 1. Demographics of Respondents

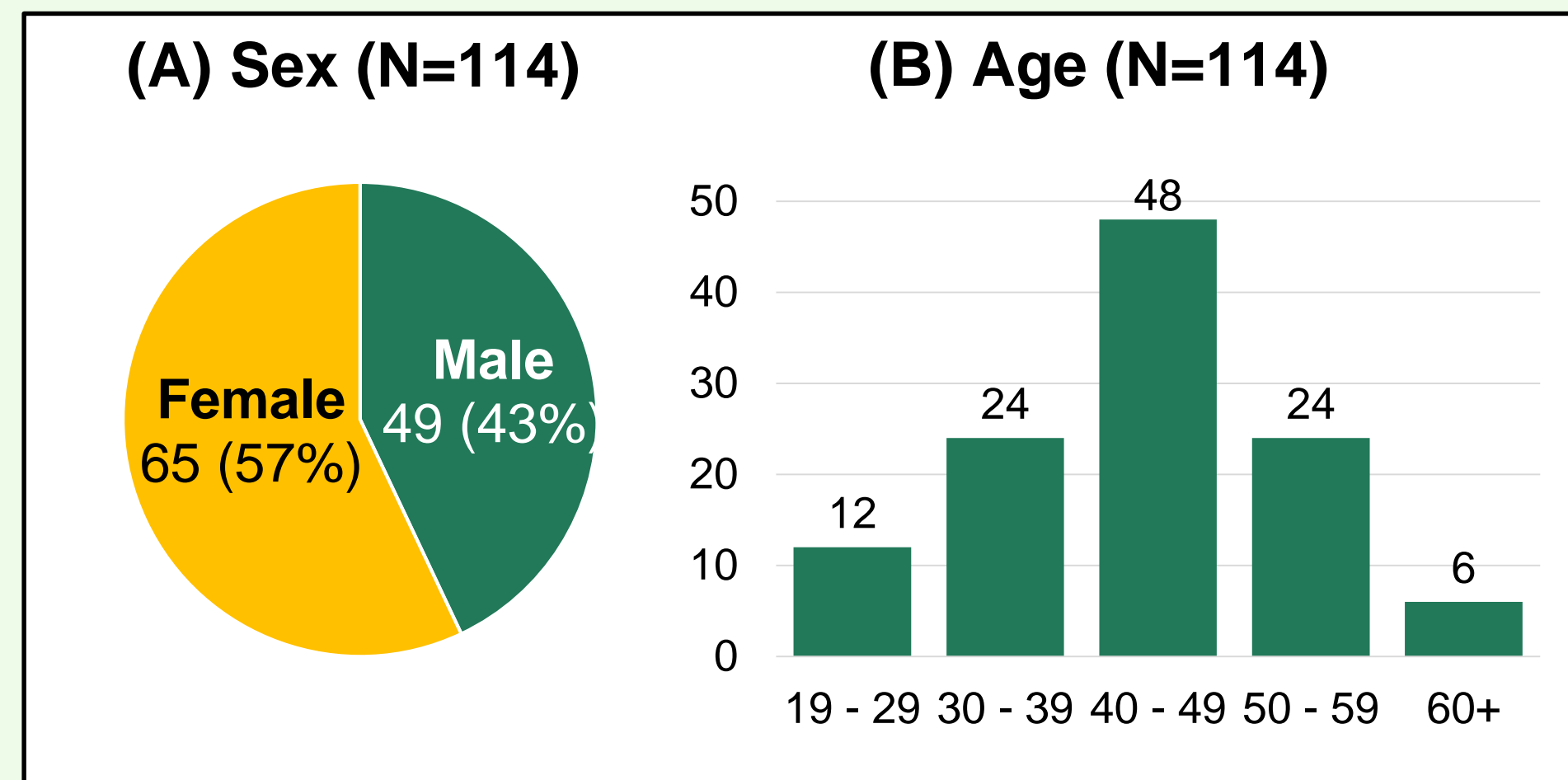


