



# Specialty Pharmacy Education: A Rare Specialty in Pharmacy Curriculum

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## Purpose

- Specialty pharmacy is a rapidly growing field; over half of FDA approvals are for specialty medications
- Specialty medications, high-cost treatments prescribed for complex and chronic conditions, comprise over half of drug spending in the United States (US)
- The purpose of this study was to evaluate the scope and depth of didactic and experiential instruction on specialty pharmacy (SP) in US schools/colleges of pharmacy

## Methods



### Design

- Cross-sectional, population-based, anonymous survey sent via email
- Contact list compiled from school/college websites



### Population

- Accredited schools/colleges of pharmacy in the US
- Targeted faculty members closest to the Academic Affairs division



### Survey Design

- Review and pilot testing completed
- Domains: didactic curriculum, experiential curriculum, future perceptions

## Respondent Characteristics

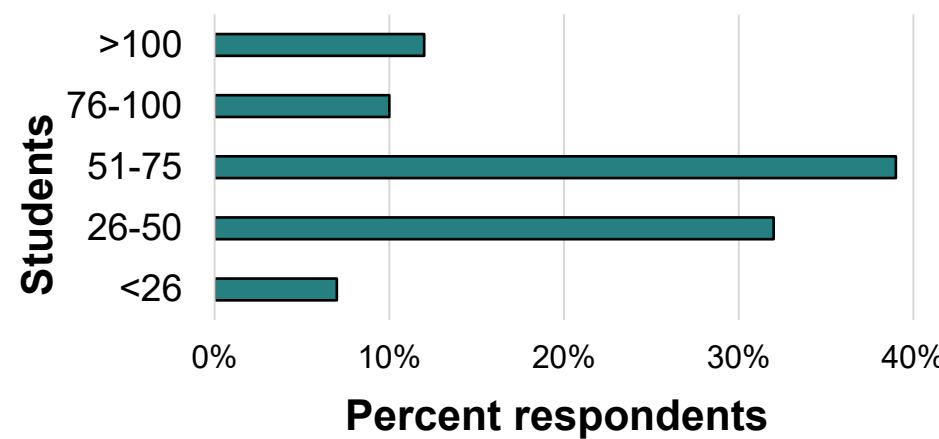
### Response rate

☒ 29%  
N=41/140

### Status

51%  
Public

### Estimated enrollment for P1 PharmD class



### Geographic region

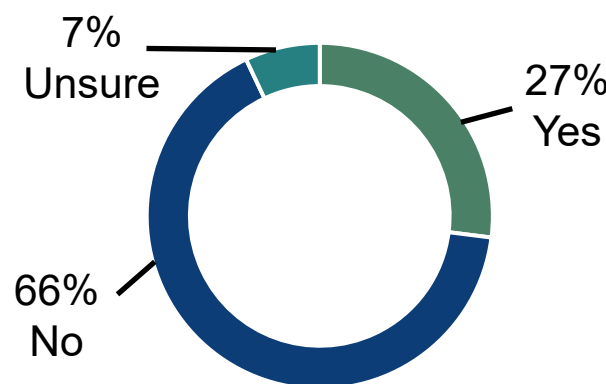
5% Southwest  
7% West  
15% Northeast  
27% Midwest  
46% Southeast

### Setting

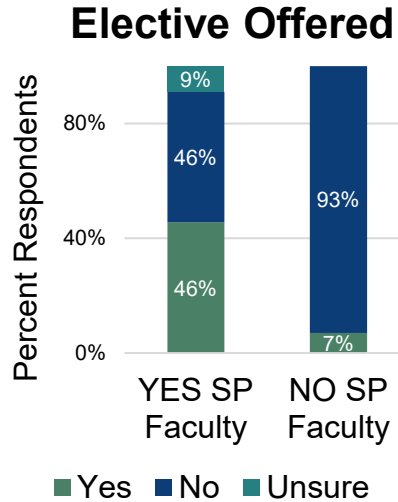
20% Rural  
37% Suburban  
44% Urban

## Specialty Pharmacy Faculty and Elective

Faculty member practicing in a specialty pharmacy owned/operated by a health system



