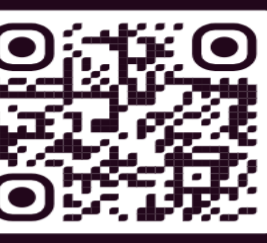


Introduction of a Medicines Reconciliation Training Programme For Pharmacy Technicians

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Introduction

Medicines reconciliation is a task that is traditionally undertaken by Pharmacists however, in June 2022, the shortage of Pharmacists in Ireland reached near crisis levels with the occupation added to the Critical Skills Occupation List of the Irish Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.¹

This list is designed to attract highly skilled workers outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and fill skills gaps in the Irish economy.

While Pharmacists are skilled at performing medicines reconciliation, it may be impractical to assign them to the role routinely due to staff shortages.²

Resource constraints promote opportunities for expanding the role of Pharmacy Technicians who can fill important roles to help Pharmacists provide better patient-centred care.

The Institute of Medicine estimates that one medication error occurs per hospital patient, per day, equating to three million medication errors in Irish hospitals per year.³

Although most errors do not result in patient harm, they have the potential to result in serious harm and the majority are preventable.

Medicines reconciliation is a proven strategy to help reduce medication errors and improve patient safety outcomes.⁴

This is a novel and new approach in Irish hospitals as medicines reconciliation is currently outside the current scope of practice for Pharmacy Technicians.

Aims and Objectives

Increase the quantity of medicines reconciliation performed for inpatients aged >70

Reduce the overall prevalence of unintentional medication discrepancies (UMDs) on admission for inpatients >70

Facilitate an increase to the current scope of practice of Pharmacy Technicians through completion of the training programme

Improve patient safety and quality of care

Allow greater time for Pharmacists to complete clinical tasks.

Methods

Background Research

1. Extensive research into the role of Pharmacy Technicians in medicines reconciliation internationally.
2. Development of a training manual based on best practices in patient safety and clinical education.
3. Pharmacist mentor and educational supervisor allocated to each Pharmacy Technician.
4. SOP and checklists developed.

