

SOLAR EXPOSURE IN ONCOLOGY PATIENTS: EDUCATE AND CONVINCING

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INTRODUCTION

Some anti-cancer treatments are photosensitizing and requires broad spectrum UV protection against UVB and UVA rays. Even indirect exposure to sunlight requires protection, and the use of sunscreens (protection against UVA and UVB) is an easily accessible way to prevent these reactions. Therefore, educating and convincing patients to use this photoprotection method is a real Public Health challenge.

MATERIAL & METHODS

To evaluate skin acceptability in patients undergoing anti-cancer treatment, a real-life study was conducted in 41 male and female patients aged over 18 years who were undergoing cancer treatment and who received a sunscreen with very high UVB and UVA protection. This product was powered by Netlock Technology™, which creates a film on the skin with constant thickness and even coverage in order to ensure a homogeneous distribution of UV filters on the skin.

RESULTS

Forty-one patients were analyzed (average age of 59.8 ±9.9 years). The sex ratio was in favour of women, who represented 75% of our sample. Sixty-four percent had received chemotherapy, 31% had received radiotherapy, and 2% chemotherapy combined with radiotherapy. Sixty percent initiated the sunscreen at the beginning of their cancer treatment period. Fifty-nine percent had used the photoprotection product before the onset of any skin changes; 49% used the product daily and 32% used the product regularly (Fig.3). The mean duration of use was 34.3 days ± 14 days. Of all the patients, 58% and 21% claimed one and two daily applications respectively. They complained of dryness (40%), redness and itching (37.5%), irritation (22.5%) and photosensitization (17.5%) which is aligned with the anticipated adverse events of the anti-cancer treatments according to HCPs (Fig.1). One hundred percent said they applied the product to the face and 58.5% stated that they applied the product to the neck (Fig. 2). A total of 97.6% [92.8; 100.0] of patients described improvements in the condition of their skin and signs associated with cancer treatment (Fig. 5) ; 97.4% of the population felt that the product used was more suitable for their skin's needs than products that were previously used (2 did not express an opinion, and 1 expressed a contrary opinion). 95.1% were satisfied or very satisfied overall with the sun care product used (Fig. 4).

