

**A STUDY ON THE KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND QUALITY OF LIFE ABOUT
LEPROSY DISEASE AMONG ADULT URBAN & RURAL POPULATION OF EITHER
GENDER**Swati Rastogi¹ and Dr. Srabani Bhattacharya^{2*}¹MBBS Student, Rajiv Gandhi Medical College and CSMH Hospital Thane, Maharashtra, India.²Professor of Physiology, Rajiv Gandhi Medical College and CSMH Hospital Thane, Maharashtra, India.***Corresponding Author: Dr. Srabani Bhattacharya**

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ABSTRACT

It is a cross sectional study. Total number of adult participants were 255 of both male and female gender. 61.17% were male participants and 38.82% were female. Among them, 2.35% 10th standard pass, 16.86% 12th standard pass, graduate 27.45%, post graduate 15.68%, under graduate and other were 34.90% and 2.74% respectively. Among them 90.58% were from urban area. Regarding their occupation, 35.29% were medical students, 13.72% students from other branches, 22.74% office job, 17.64% field job, business 2.35%, 6.27% were house wife & retired 1.96%. Among the respondents only 1% were a leprosy patient or in close contact with a leprosy patient. Among them 47.84% were aware about what leprosy is also called. About the cause of leprosy, 67.05% answered bacteria. About symptoms, 169 participants answered sores or lesions. 72.16 % of them were also aware about the free of cost leprosy treatment available in India.

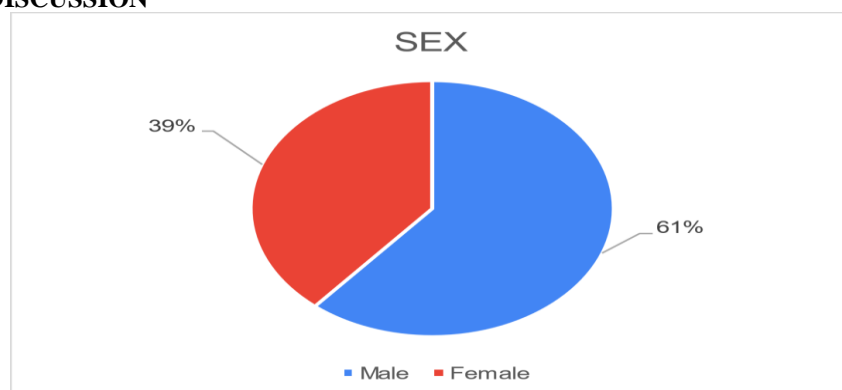
KEYWORDS: Leprosy, Knowledge, Attitude.**INTRODUCTION**

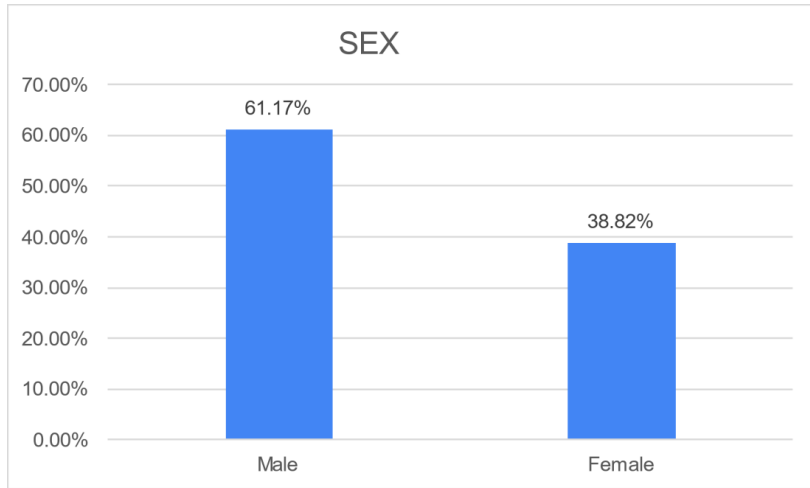
Leprosy or Hansen's disease is an infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium leprae. Leprosy preliminarily affects the peripheral nerves and skin. The damage of the nerves may affect the sensory, motor and autonomic functions of the nerves, resulting ultimately in disability. Social stigmatisation is a challenge for many people affected by leprosy.^[1] Leprosy is still prevalent in certain parts of the world particularly India and South America. In India, it has been known to people since the Vedic period.^[2] Children and adolescents experience internalised stigma.^[3] Leprosy is a neglected disease. Many new cases world wide each year despite the efficacy of multidrug therapy that cures millions of

patients.^[4] The social stigma in leprosy is a social fear resulting in a guilt complex in the patient.^[5] There is a gap between the number of reported cases and the number of actual cases in the community.^[6] Leprosy has been widely prevalent in India.^[7]

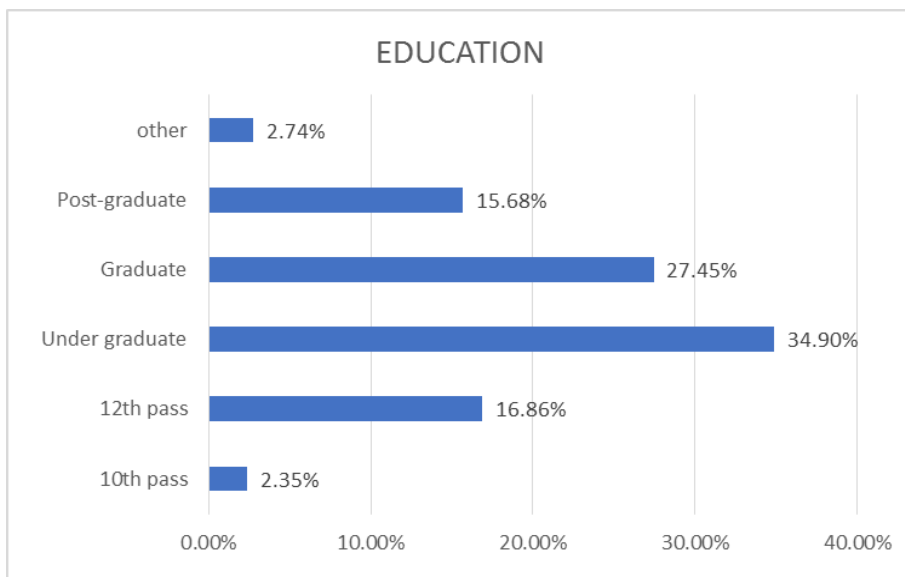
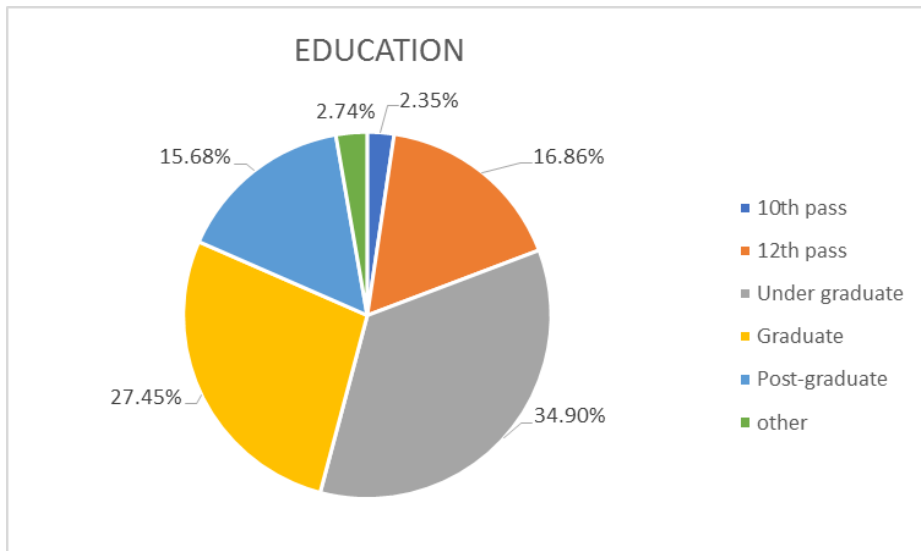
MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional interview based study was conducted with a pre-tested and pre-validated questionnaire administered via google forms to the adult residents of India. Informed consent was taken on the google forms. The data was adapted to Microsoft Excel spread sheet.

