

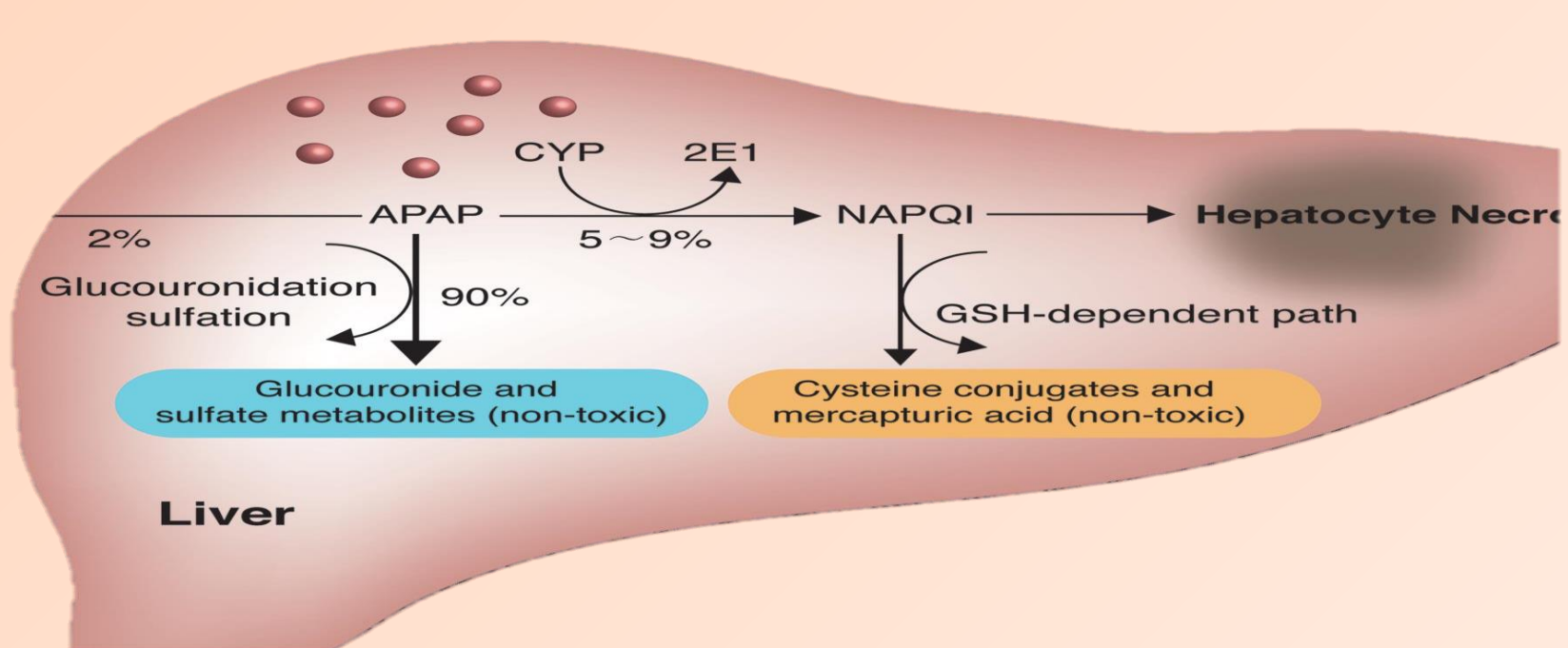
KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF PEOPLE REGARDING ACETAMINOPHEN INDUCED TOXICITY: A QUESTIONNAIRE BASED SURVEY

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BACKGROUND:

Self-medication has been found to be a growing trend among public and is mostly associated with non-rational use of over the counter (OTC) medications. Most of the people believe that medicines available under the label of OTC are safe and harmless. Acetaminophen is among the popular analgesics used by masses for the treatment of headaches, fever, backache etc. It has been found that hepatotoxicity associated with intentional and non-intentional overdose of acetaminophen is the leading cause of acute liver failure (ALF).



DESIGN/METHODS:

Present study is a questionnaire-based survey. Questionnaire was randomly filled by people of different age groups and occupations. Out of 460, 420 questionnaires returned over a period of six months. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS and p-value of ≤ 0.05 was considered statistically significant. Participants completing the survey reported recent use of OTC medicines. Of these, 280 preferred to self medicate.

Out of 420, 46 were prescribed, 50 were not indicated and 44 were indicated.

