



# STATE OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES OF COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS REGARDING ORAL CARE IN PATIENTS UNDERGOING CANCER TREATMENT WITH ORAL MUCOSITIS

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**Introduction :** Cancer treatment, while offering a glimmer of hope to patients, often requires navigating a sea of side effects. One of the most unwanted passengers on this trip is oral mucositis (OM) as it can cause pain, dysphagia, and anorexia. Community pharmacists (CPs) can play an important role in the management of OM, but their involvement and knowledge vary. This qualitative study aimed to assess CP's knowledge and practices in oral care and mucositis in cancer patients, and to identify the needs in terms of coordination between outpatient and inpatient care.

**Methods and materials :** Qualitative study with semi-structured individual interviews of ten CPs practicing in Grand-Est, France. The dispensing pharmacists follow patients undergoing their cancer treatment in one oncology day-Hospital and have had at least one episode of mucositis during the year. The interviews aim to explore CPs' state of knowledge and expectation regarding both content quality and format. Recorded and transcribed verbatims were subjected to thematic analysis.

**Results :** CPs recognize the shift in their role towards more patient-centered care, including the management of adverse events such as OM. However, some pharmacists feel overwhelmed by specific knowledge about OM and cancer-related oral conditions. During the interviews, we were able to discuss the role of the CPs (contributions, difficulties and room for improvement) in the care of patients with OM, but also to let CPs express themselves on their knowledge (training, access to information and current practices). A document has been produced in line with the request of CPs to enable a better management of OM.

**Conclusion :** CPs are key players in the follow-up of cancer patients, offering advice, education and care coordination. Continuous training and increased access to information are called for to improve practices and care.