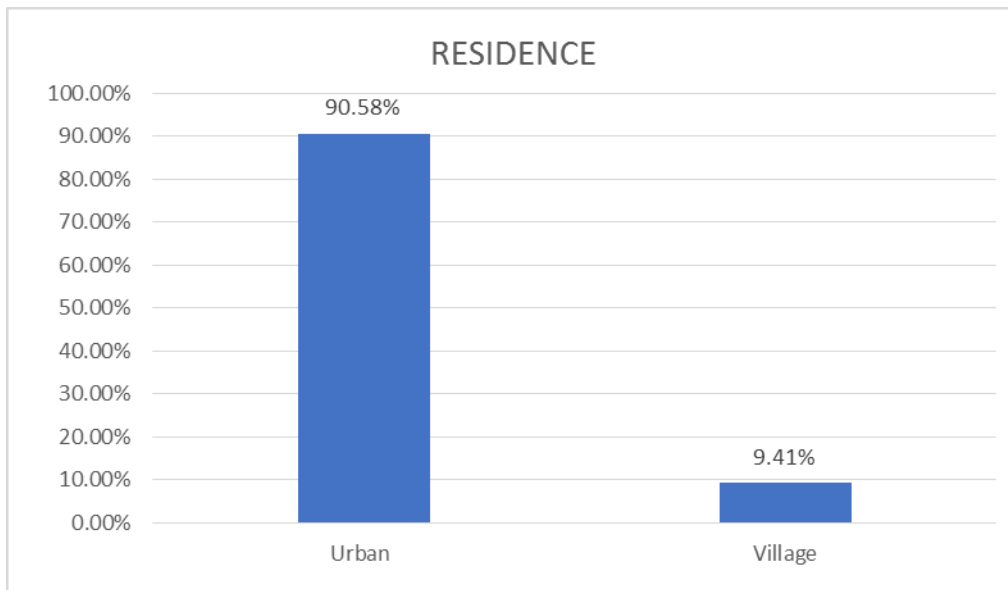
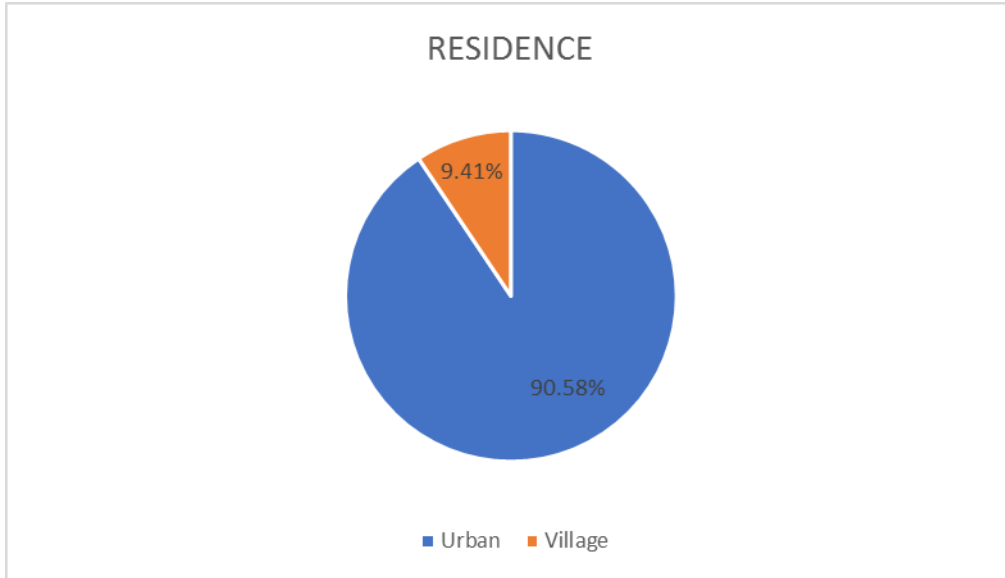
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



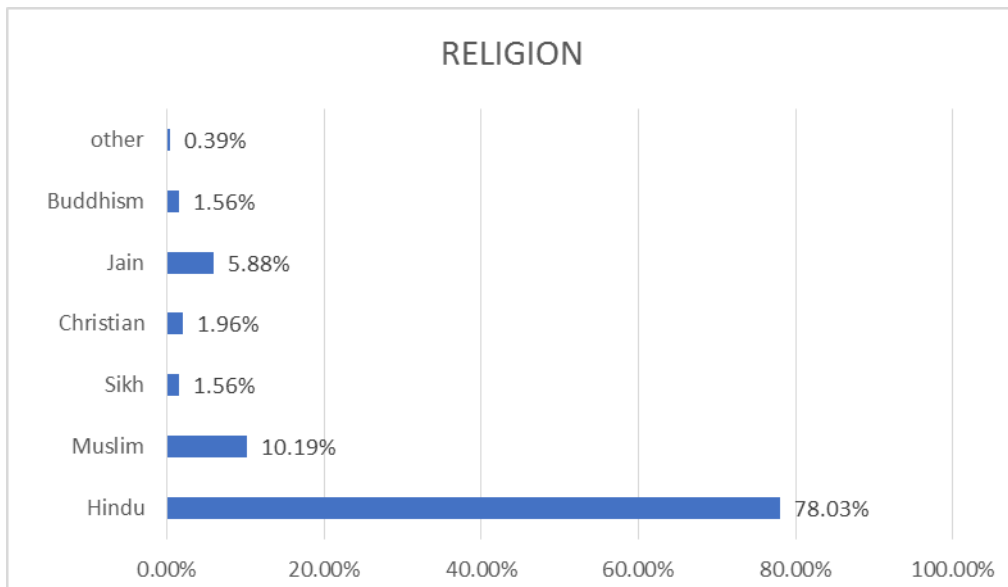
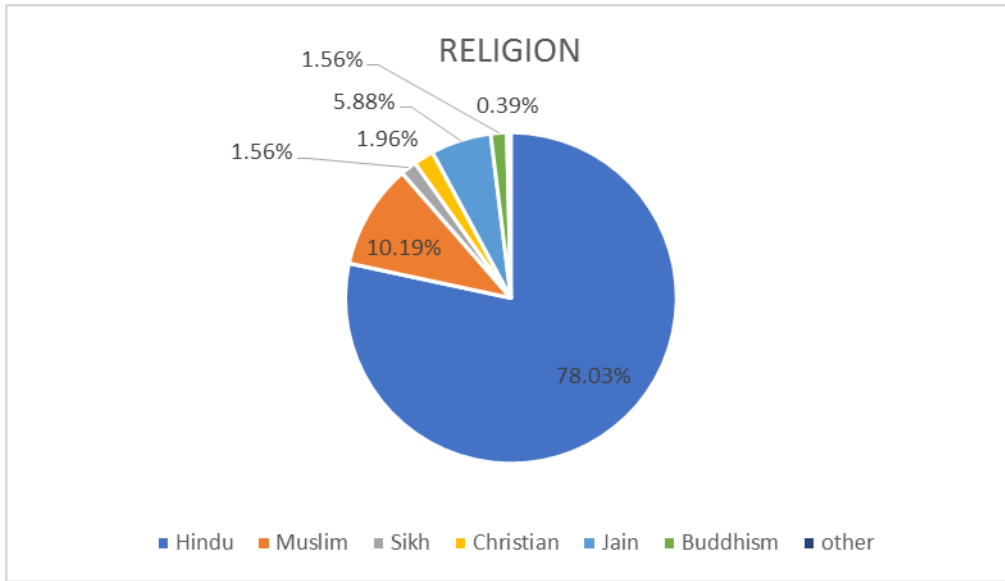
SEX	PERCENTAGE
Male	61.17%
Female	38.82%