Pharmacy Technician Training

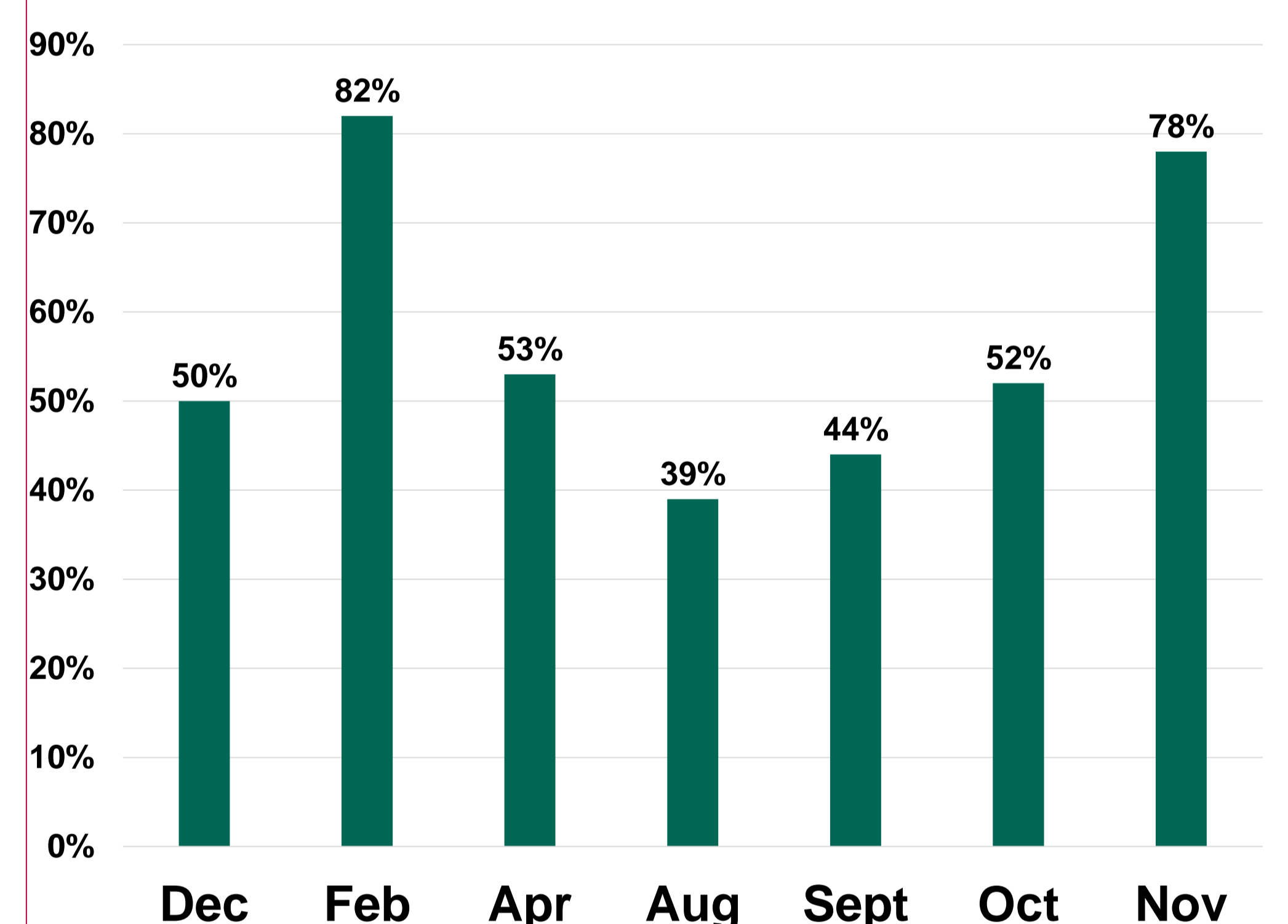
1. Didactic educational component completed
2. Train to take the Best possible Medication History (BPMH)
3. Observation of Med Rec interviews completed by a Pharmacist
4. Conduct Med Rec interviews under Pharmacist observation
5. Competency assessments
6. Reflective logs

Data Collection

1. Baseline data collected Dec 2022 (Pharmacist only)
2. Data collection repeated Feb 2023 → (including 3 x trained Pharmacy Technicians)
3. Data collection repeated at 2/3 month intervals