Figure 2. Awareness and Sources of Information

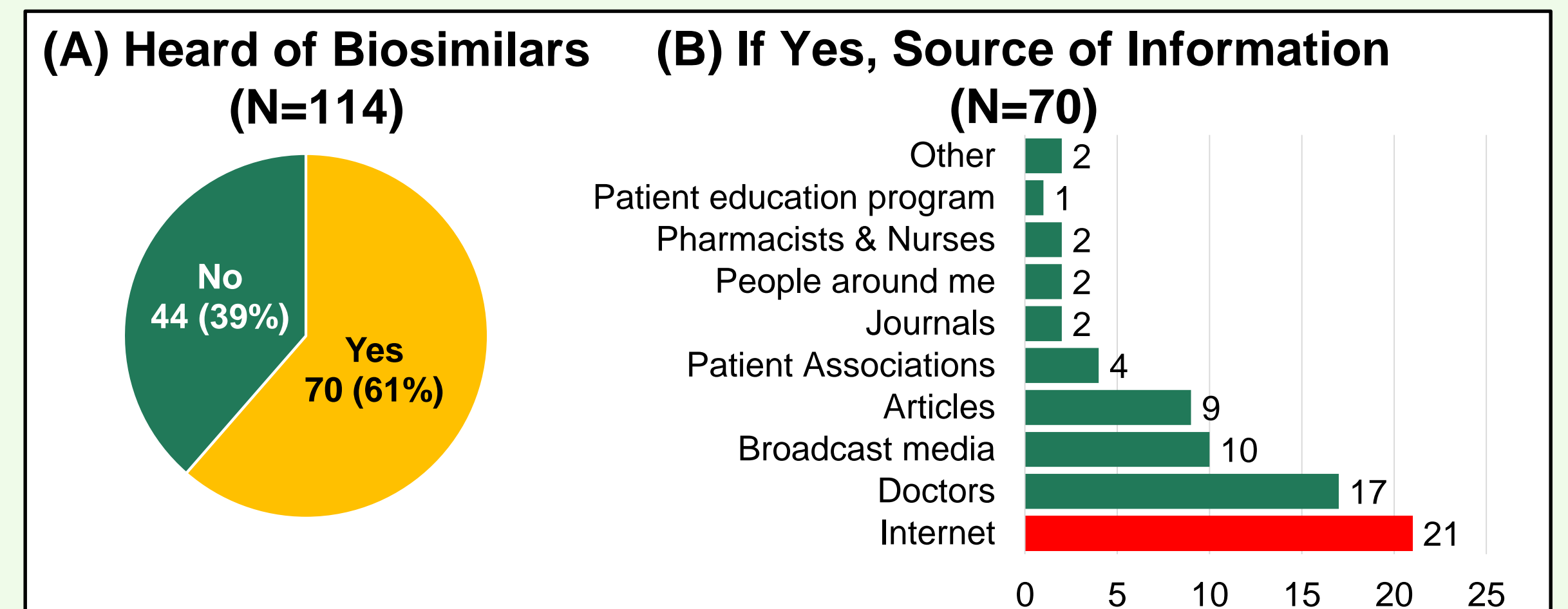