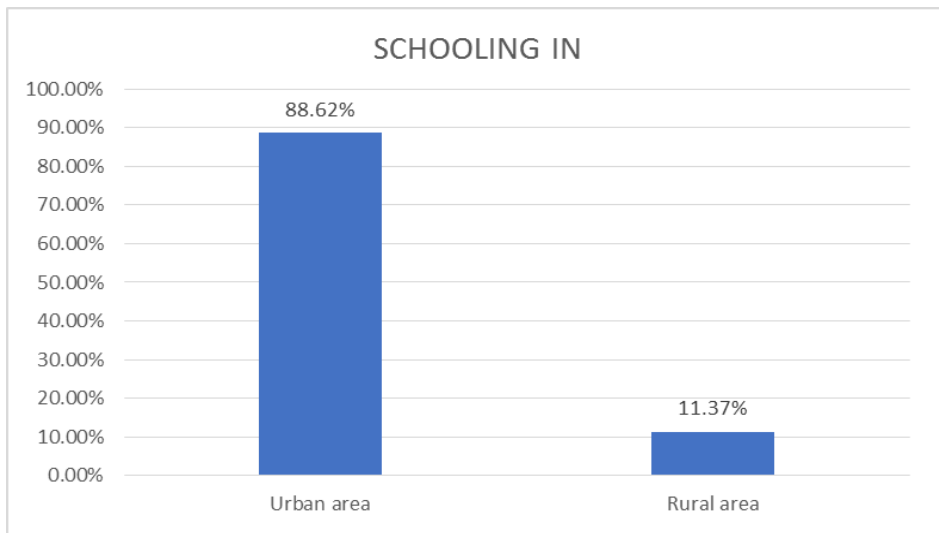
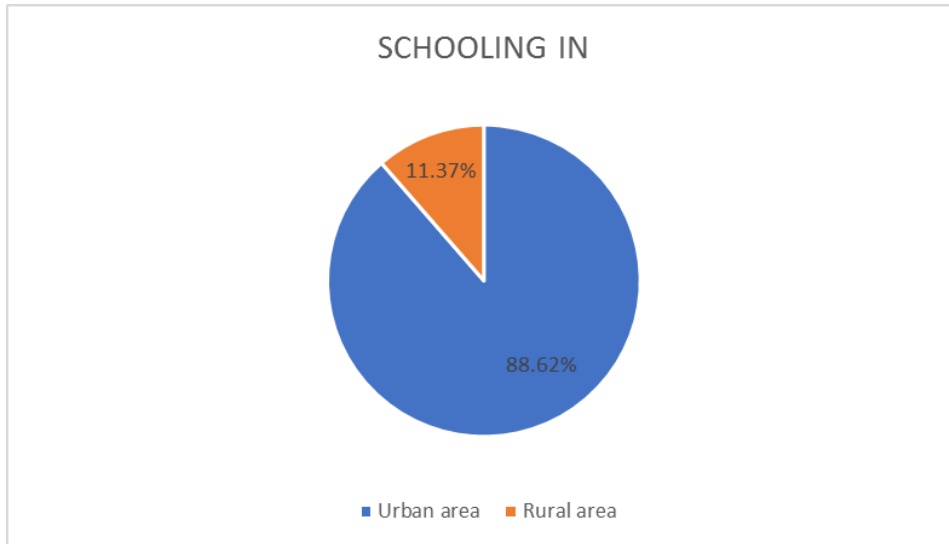
EDUCATION	PERCENTAGE
10th pass	2.35%
12th pass	16.86%
Under graduate	34.90%
Graduate	27.45%
Post-graduate	15.68%
other	2.74%



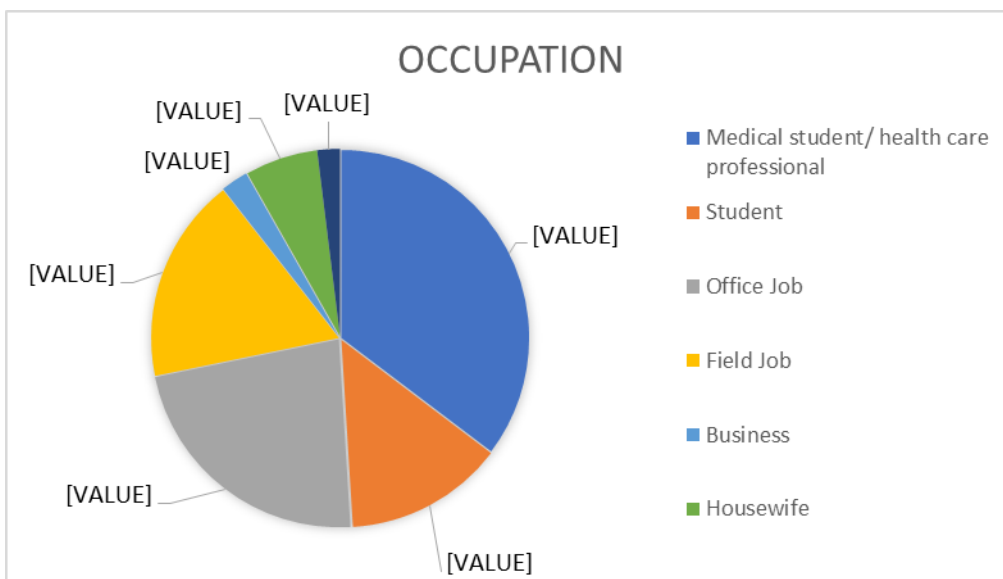
RESIDENCE	PERCENTAGE
Urban	90.58%
Village	9.41%

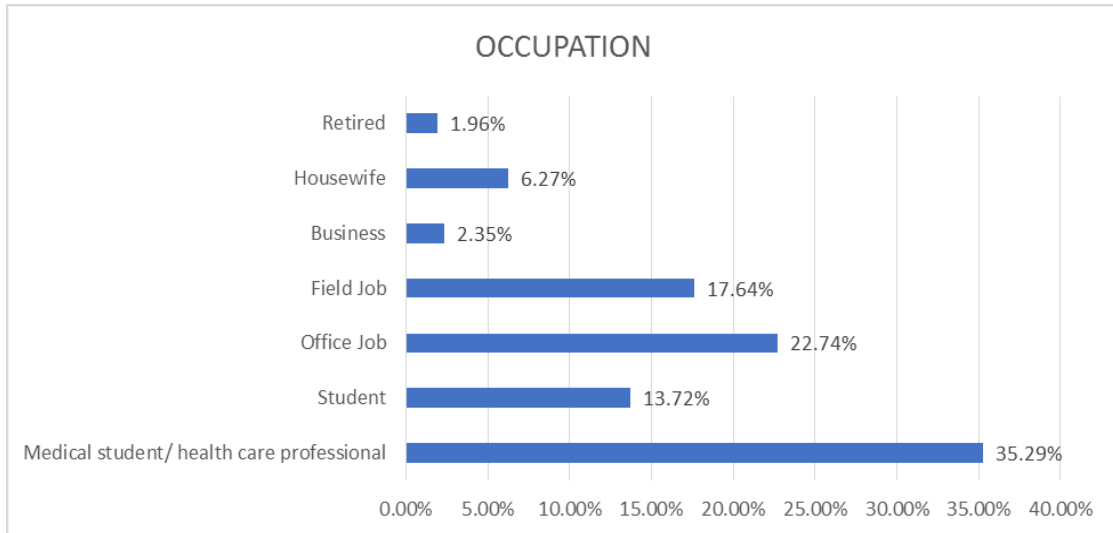


RELIGION	PERCENTAGE
Hindu	78.03%
Muslim	10.19%
Sikh	1.56%
Christian	1.96%
Jain	5.88%
Buddhism	1.56%
other	0.39%



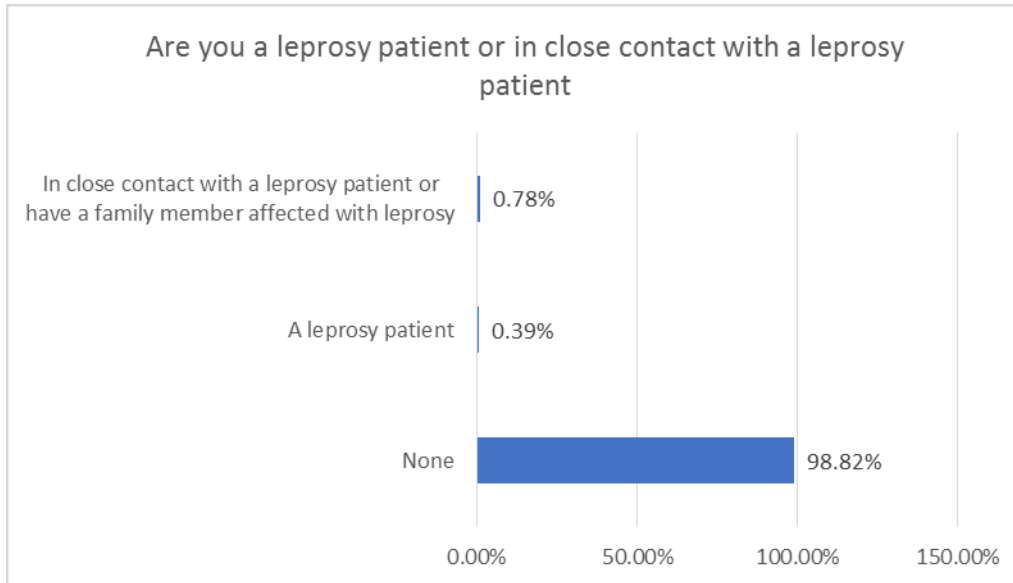
SCHOOLING IN	PERCENTAGE
Urban area	88.62%
Rural area	11.37%