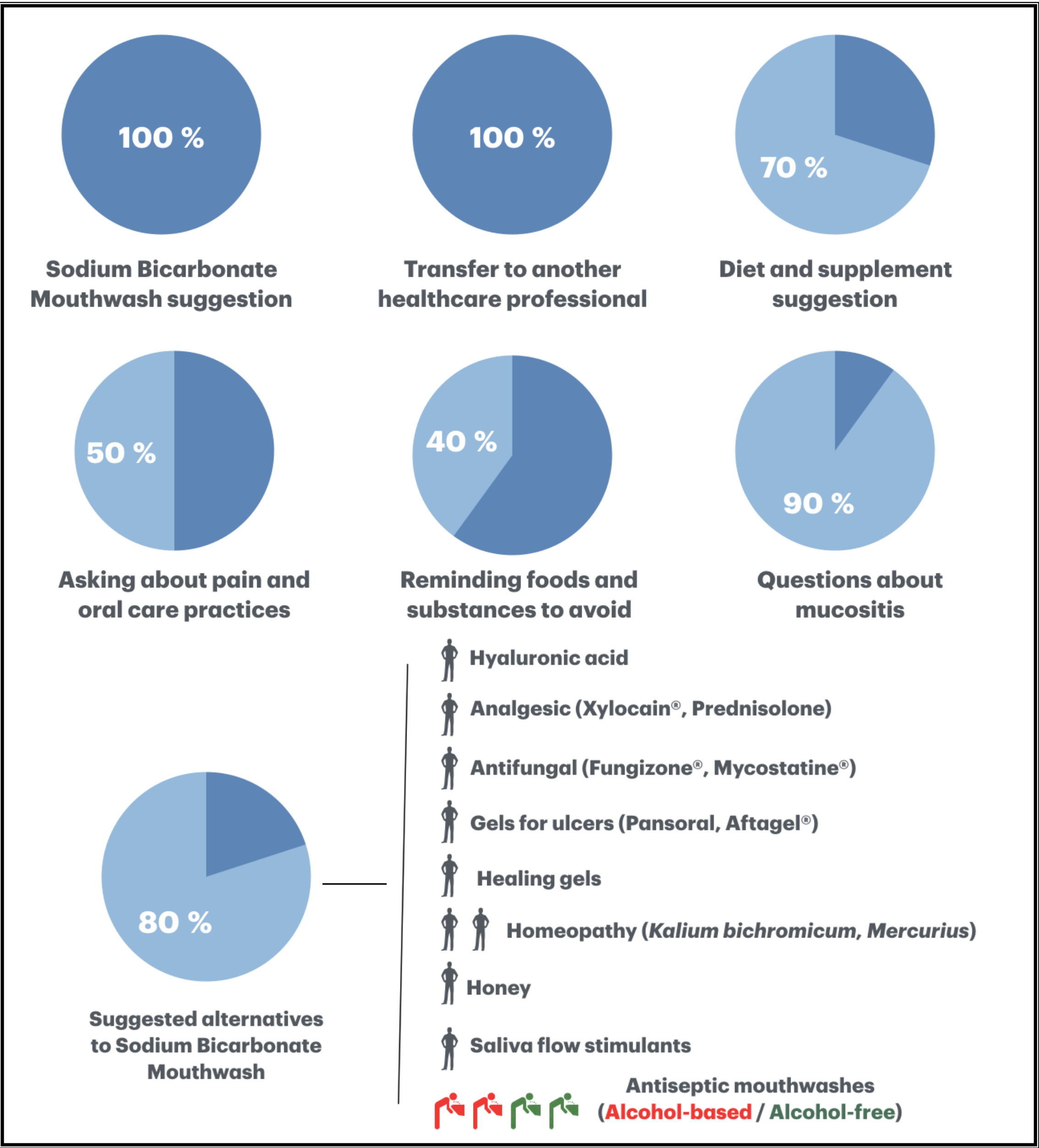


Fig 1 Pharmacists' approach to OM at the counter

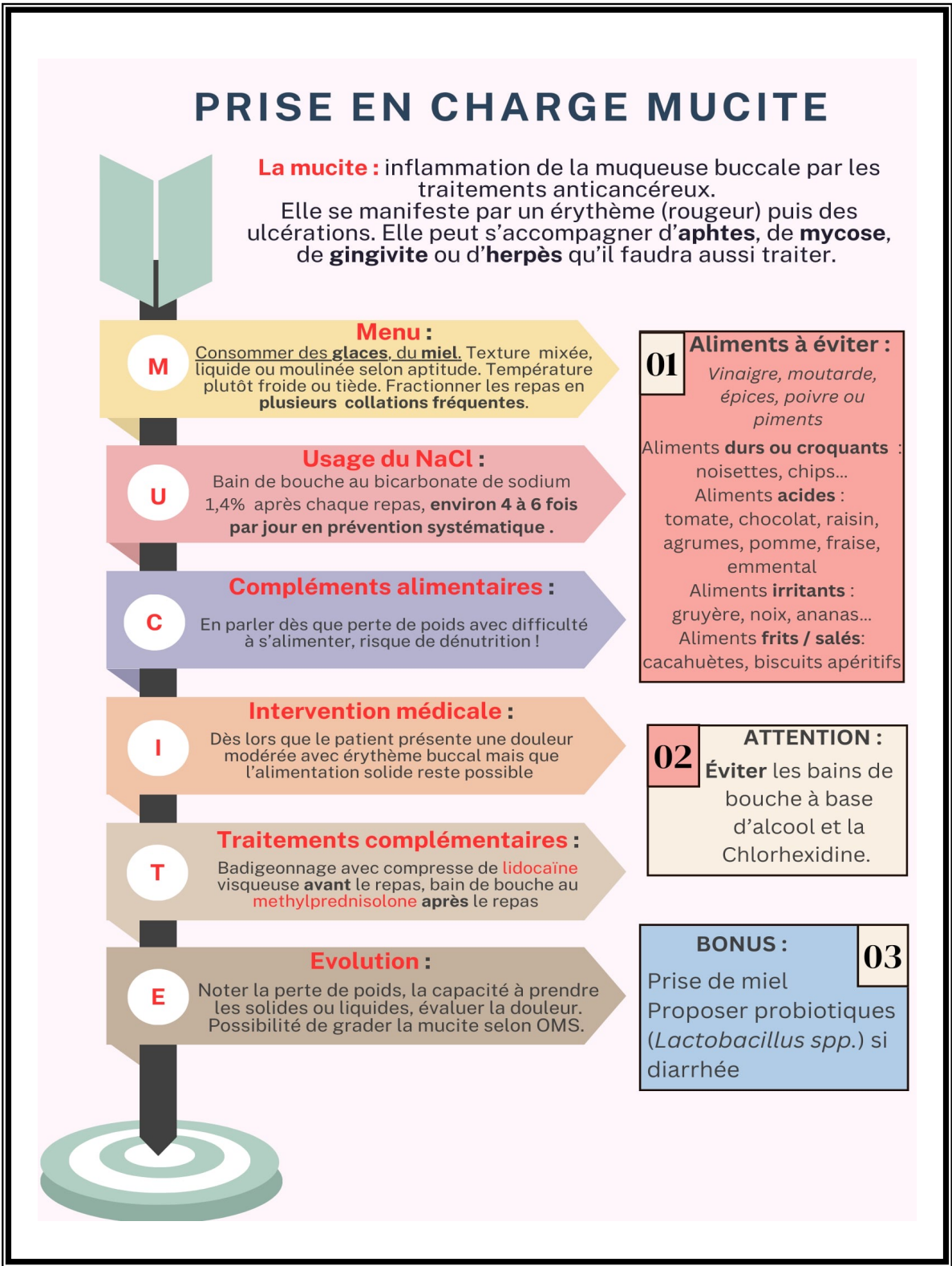


Fig 2. Document for CPs

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