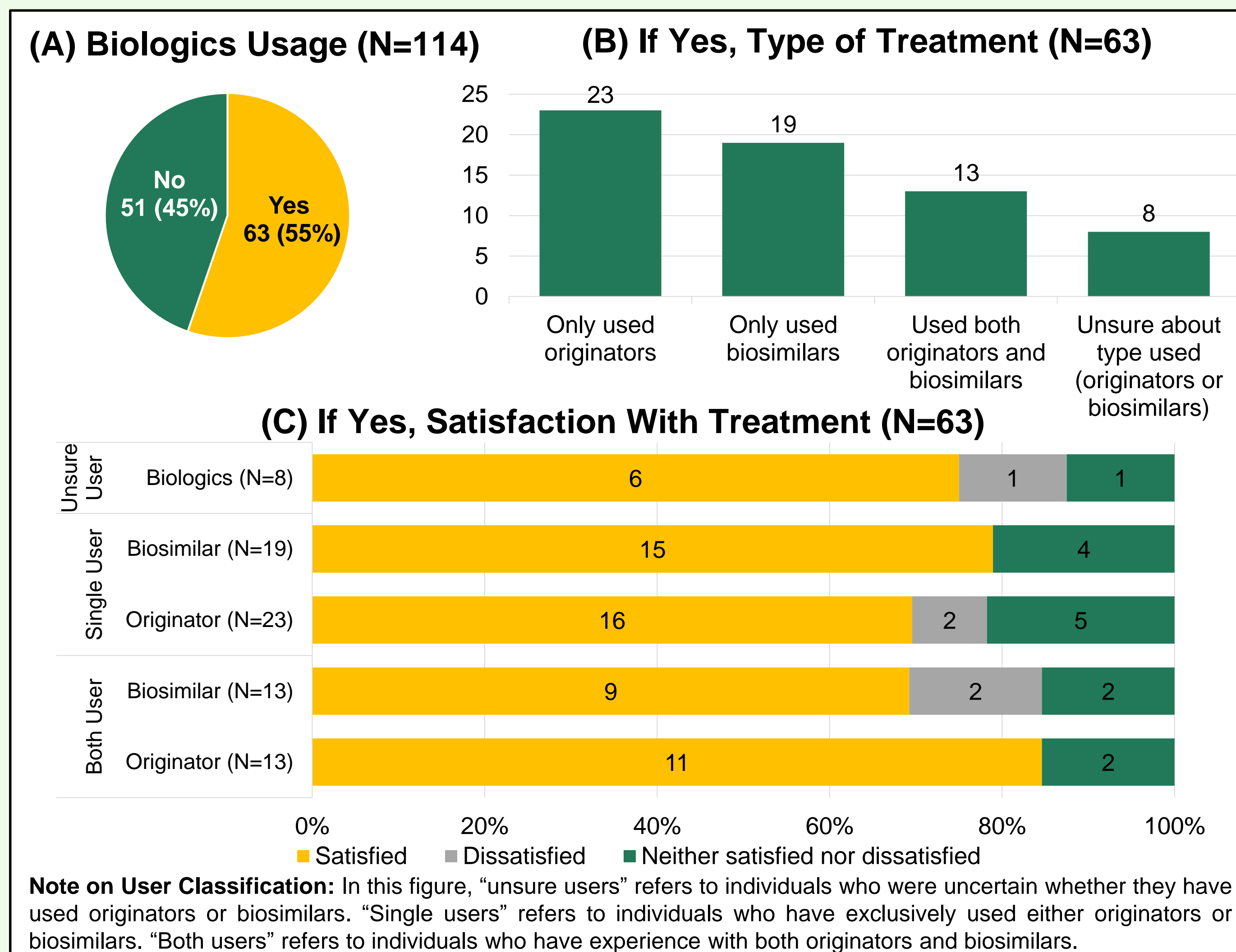
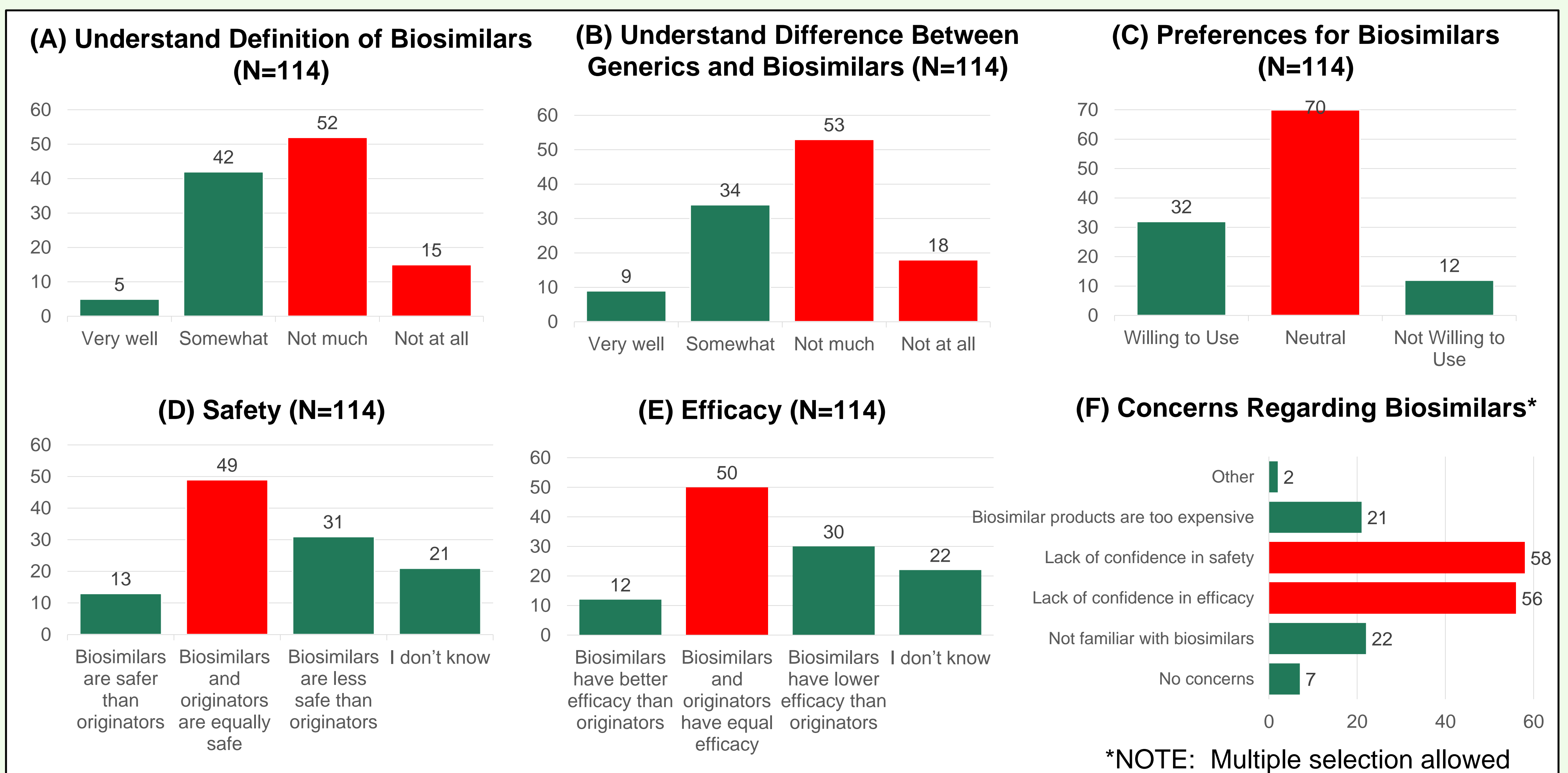