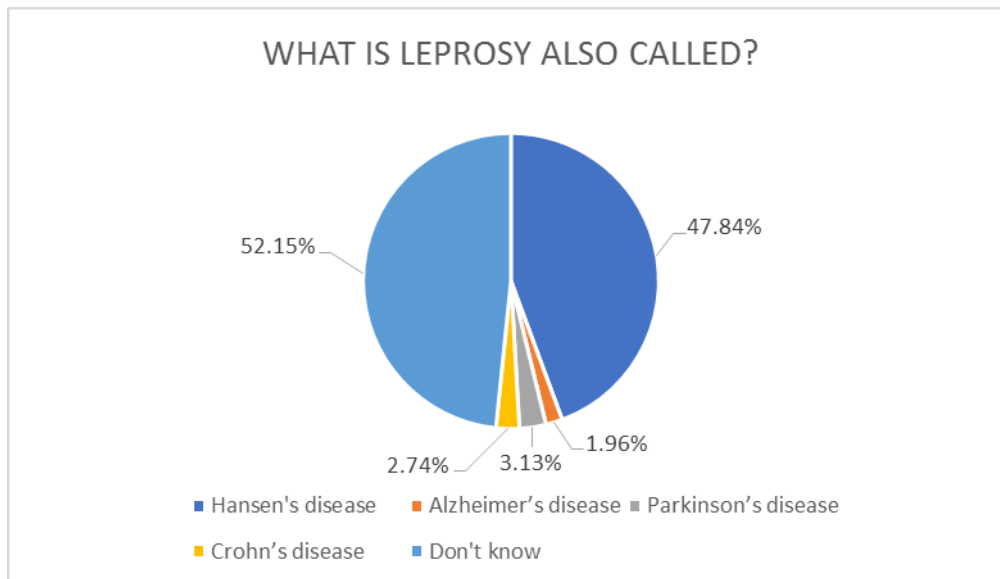


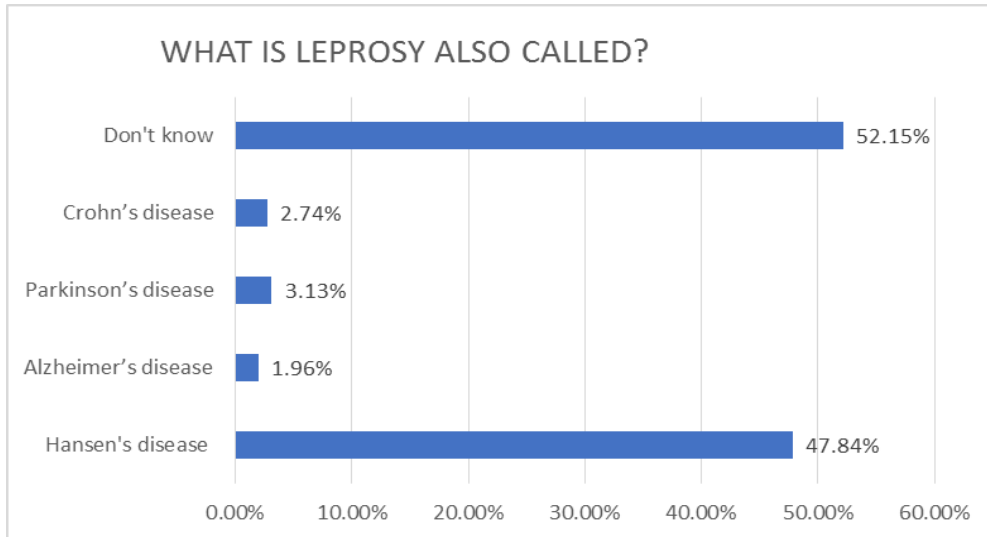
OCCUPATION	PERCENTAGE
Medical student/ health care professional	35.29%
Student	13.72%
Office Job	22.74%
Field Job	17.64%
Business	2.35%
Housewife	6.27%
Retired	1.96%



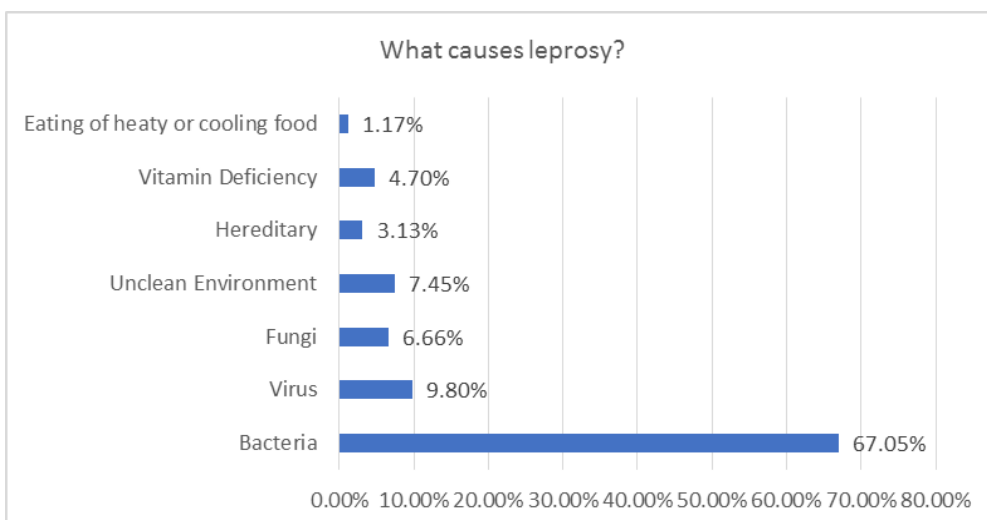
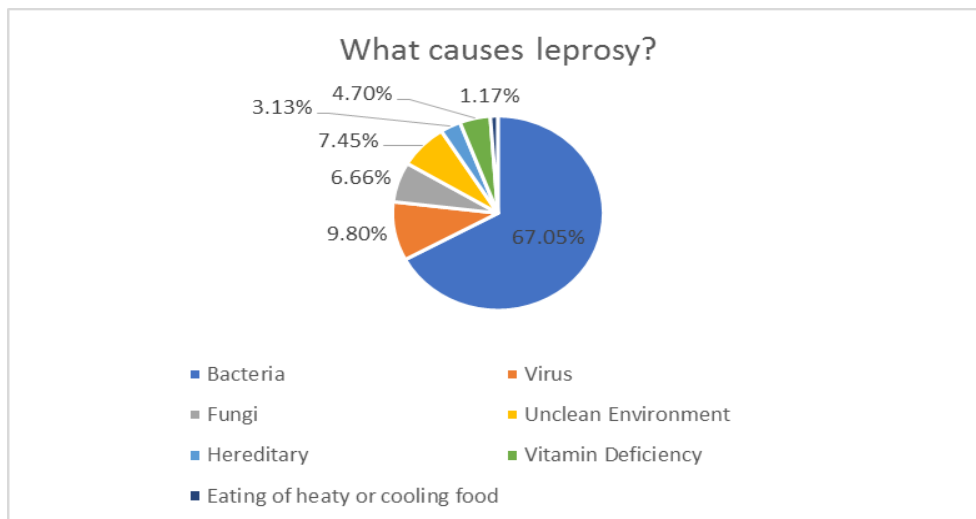


ARE YOU A LEPROSY PATIENT OR IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH A LEPROSY PATIENT?	PERCENTAGE
None	98.82%
A leprosy patient	0.39%
In close contact with a leprosy patient or have a family member affected with leprosy	0.78%