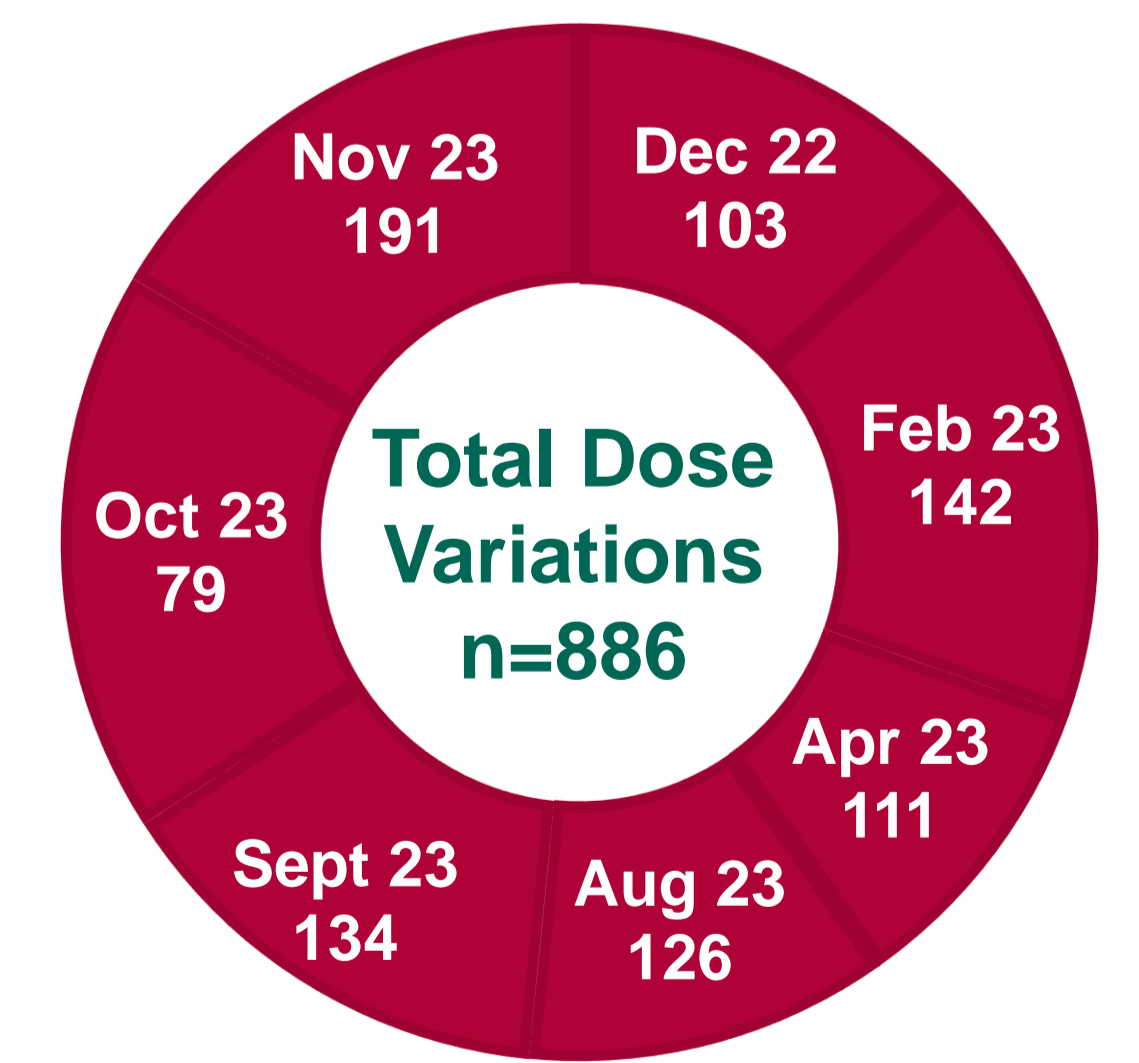