Figure 3. Biologics Usage, Treatment Types and Satisfaction



- A total of 122 responses were collected, out of which 114 were analyzed after excluding 8 individuals without any medical conditions.
- Among 114 respondents, there were more female (57%, N=65) than male (43%, N=49), and predominantly aged 40 – 49 years [Figure 1].
- Overall, 61.4% (N=70) of respondents had heard of biosimilars, primarily through the internet (30%, N=21). The next most common source of information was from doctors (24.3%, N=17) [Figure 2].
- 55.3% (N=63) have used biologics, including both originators and biosimilars, with the majority reporting high satisfaction with their experiences [Figure 3].

Figure 4. General Perceptions of Biosimilars



- 58.0% (N=67) were unaware of the definition of biosimilars, and 62.3% (N=71) did not understand the difference between generics and biosimilars. Given this, it is not surprising that most patients (61.4%, N=70) expressed no clear preference for biosimilars. [Figure 4(A), (B), (C)]
- Among those familiar with the definition of biosimilars, a significantly higher preference for biosimilars was observed compared to those unfamiliar (20 out of 47 vs. 12 out of 67, $p = 0.013$) [Figure 4].
- While a majority acknowledged biosimilars equivalent to originators in terms of safety (N=49) and efficacy (N=50), the primary concerns remained centered around safety (N=58) and efficacy (N=56), which indicates ongoing concerns about the comparability of biosimilars in practical applications [Figure 4(D), (E), (F)].

4. Conclusions

- Most patients were not familiar with biosimilars and expressed a neutral preference. The large proportion of neutrality suggests there is room for improvement in patients' awareness of biosimilars.
- To further increase biosimilar utilization, it is necessary to implement policies that foster patient education programs to enhance patient perception of biosimilars and encourage physicians to prescribe biosimilars.

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