### Specialty pharmacy (SP) elective



### Elective Details

Average estimated # credit hours

Average # of students enrolled in elective

### YES SP Faculty

2.4

17

### NO SP Faculty

2

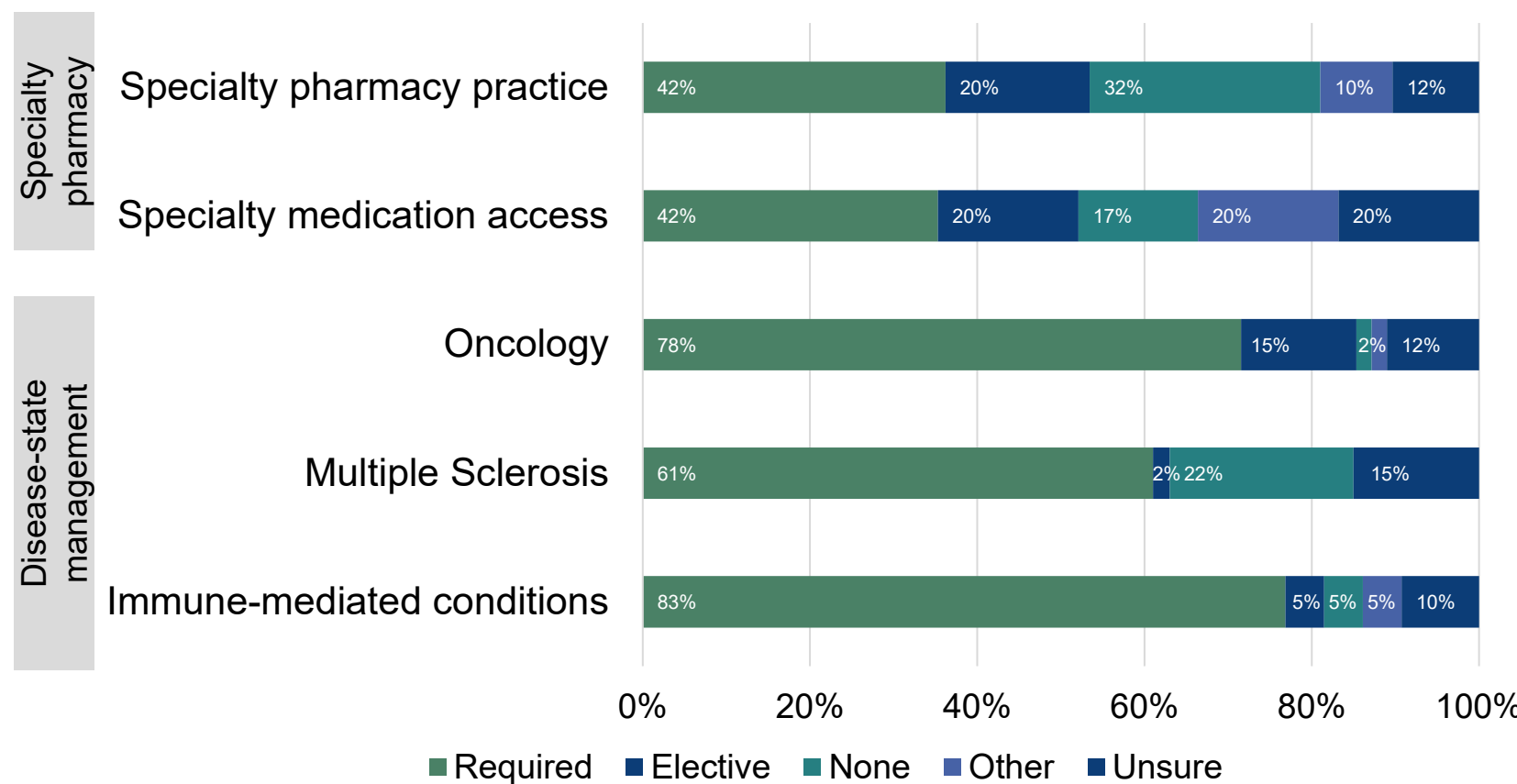
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## CONCLUSIONS

- Specialty pharmacy (SP)-related topics are sparsely covered in current didactic and experiential curriculum.
- SP topics and electives are more common in schools with SP-affiliated faculty.
- Many schools recognize the value and growth of SP and the importance of SP-related education to meet growing workforce needs and ensure students are practice-ready for any area of pharmacy.