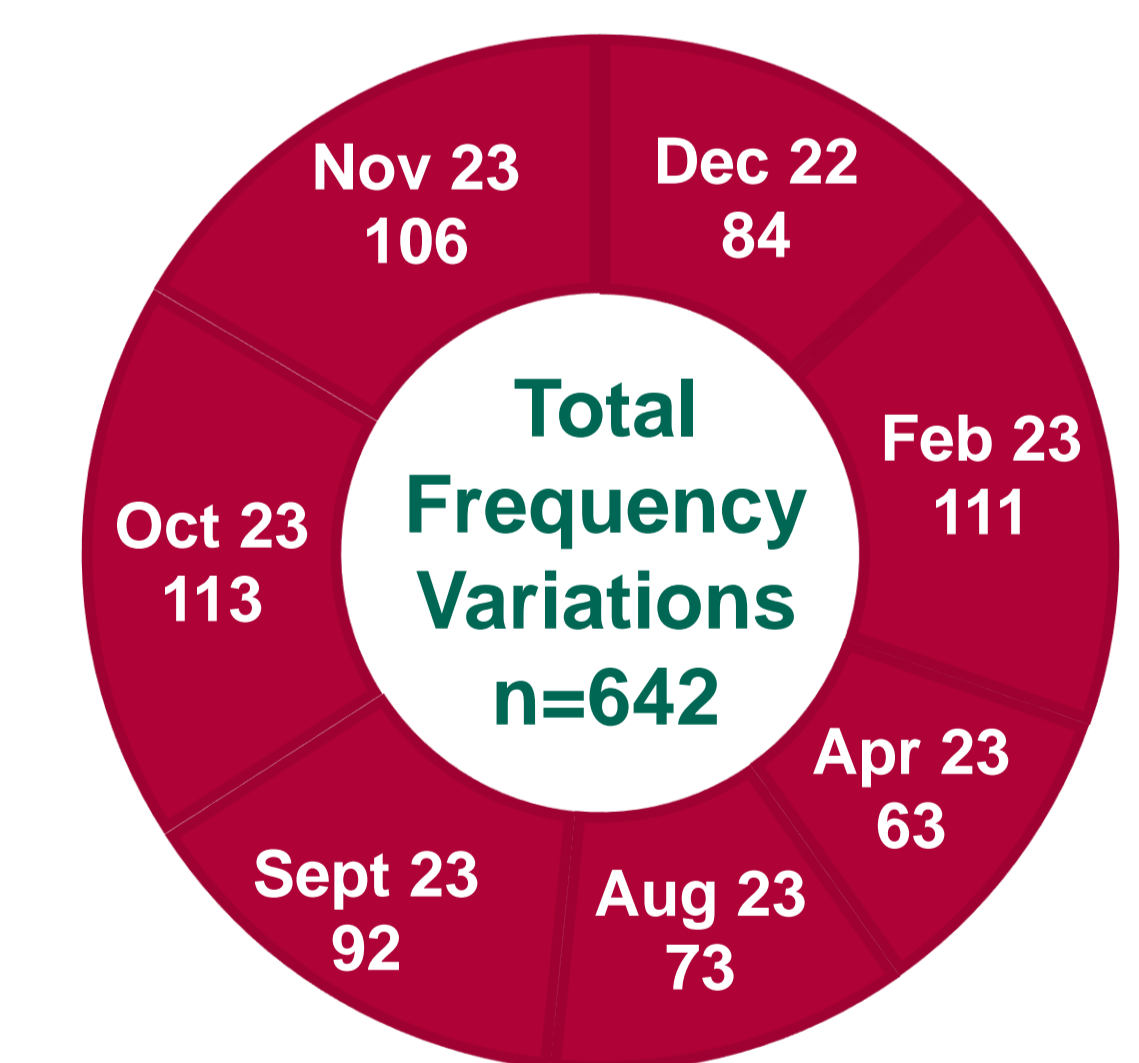