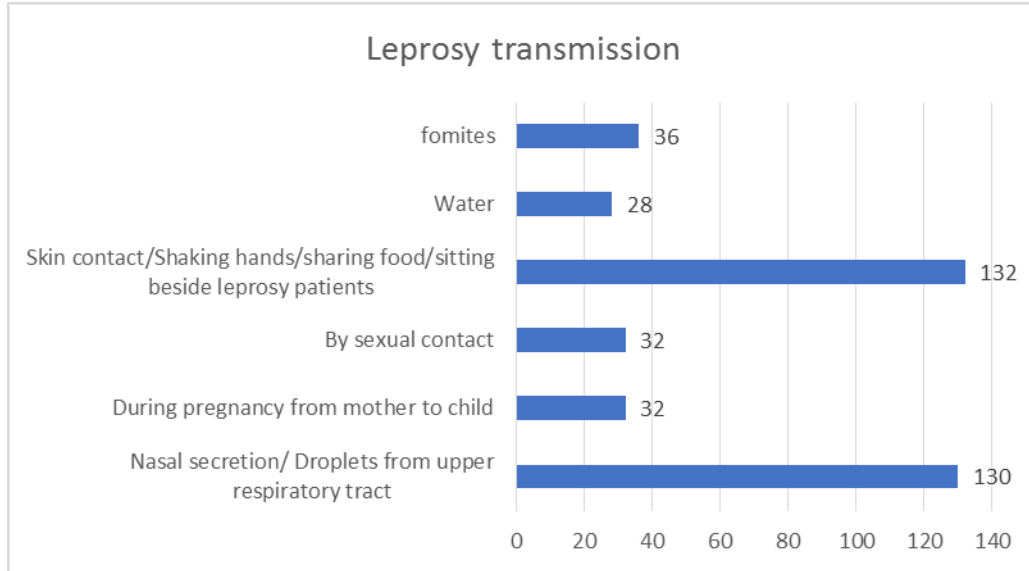




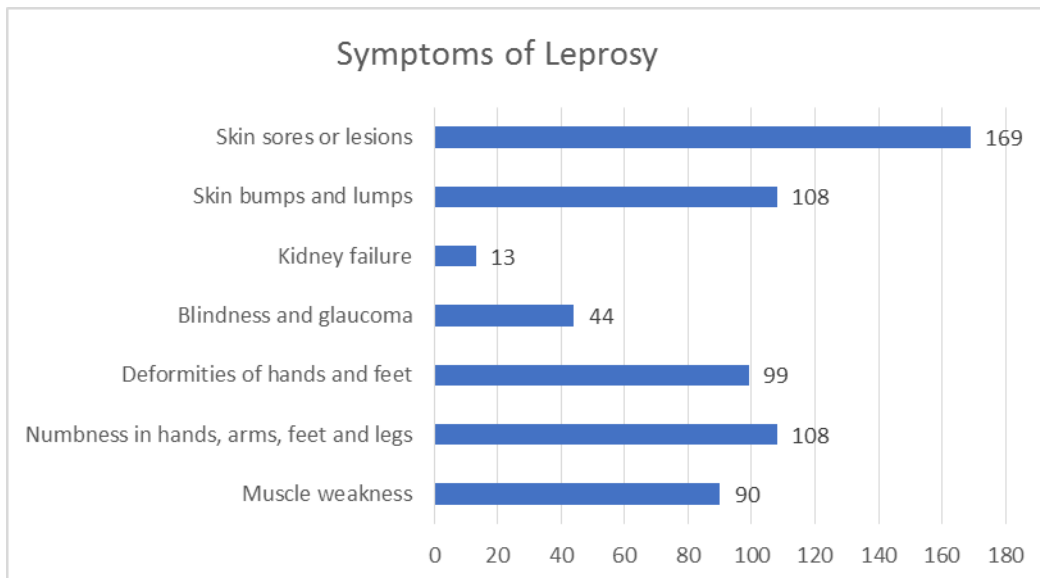
WHAT IS LEPROSY ALSO CALLED?	PERCENTAGE
Hansen's disease	47.84%
Alzheimer's disease	1.96%
Parkinson's disease	3.13%
Crohn's disease	2.74%
Don't know	52.15%



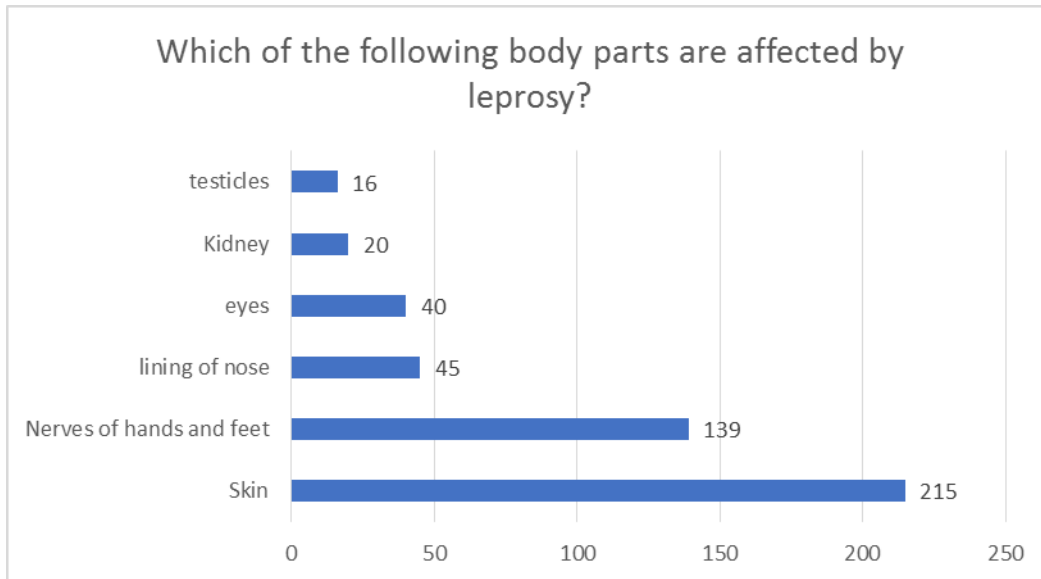
WHAT CAUSES LEPROSY	PERCENTAGE
Bacteria	67.05%
Virus	9.80%
Fungi	6.66%
Unclean Environment	7.45%
Hereditary	3.13%
Vitamin Deficiency	4.70%
Eating of heaty or cooling food	1.17%



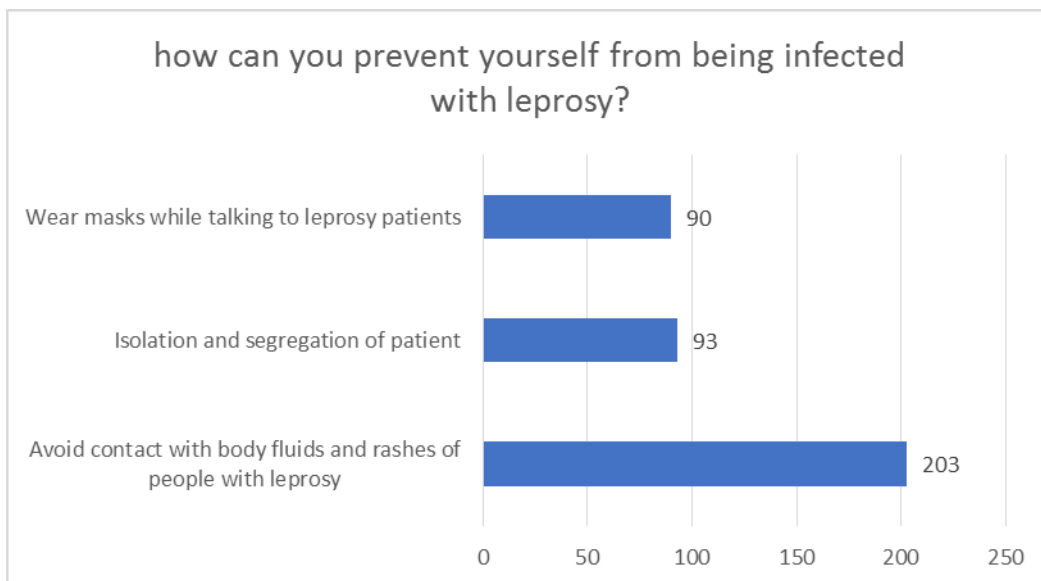
HOW IS LEPROSY TRANSMITTED	PERCENTAGE
Nasal secretion/ Droplets from upper respiratory tract	130
During pregnancy from mother to child	32
By sexual contact	32
Skin contact/Shaking hands/sharing food/sitting beside leprosy patients	132
Water	28
fomites	36