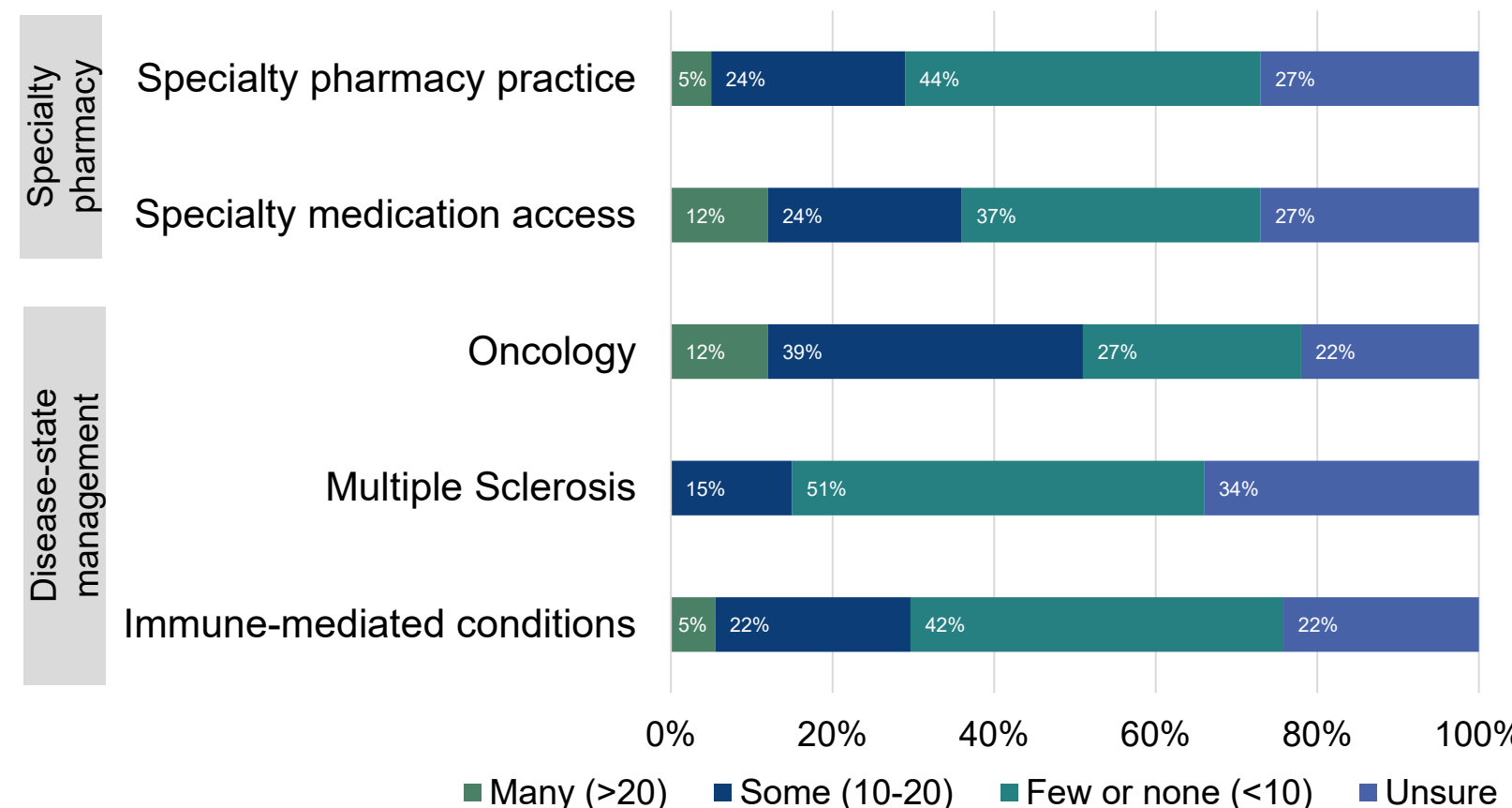
## Results

Figure 1. Topics Covered in Didactic Curriculum



Less than half of students were exposed to SP practice or the specialty medication access process through required curriculum.