Fig. 1 Cutaneous side effects caused by anti-cancer treatment

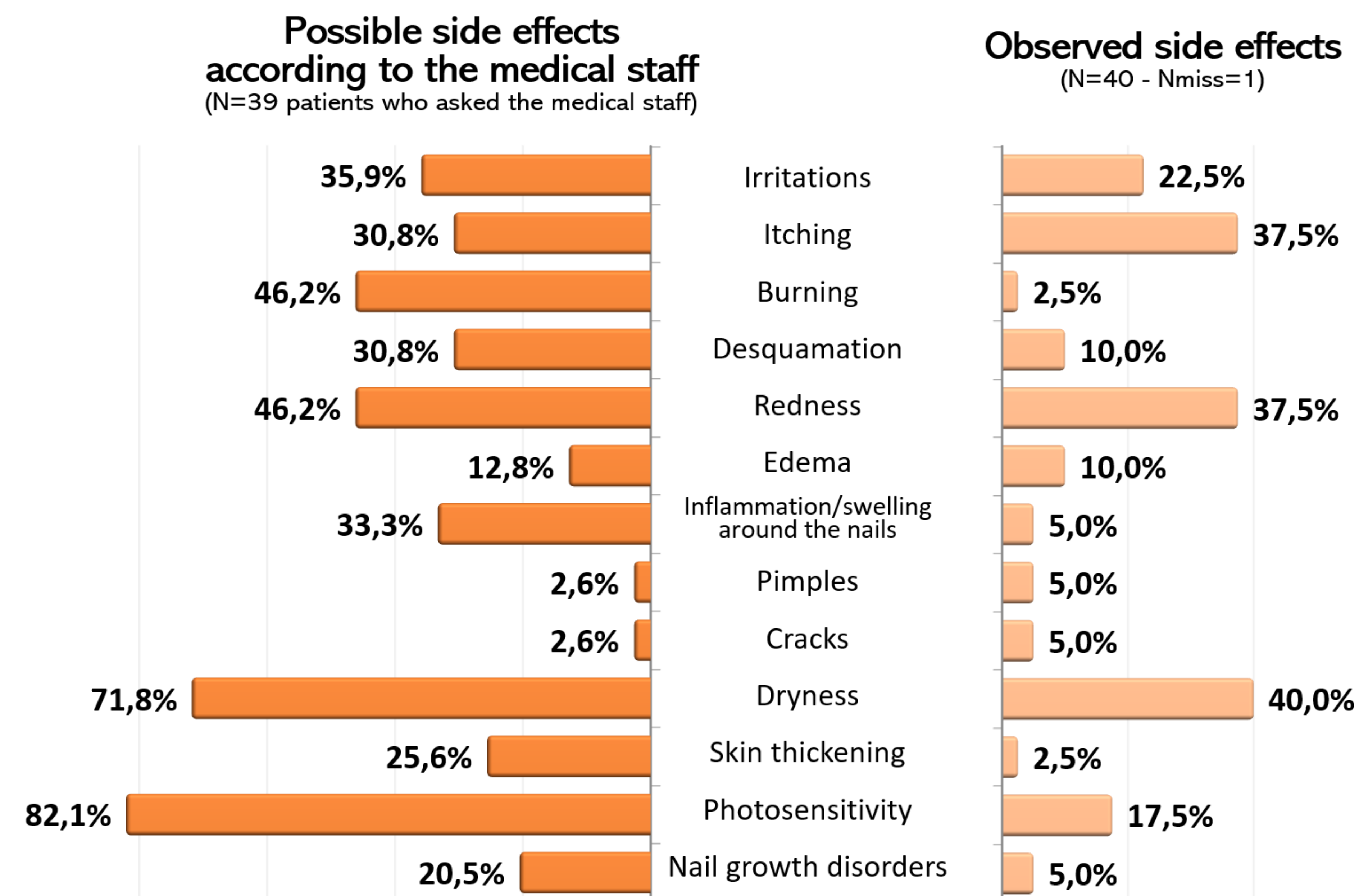


Fig. 2 Zones of application

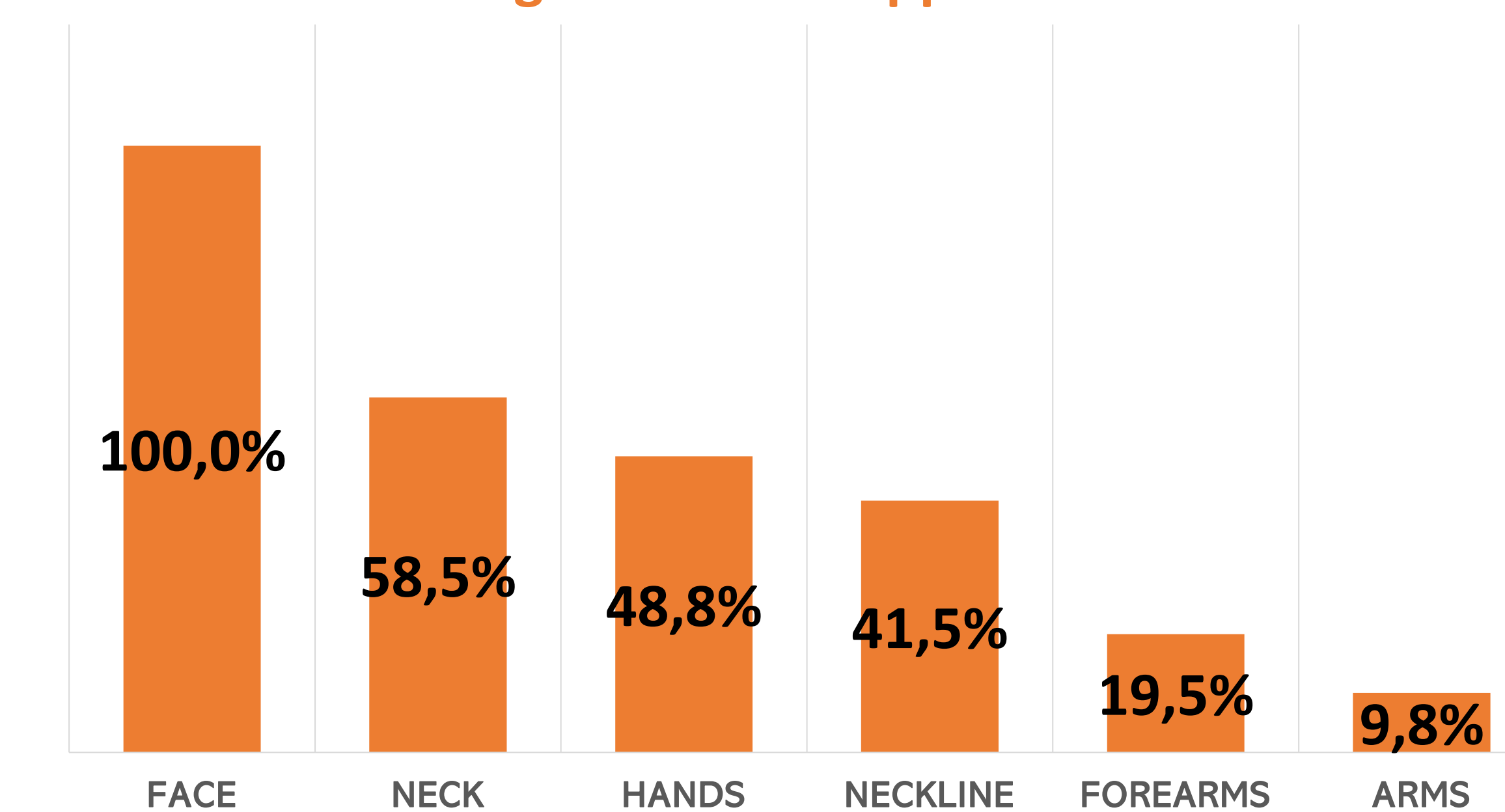


Fig. 3 Frequency of application

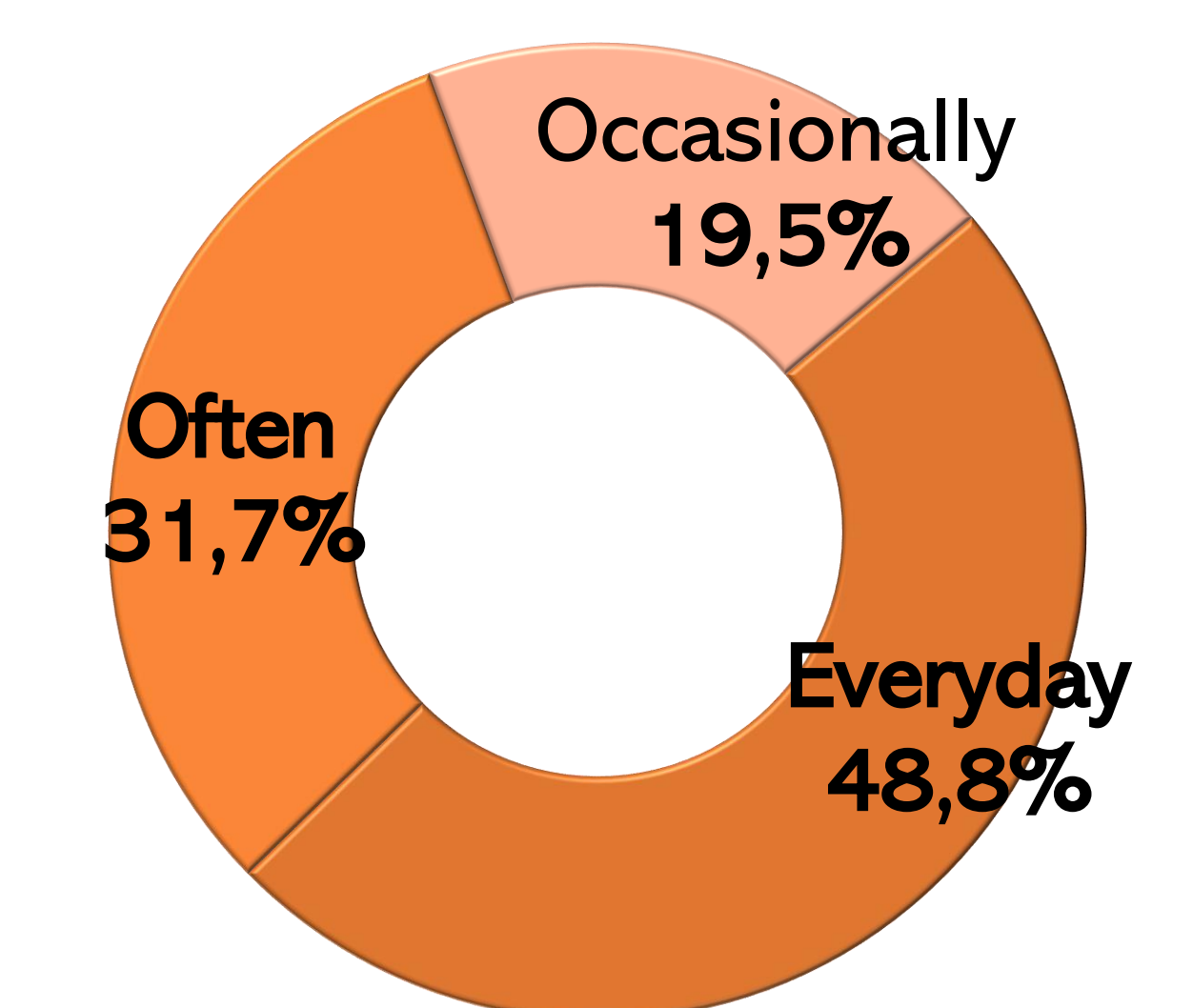


Fig. 4 Product satisfaction

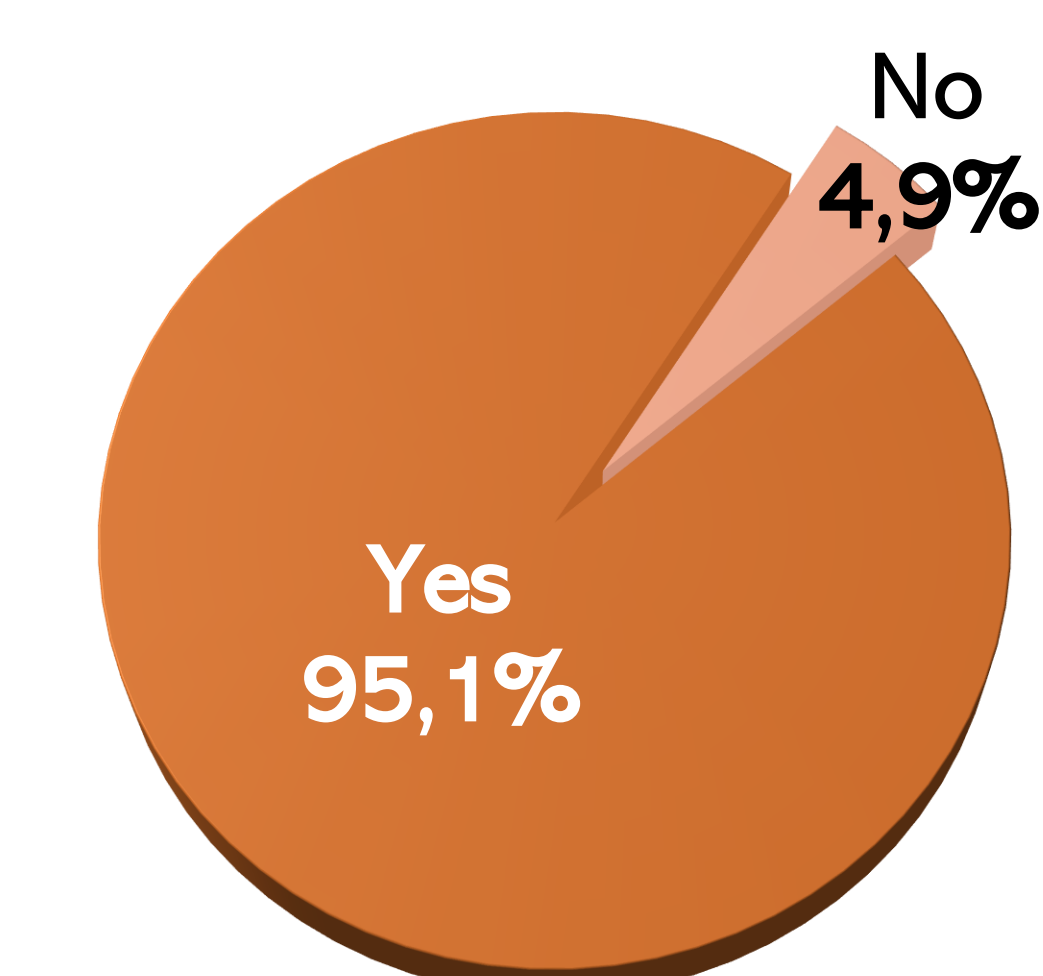