Q: Do you opt self-medication?
Yes ___ No ___

Q: Do you consult your doctor about self-medication?
Yes ___ No ___

Q: If the answer to above question is yes, how often do you consult your doctor about self-medication?
Sometimes ___ More often ___ Never ___

Q: What kind of medicine do you mostly take as self-medication?
Paracetamol ___ Anti-allergen ___ Anti-hypertensive ___ NSAIDs ___

Q: Does your medication involve painkillers?
Yes ___ No ___

Q: Do you check the dose of these medicines?
Yes ___ No ___

Q: What is the usual normal dose of these medicines?
200 mg- 350 mg ___ 350 mg- 450 mg ___ 450 mg- 600 mg ___ 600> ___

Q: What kind of painkillers do you mostly use?
Paracetamol ___ Anti-inflammatory ___ Dihydrocodeine ___
Biphosphonates ___

Q: What is the cause of using painkillers most commonly?
Joint pain ___ Fever ___ Headache ___ others ___

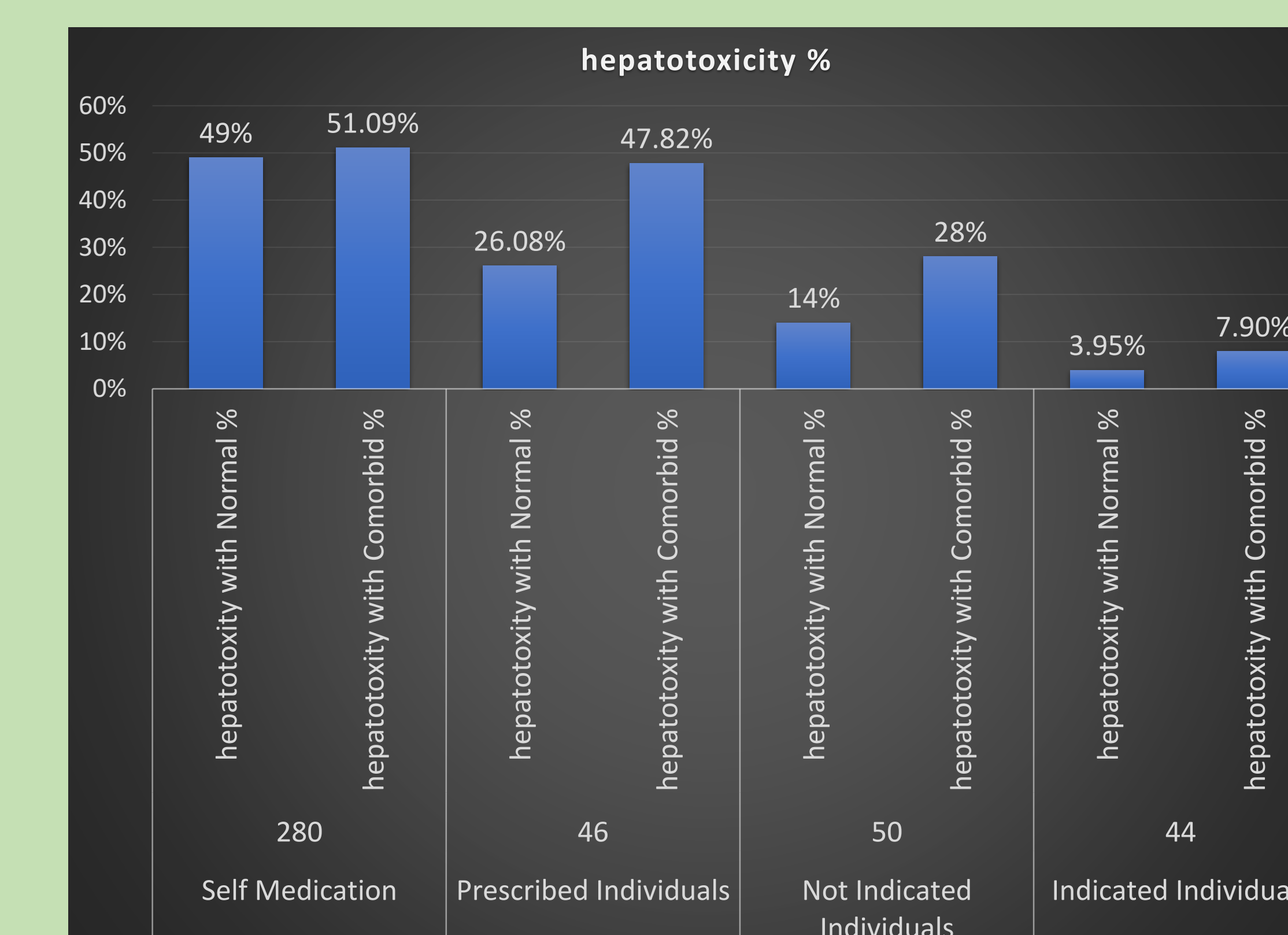
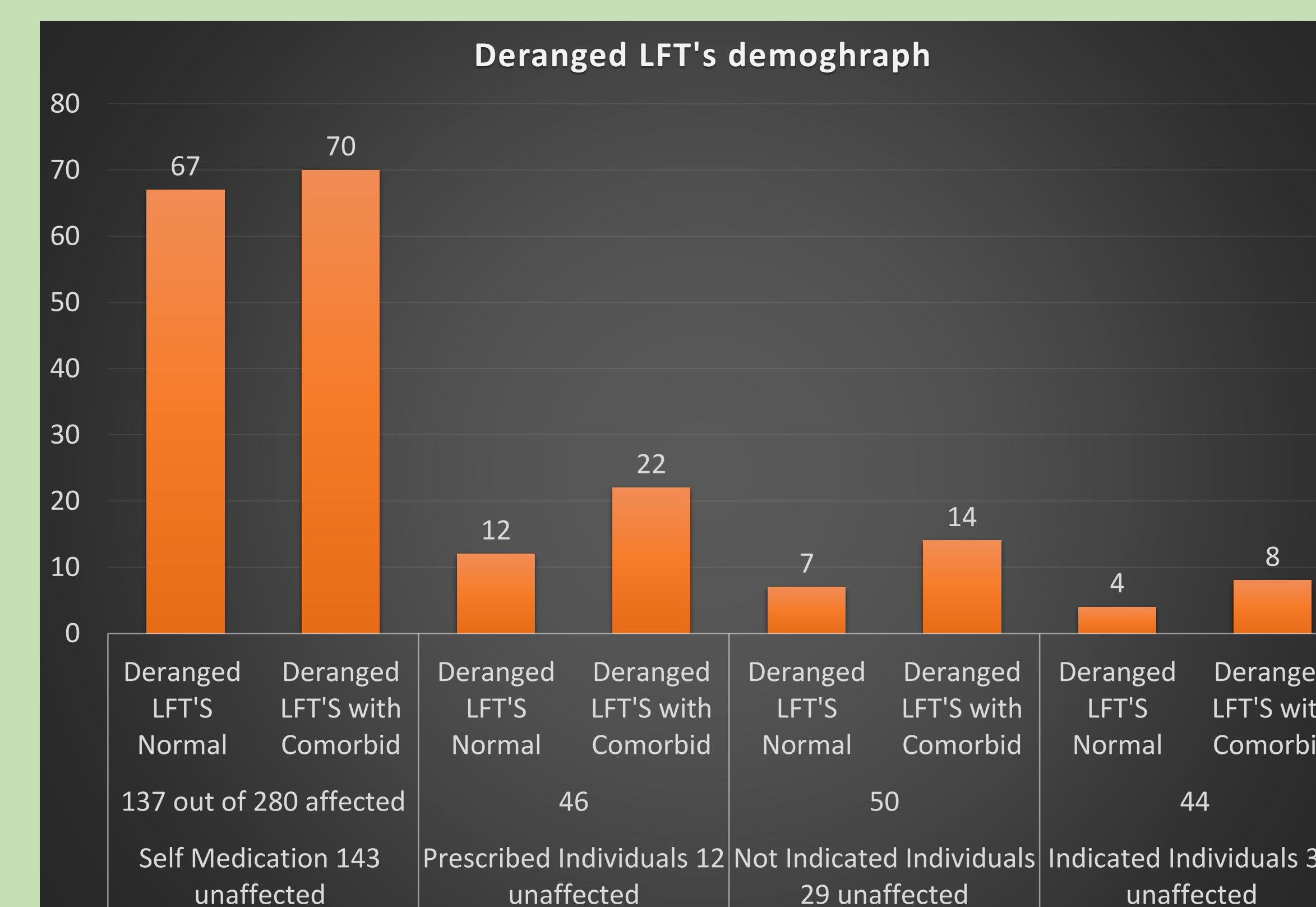
Q: How old were you when you started self-medication?
15-20 ___ 21-30 ___ 31-40 ___ above 40 ___

Q: Can you get through the week without taking these medicines?
Yes ___ No ___

RESULTS:

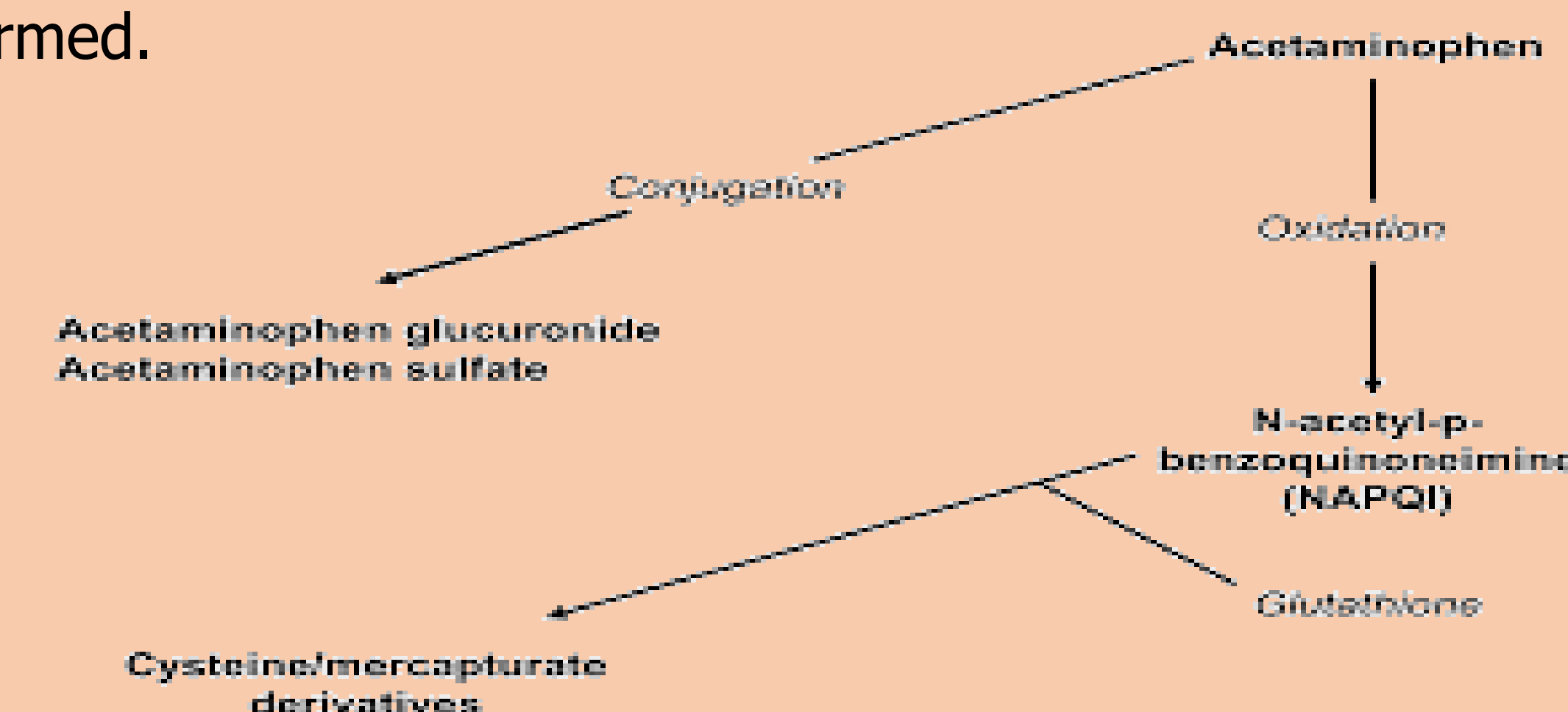
Figure A shows deranged LFT's among 420 patients who returned their responses. Patients were divided into two groups i.e. with comorbidities and without comorbidities.

Figure B shows about the percentage toxicity caused by acetaminophen in population who self medicated themselves, were prescribed acetaminophen, indicated and not indicated.



AIM/OBJECTIVES:

The aim of the present study is to estimate the perception and knowledge of common public, in twin cities, towards safety concerns connected with acetaminophen. As acetaminophen induced hepatotoxicity is a very ignorant issue in Pakistan, the objective is to promote counselling regarding proper use and correct dose of acetaminophen to be used by a healthy or comorbid person. In order to achieve the aim, a questionnaire based survey was performed.



CONCLUSIONS:

According to the study it was found that most of toxicity caused by acetaminophen is due to lack of knowledge about possible side effects, not consulting the doctors and lack of counselling regarding proper use of acetaminophen. It is observed that people with comorbidities, taking other hepatotoxic drugs were more prone towards acetaminophen toxicity. Their ALT/ AST levels are usually higher than the normal levels (ALT= 7-56 units per liter, AST= 10-40 units per liter). The most common side effects caused in patients with underlying liver diseases belonged to the age of 30-50 years. The most common gender affected by the side effects or toxicity of acetaminophen/ paracetamol were males.

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