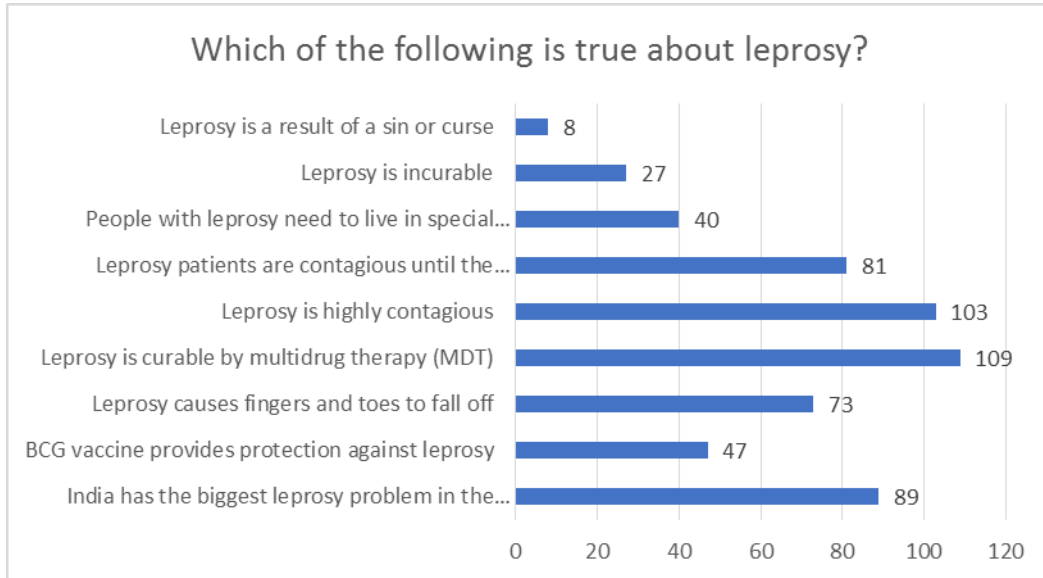
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF LEPROSY	PERCENTAGE
Muscle weakness	90
Numbness in hands, arms, feet and legs	108
Deformities of hands and feet	99
Blindness and glaucoma	44
Kidney failure	13
Skin bumps and lumps	108
Skin sores or lesions	169



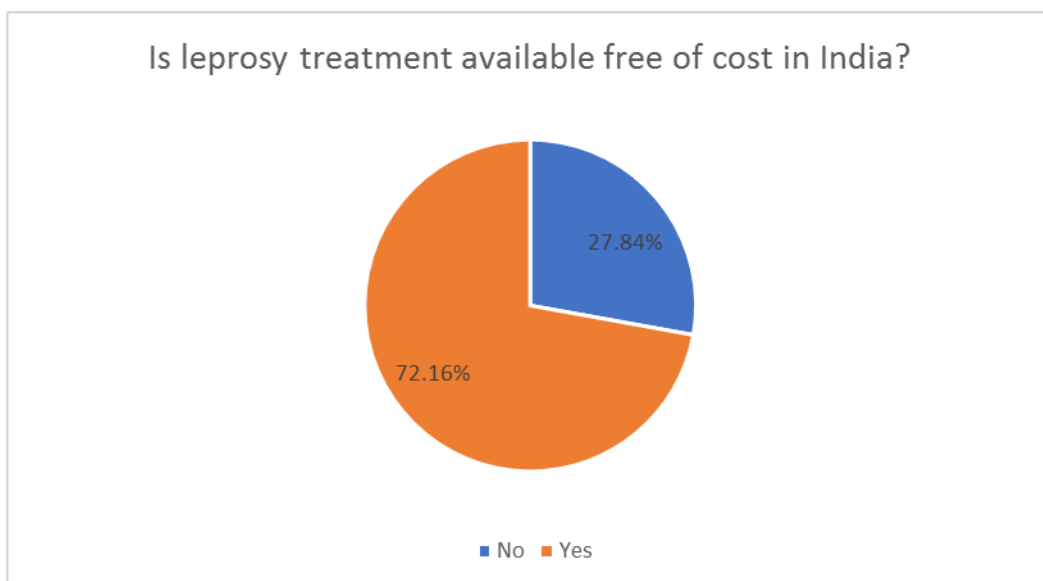
WHICH BODY PARTS ARE AFFECTED BY LEPROSY	NO. OF RESPONSES
Skin	215
Nerves of hands and feet	139
lining of nose	45
eyes	40
Kidney	20
testicles	16

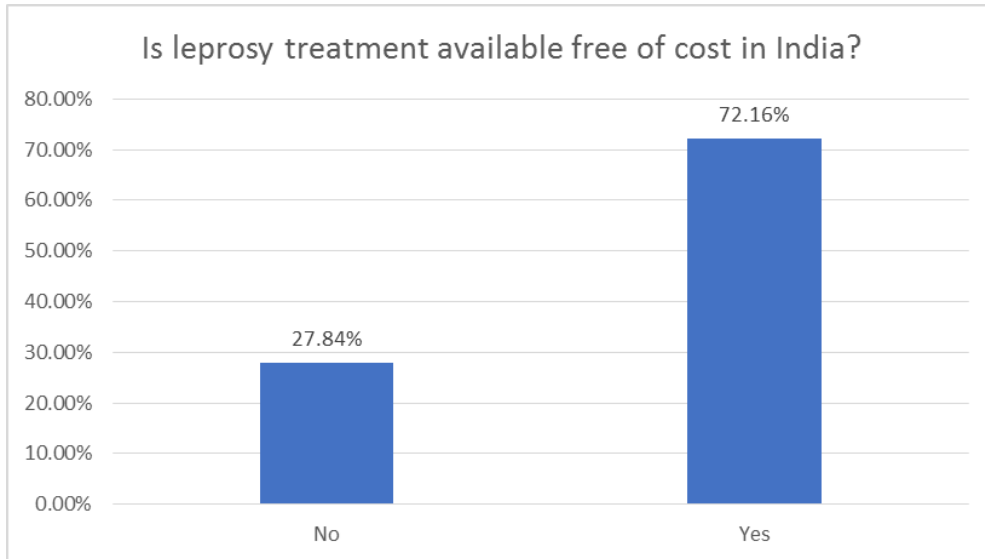


HOW CAN YOU PREVENT YOURSELF FROM BEING INFECTED WITH LEPROSY	NO. OF RESPONSES
Avoid contact with body fluids and rashes of people with leprosy	203
Isolation and segregation of patient	93
Wear masks while talking to leprosy patients	90

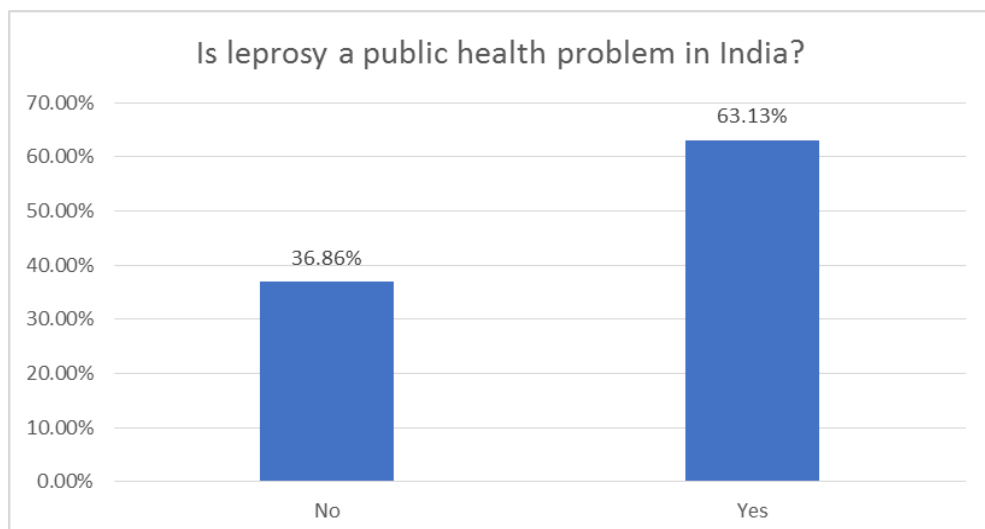
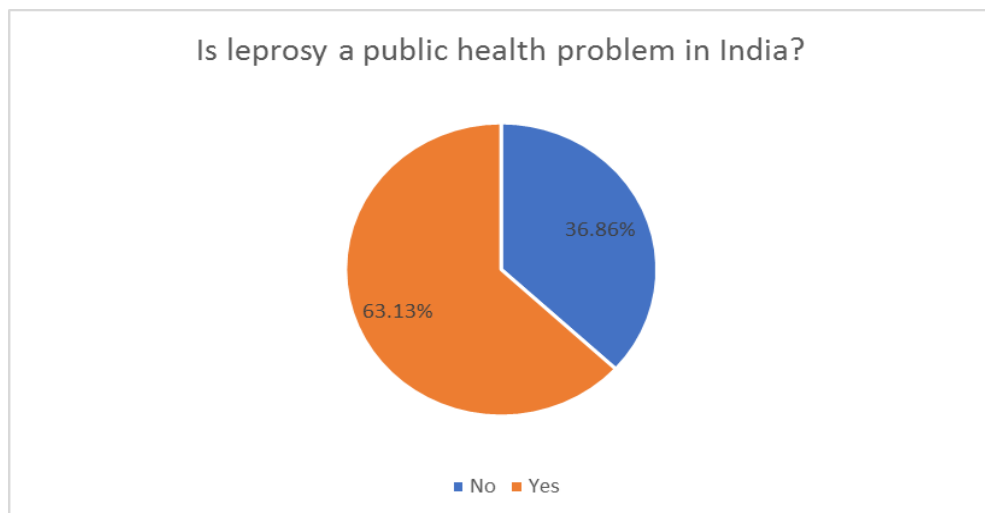


WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS TRUE ABOUT LEPROSY	NO. OF RESPONSES
India has the biggest leprosy problem in the world	89
BCG vaccine provides protection against leprosy	47
Leprosy causes fingers and toes to fall off	73
Leprosy is curable by multidrug therapy (MDT)	109
Leprosy is highly contagious	103
Leprosy patients are contagious until the treatment is complete	81
People with leprosy need to live in special isolation houses	40
Leprosy is incurable	27
Leprosy is a result of a sin or curse	8

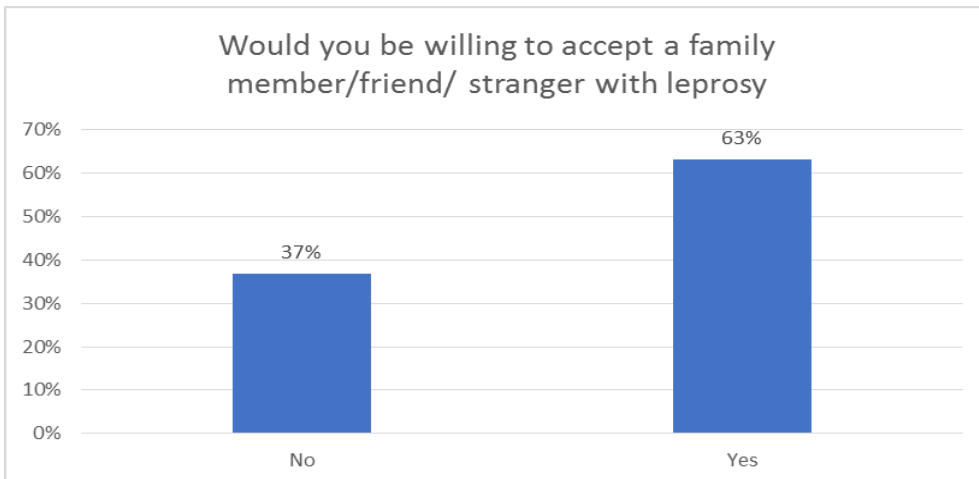
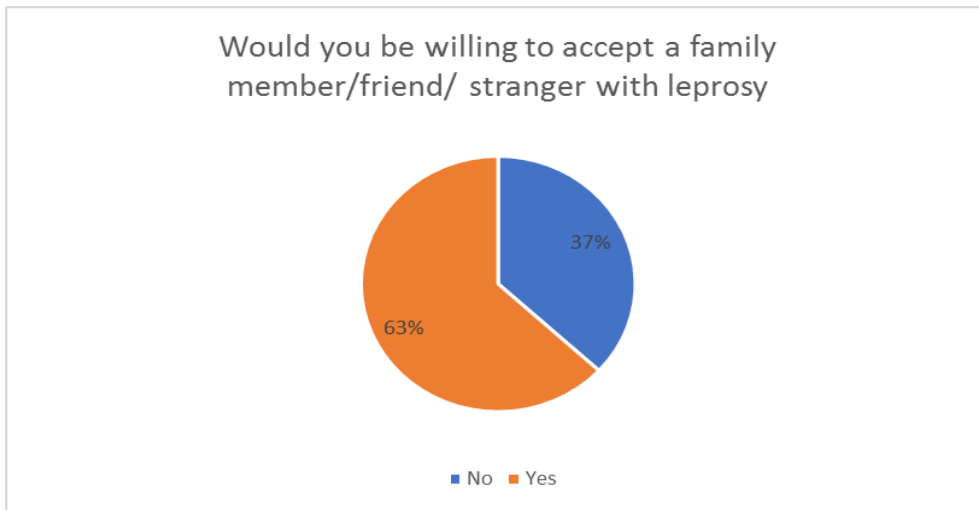




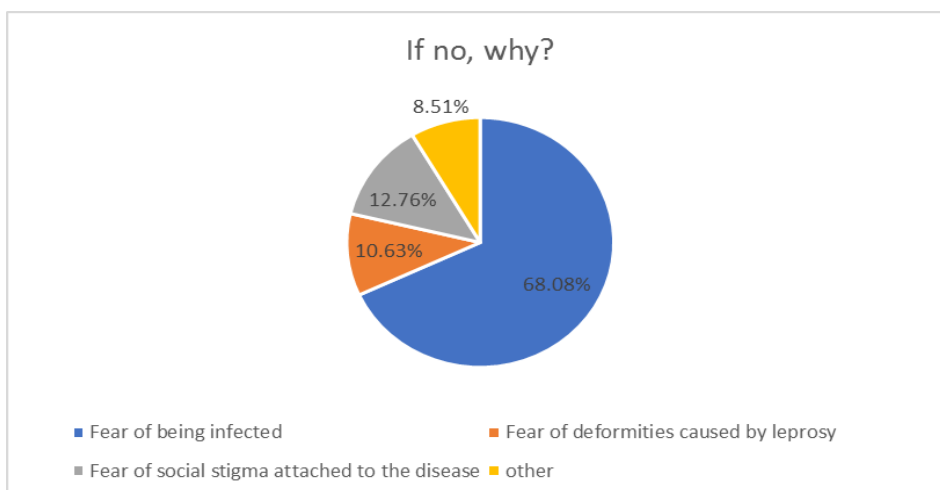
IS LEPROSY TREATMENT AVAILABLE FREE OF COST IN INDIA	PERCENTAGE
No	27.84%
Yes	72.16%

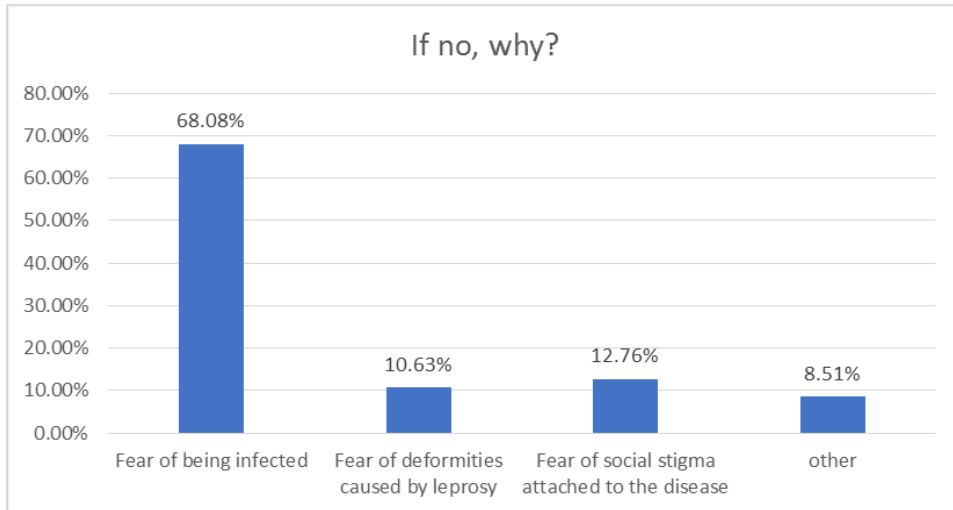


IS LEPROSY A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM IN INDIA	PERCENTAGE
No	36.86%
Yes	63.13%