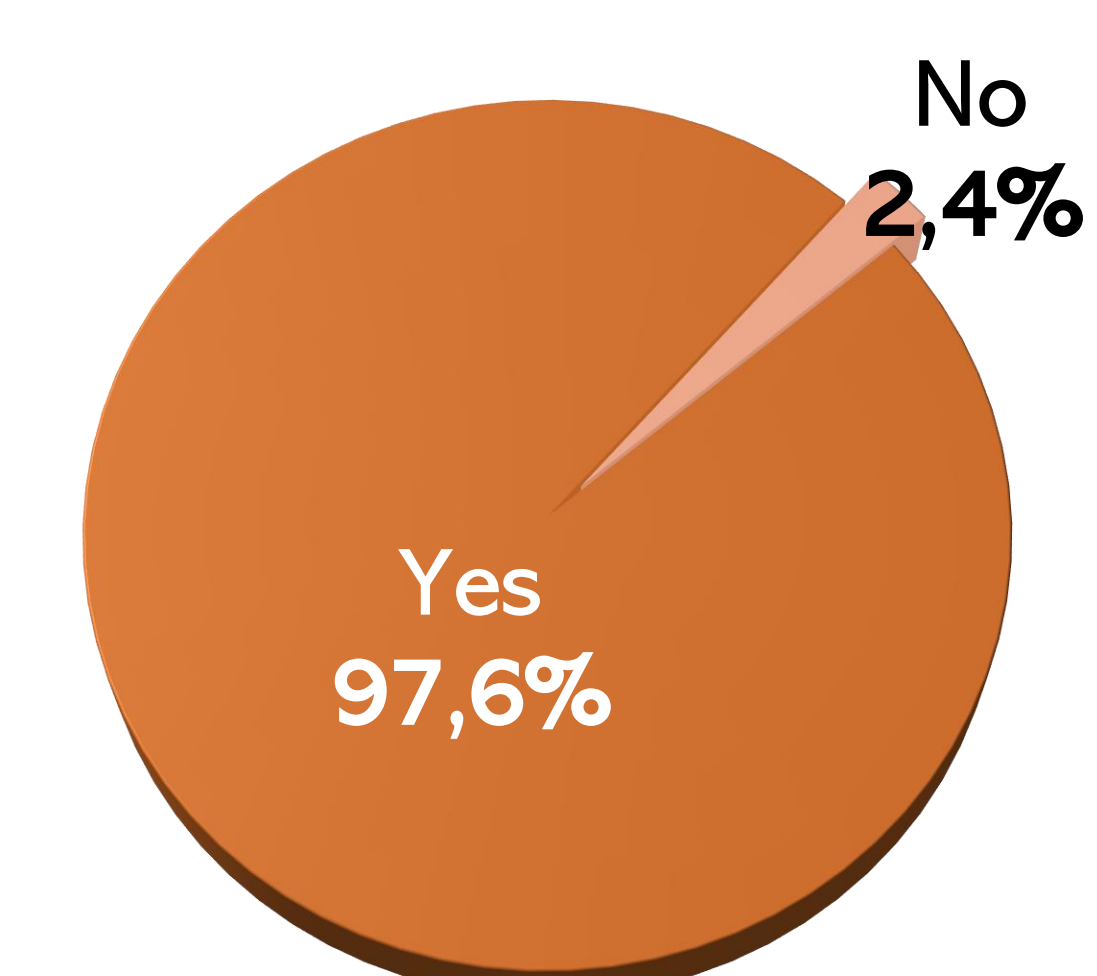


Fig. 5 Improvement of the skin condition



DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

100 % of patients protected their face and more than half the neck indicating that patients are aware of the effect of the sun on skin which is fragilized by cancer treatment. Nevertheless, exposed areas such as the neckline, forearms and arms are neglected ; the lower limbs are either even more neglected or are covered by clothes. These data should mobilise health professionals [primarily dermatologists, but also general practitioners and pharmacists, regarding the imperative need to convince our fellow citizens to protect all parts of the body during voluntary exposure to the sun, as well as during involuntary exposure in daily life. Health care professionals should emphasize the need for daily protection. Therefore, an easy-to-apply product would improve compliance to Public Health challenges and optimize daily compliance.