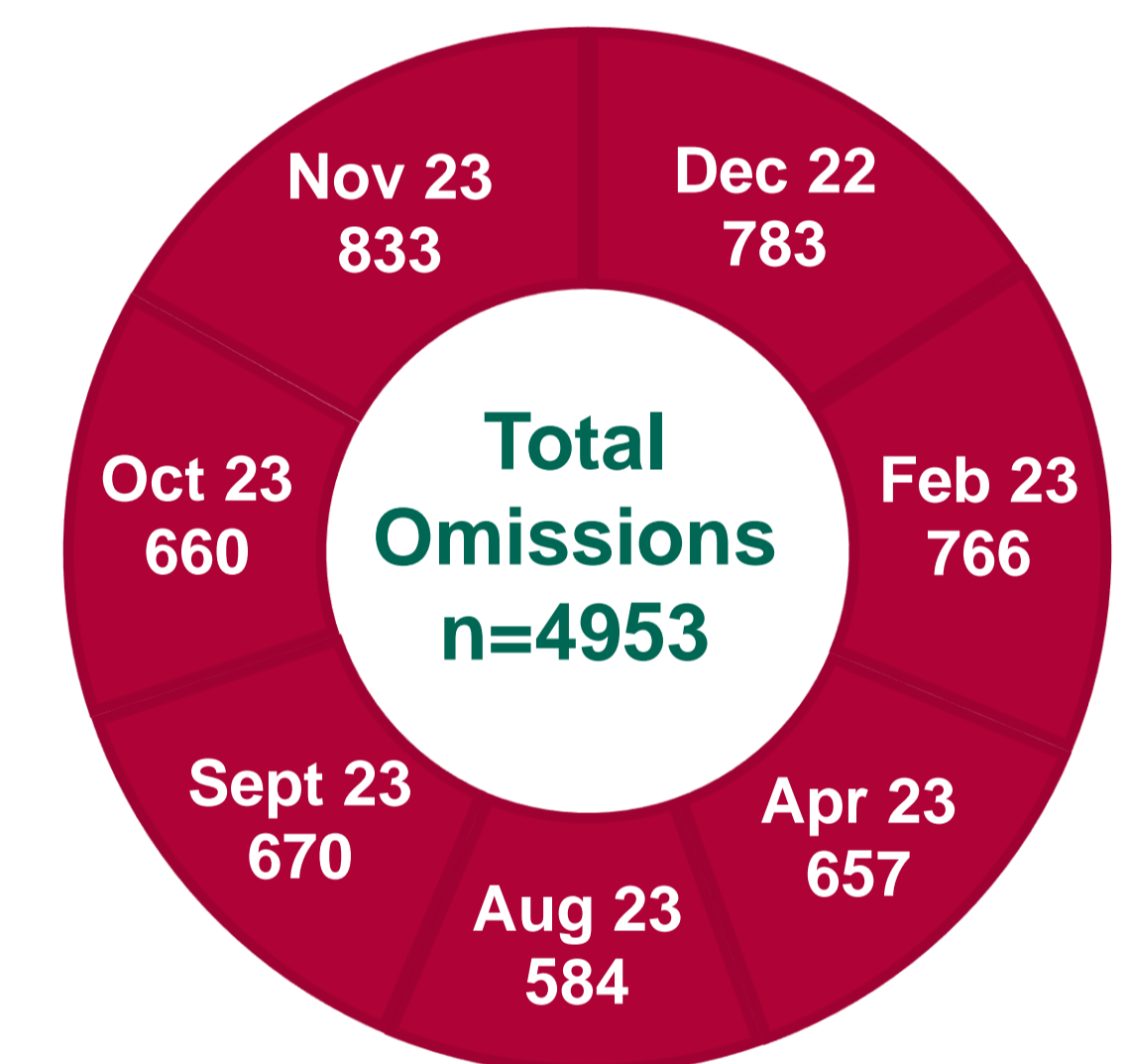
Results