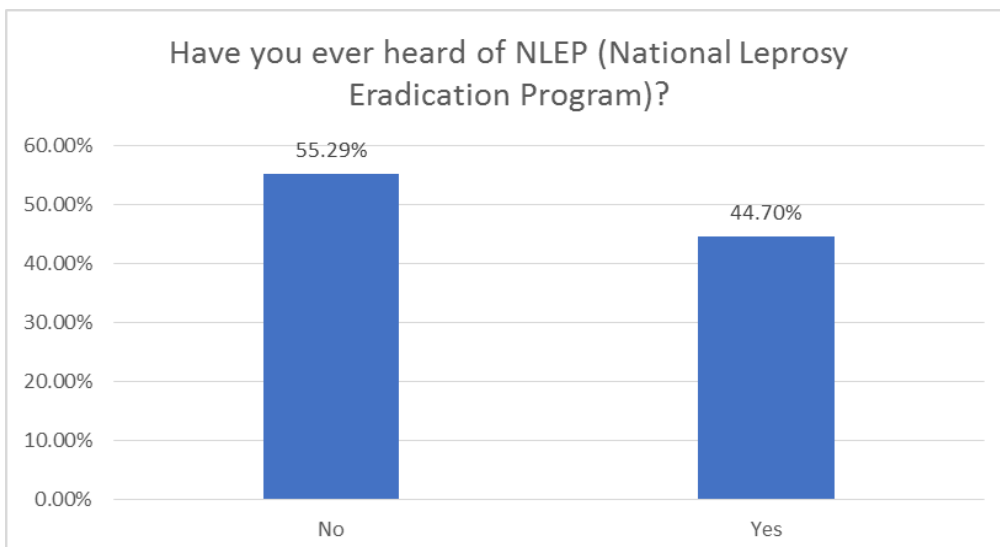
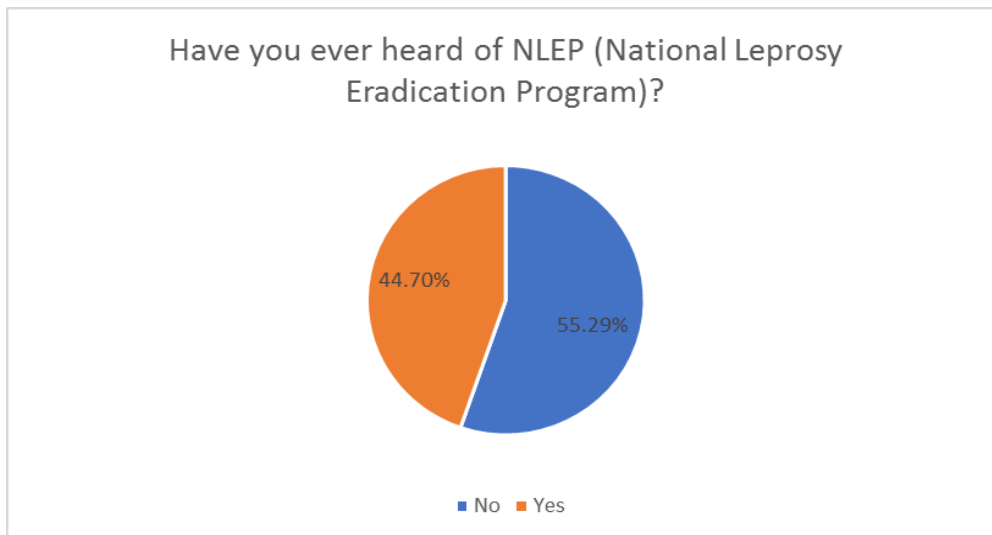


WILL YOU BE WILLING TO ACCEPT A FAMILY MEMBER/FRIEND/STRANGER WITH LEPROSY	PERCENTAGE
No	37%
Yes	63%

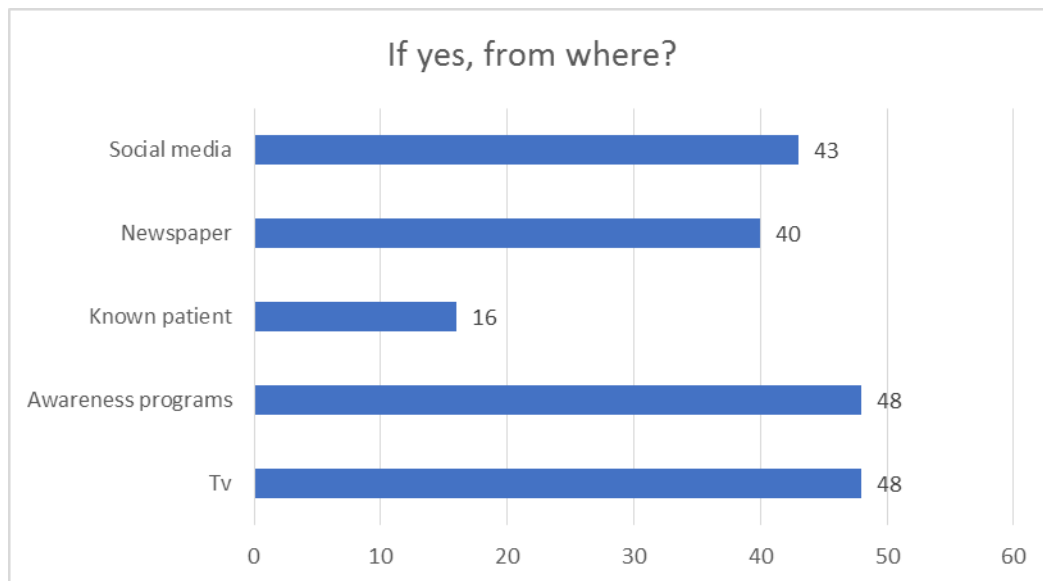




IF NO, WHY?	PERCENTAGE
Fear of being infected	68.08%
Fear of deformities caused by leprosy	10.63%
Fear of social stigma attached to the disease	12.76%
other	8.51%



HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF NLEP	PERCENTAGE
No	55.29%
Yes	44.70%



IF YES, FROM WHERE?	NO. OF RESPONSES
Tv	48
Awareness programs	48
Known patient	16
Newspaper	40
Social media	43

Among the respondents 90.58% were from urban area and 9.41% were from village. Leprosy or Hansen's disease is an ancient bacterial disease.^[8] 67.05% respondents of the present study answered that bacteria is the cause of leprosy. About 50.98% of the participants answered that leprosy is transmitted by nasal secretion. As per Joel CL^[9] it is to be believed that leprosy transmission occurs by close and prolonged contact between a susceptible individual and a bacillus – infected patient through inhalation of the bacilli contained in nasal secretion. The main route of transmission is the nasal mucosa. The respondents of the present study 64.7% answered that muscle weakness is a symptom of leprosy, 57.64% answered numbness in hands, arms, feet is not a symptom of leprosy. 38.82% answered that deformities in hands and feet is a symptom of leprosy. 33.72% of respondents answered that skin sores or lesions is a symptom of leprosy. Leprosy neuropathy continues to be a health problem.^[10] Leprosy is a chronic and progressive granulomatous disease affecting the skin and nerves.^[11] The treatment of leprosy up till now is multi drug treatment.^[12] Hidyana et al^[13] revealed that long term follow up is necessary to monitor factors associated with development of disabilities as are the provision of interventions promoting self-care, disability prevention and the availability of rehabilitation services. D Seshadria et al^[14] reported from the study that vigorous information campaigns in the media and

schools regarding cause, spread, early symptoms & treatability will boost community knowledge and attitudes and pave the way for elimination, if not eradication of leprosy and its stigma.

CONCLUSION

There is a need for greater awareness about the signs and symptoms of leprosy and reactions among general health care staff as well as in the community to promote self reporting as well as early diagnosis and proper management of the disease. The stigma of leprosy can be overcome by the awareness that leprosy is curable, free of charge drug treatment is available and no need to discriminate the people who are affected. If the misconception about leprosy are not changed, it will be difficult to eliminate leprosy.

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