

Home phototherapy: improving access to dermatologic care

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INTRODUCTION

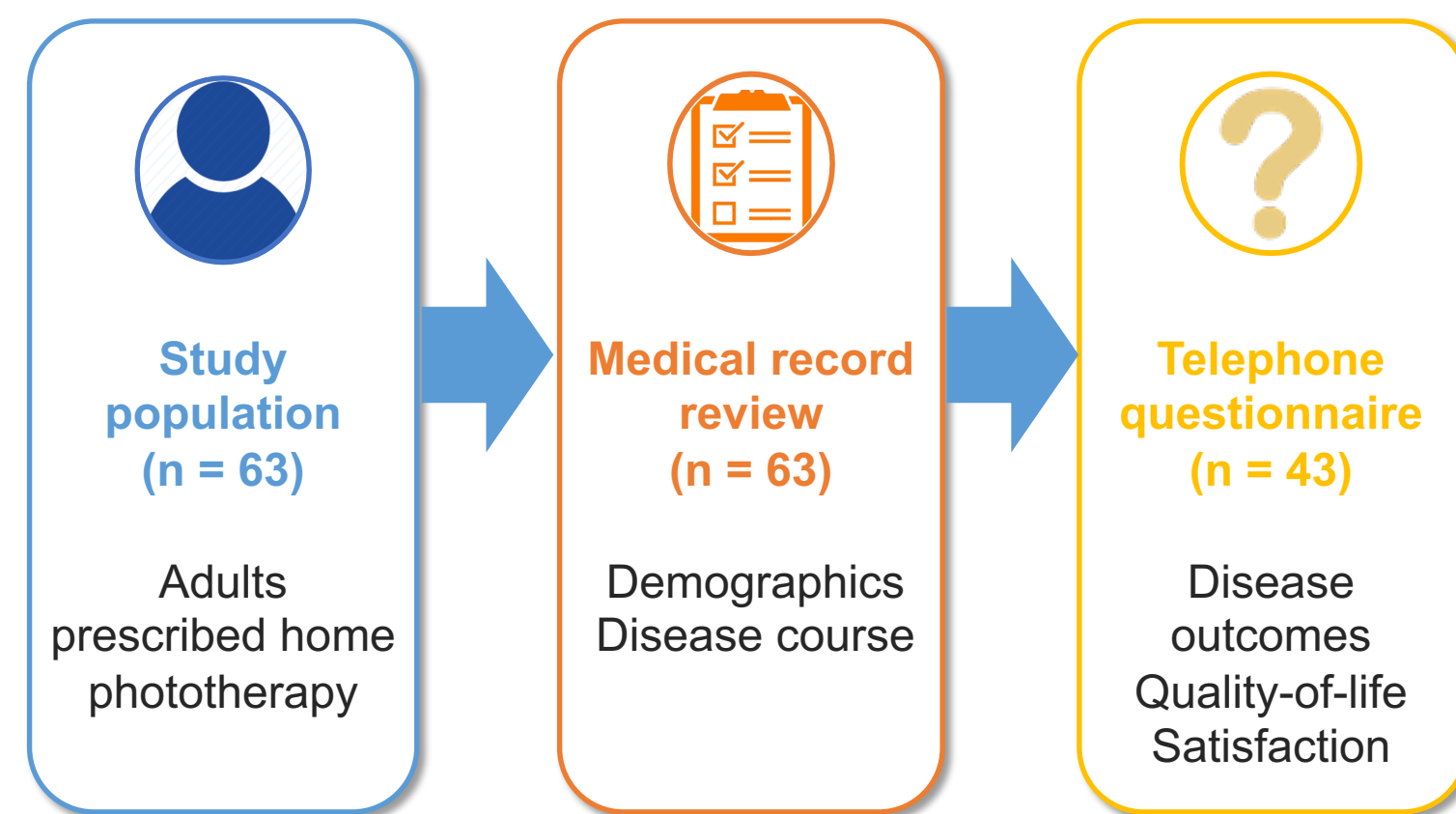
Psoriasis (PS) and atopic dermatitis (AD) affect 3.2% and 7.3% of the adult population in the United States, respectively.

Phototherapy is an effective and economic treatment for AD and PS with few side effects. However, phototherapy clinics are available in only 11% of counties in the United States. This can create substantial patient burden, as treatment regimens often require patients to visit the clinic several times a week.

At URMC, we have created a home phototherapy program in partnership with Excellus BlueCross BlueShield to provide patients with phototherapy devices at home at reduced or no cost.

The objective of this study is to determine patient-reported disease, quality-of-life, and treatment satisfaction outcomes from our home phototherapy program.