Figure 2. Topics Covered in Experiential Curriculum



SP practice and the specialty medication access process were often reported to be covered in few or no rotation experiences, 44% and 37%, respectively.

Figure 3. Topics NOT Covered in Didactic Curriculum

TOPIC	YES SP-affiliated faculty	NO SP-affiliated faculty
Specialty pharmacy practice	18%	37%
Specialty medication access	9%	20%
Oncology	0%	3%
Multiple sclerosis	0%	30%
Immune-mediated conditions	0%	7%

Pharmacy schools/colleges **WITHOUT** SP-affiliated faculty were **LESS** likely to report covering SP and specialty disease state topics in didactic curriculum.

Figure 4. Perceived Value of Specialty Pharmacy Content

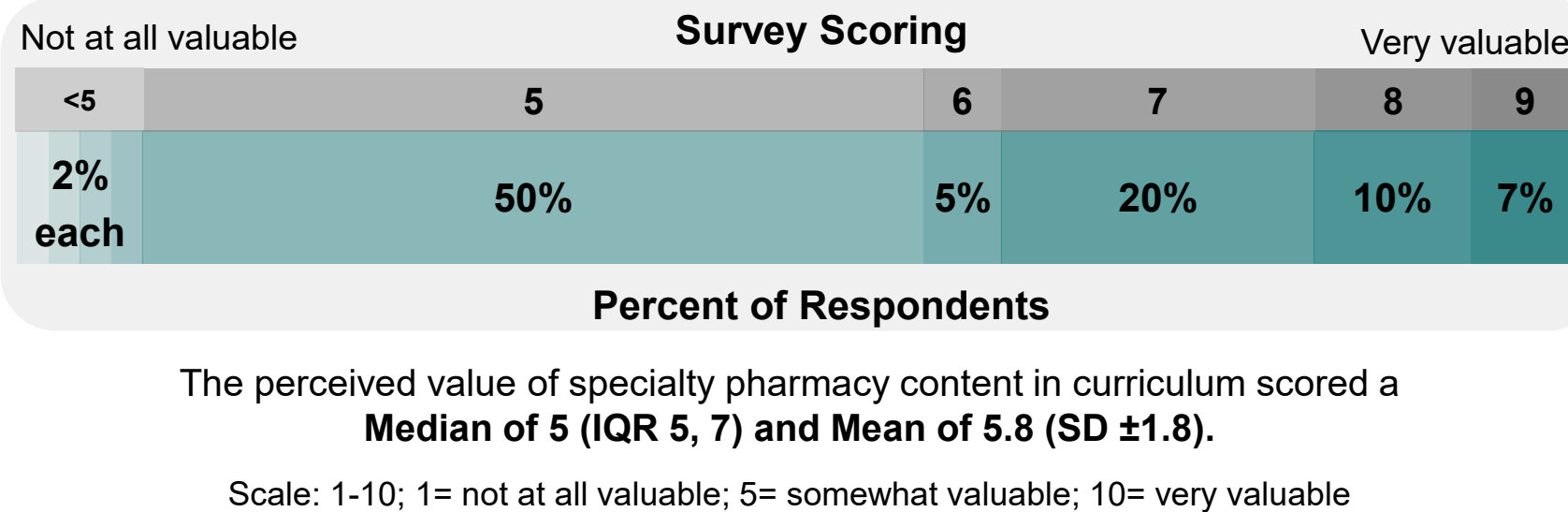


Figure 5. Anticipated Change in Specialty Pharmacy Content