% of Med Recs completed for inpatients >70

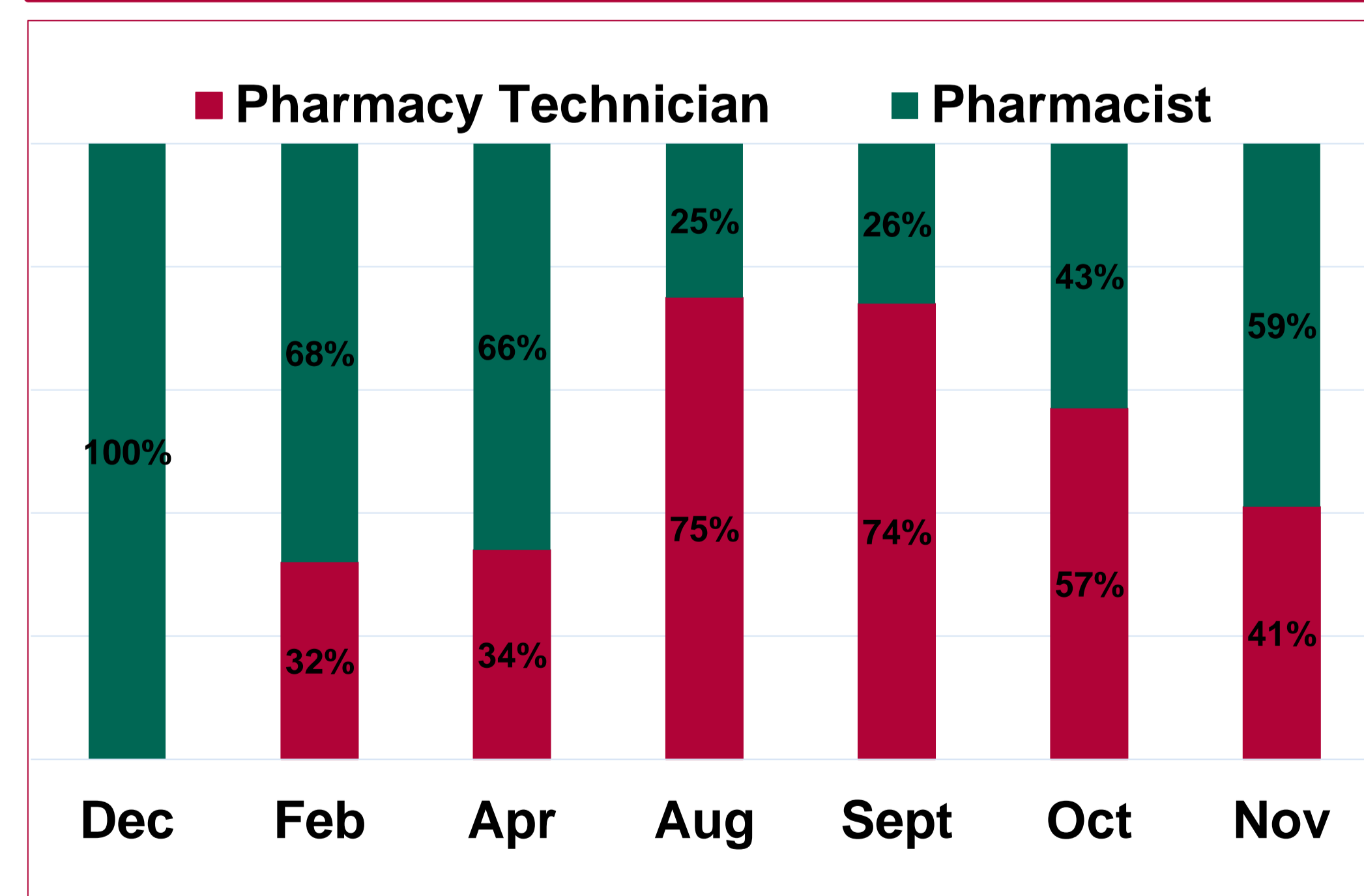


*Dec 2022: Pharmacist only. Feb 2023 → including 3 x trained Pharmacy Technicians

Unintentional Medication Discrepancies alerted to Prescribers



% of Med Recs completed by Pharmacy Technician / Pharmacist



Conclusion

In Ireland, pharmacy faces a very serious workforce shortage at a time when both the public and health care providers alike, are looking to Pharmacists to assume expanded responsibility for better medication safety. Better use of human resources is essential and it is evident that internationally Pharmacy Technicians are expanding into new roles. Medicines reconciliation is a key task in identifying and reducing medication errors and improving patient safety.

The introduction of a medicines reconciliation training programme for Pharmacy Technicians in St Luke's General Hospital Carlow-Kilkenny has been very successful and the project highlights that a training programme for Pharmacy Technicians has positive outcomes in relation to patient safety and care.

References

1. Critical Skills Occupations in Enterprise Act 2022
2. Medicines Reconciliation in Ireland: Patient Safety and Quality of Care Report
3. Institute of Medicine (IOM). Medication Errors and Patient Safety. 2000. Chapter 4: Medication Errors.
4. Medicines Reconciliation: A Key Task in Identifying and Reducing Medication Errors and Improving Patient Safety.