METHODS



RESULTS

Table 1. Demographics of Study Cohort

	All (N = 63)	Survey respondents (N = 43)
Sex, n (%)		
Male	23 (36.5%)	14 (32.6%)
Female	40 (63.5%)	29 (67.4%)
Race, n (%)		
White	56 (88.9%)	41 (95.3%)
Black	2 (3.2%)	0
Other	4 (6.3%)	2 (4.7%)
Unknown	1 (1.6%)	0
Disease, n (%)		
Psoriasis	35 (55.6%)	23 (53.5%)
Atopic dermatitis	14 (22.2%)	11 (25.6%)
Other	14 (22.2%)	9 (20.9%)

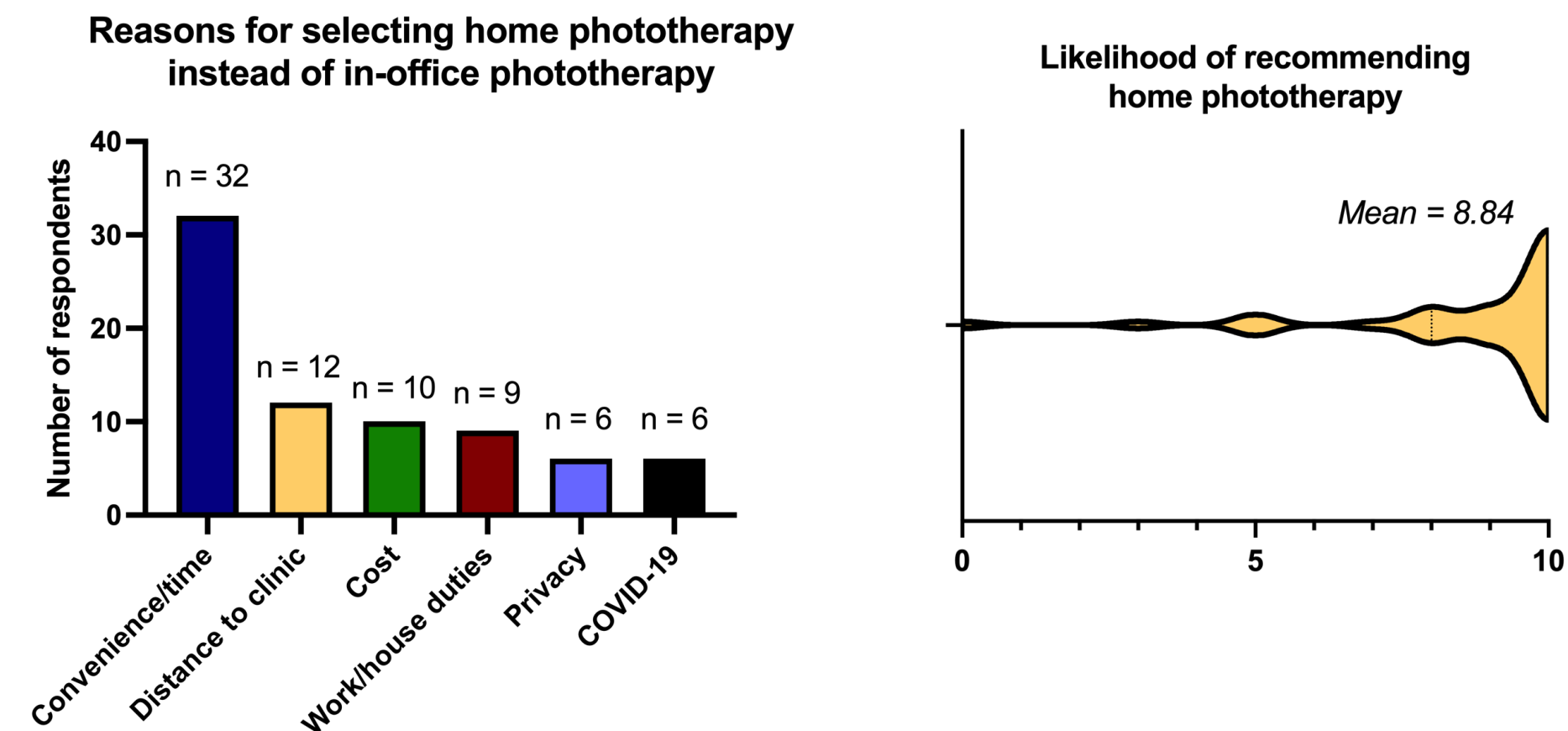
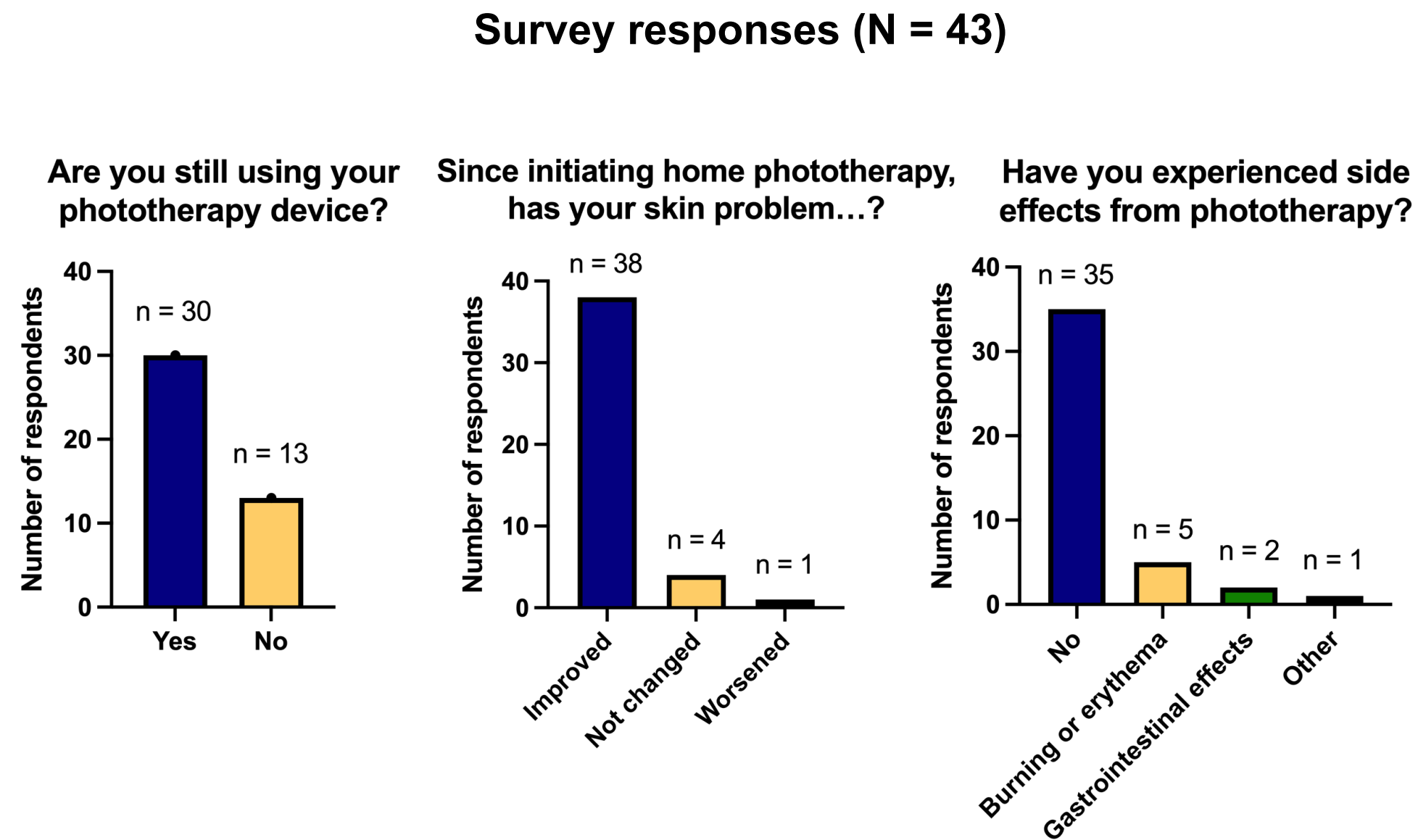


Figure 1. Phototherapy units used to treat localized (top) and generalized (right) dermatologic diseases. (www.Daavlin.com)

DISCUSSION

- Our data reaffirm that home phototherapy is an efficacious treatment with low treatment burden and high satisfaction.
- Some patients experienced side effects or difficulties operating their device, suggesting that improvements can be made in the monitoring and reporting of adverse outcomes.
- COVID-19 was a common reason for selecting home therapy. This suggests that home phototherapy may be an effective way of reducing exposure risk while maintaining continuity of care.
- We plan to conduct a cost analysis to determine how feasible such a program would be for insurers and patients.

CONCLUSIONS

- Home phototherapy is an efficacious, safe, and economical treatment, particularly for patients who have difficulty obtaining in-office care.
- The development of home therapies is particularly timely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further prospective studies should be conducted to determine feasibility for insurers, providers, and patients.

REFERENCES

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2. Tan SY, Buzney E, Mostaghimi A. Trends in phototherapy utilization among Medicare beneficiaries in the United States, 2000 to 2015. *J Am Acad Dermatol.* 2018;79(4):672-679.