

Tobacco consumption pattern, its dependence and oral cancer awareness among Kanchipuram silk weavers, Tamil Nadu, India

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Background

Oral health is an integral part of general health. A good oral health gives confidence and helps in improving the quality of life. India is one of the world's largest textile and garment producers. Kanchipuram is a city in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu known for its silk sarees, which are traditionally made by kanchipuram weavers and are known as kanjivaram sarees. Silk weavers are regarded as the Gods' master weaver. Silk is also known for its quality and craftsmanship, which has helped it gain a global reputation. Weaving is the primary occupation of the people who live in the Kanchipuram area. In spite of the tremendous advancement in the field of preventive and curative medicine, the health care delivery system in this population are still poor and need to be strengthened in order to achieve the goal of Health for all in the country.

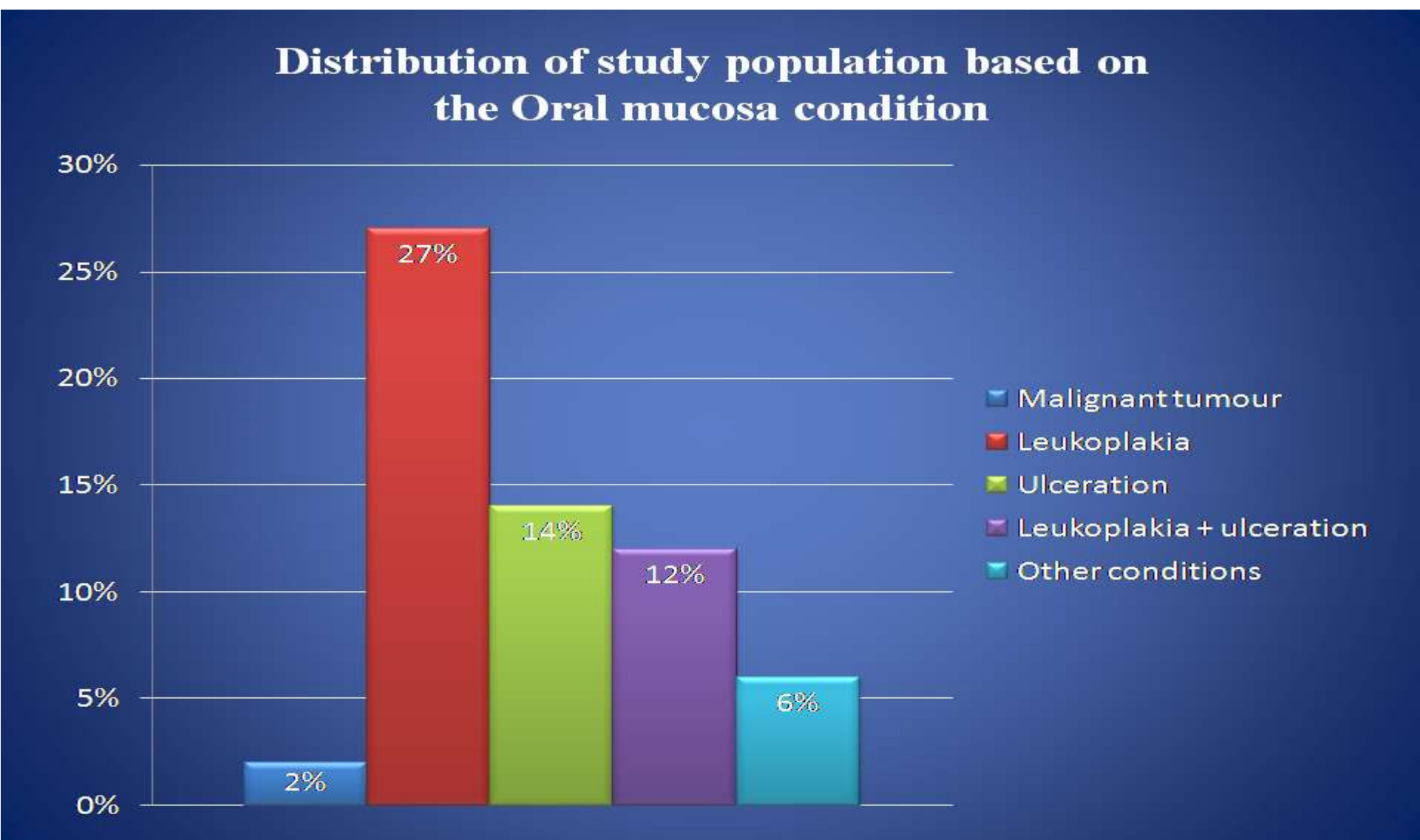
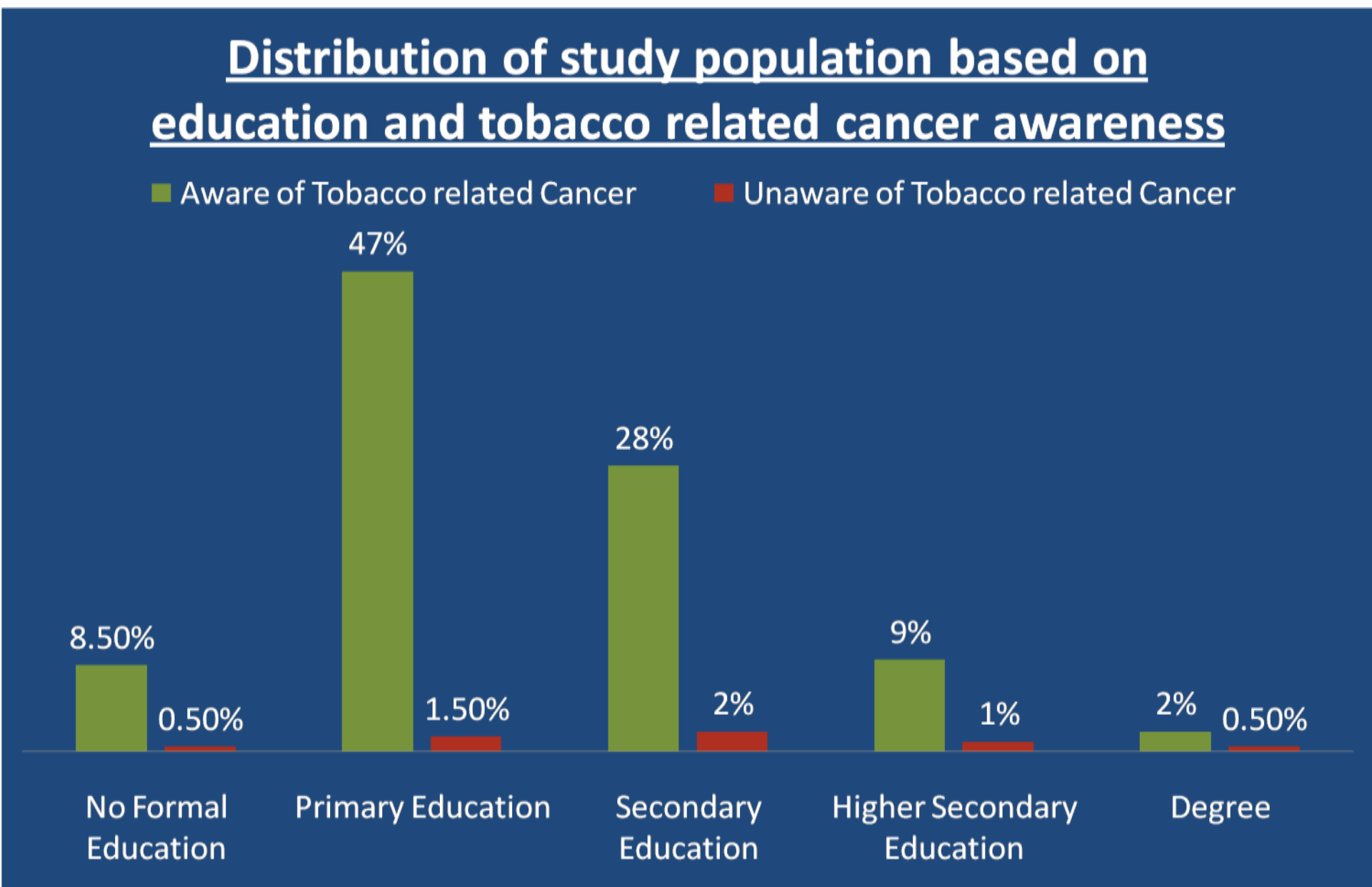
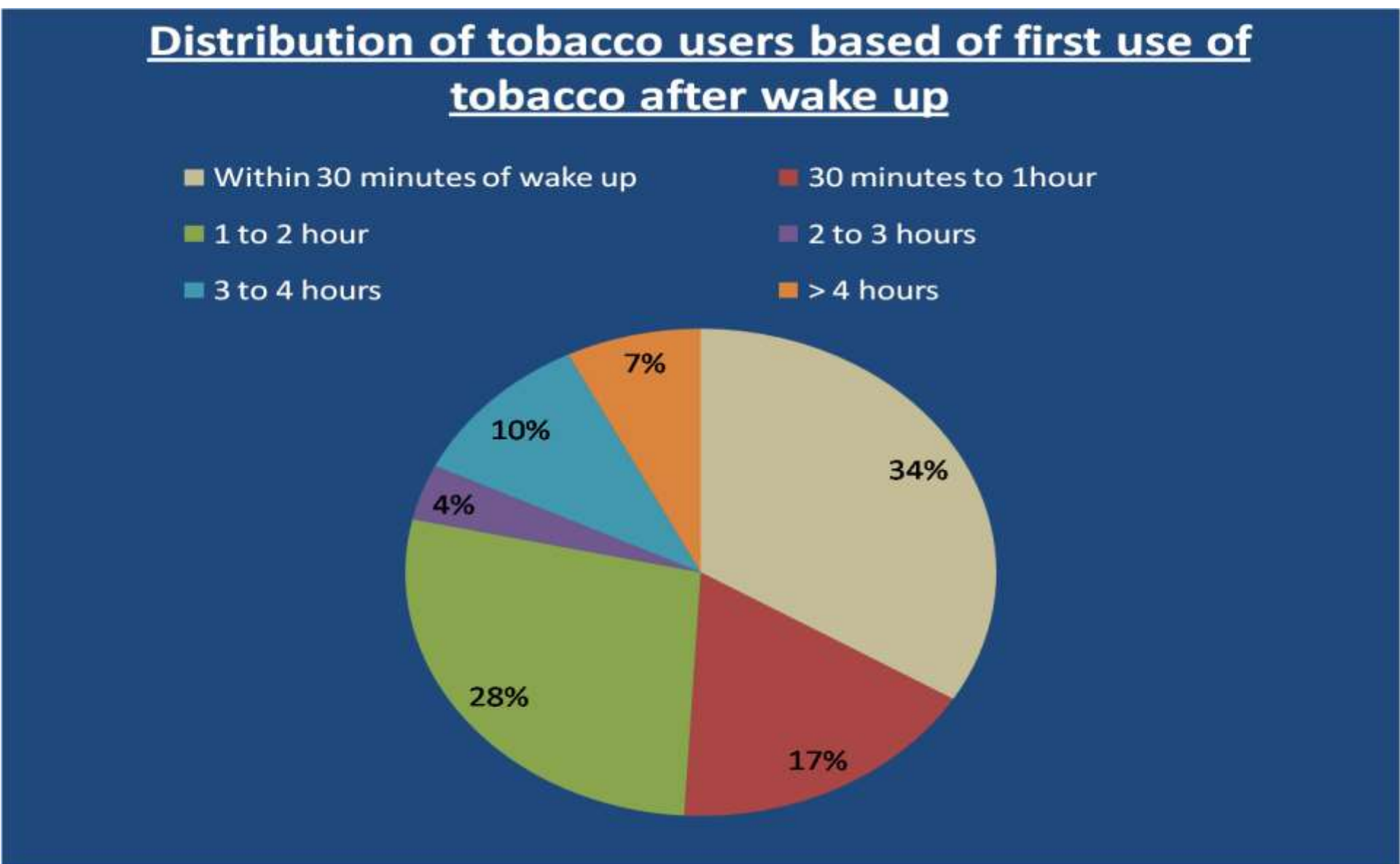
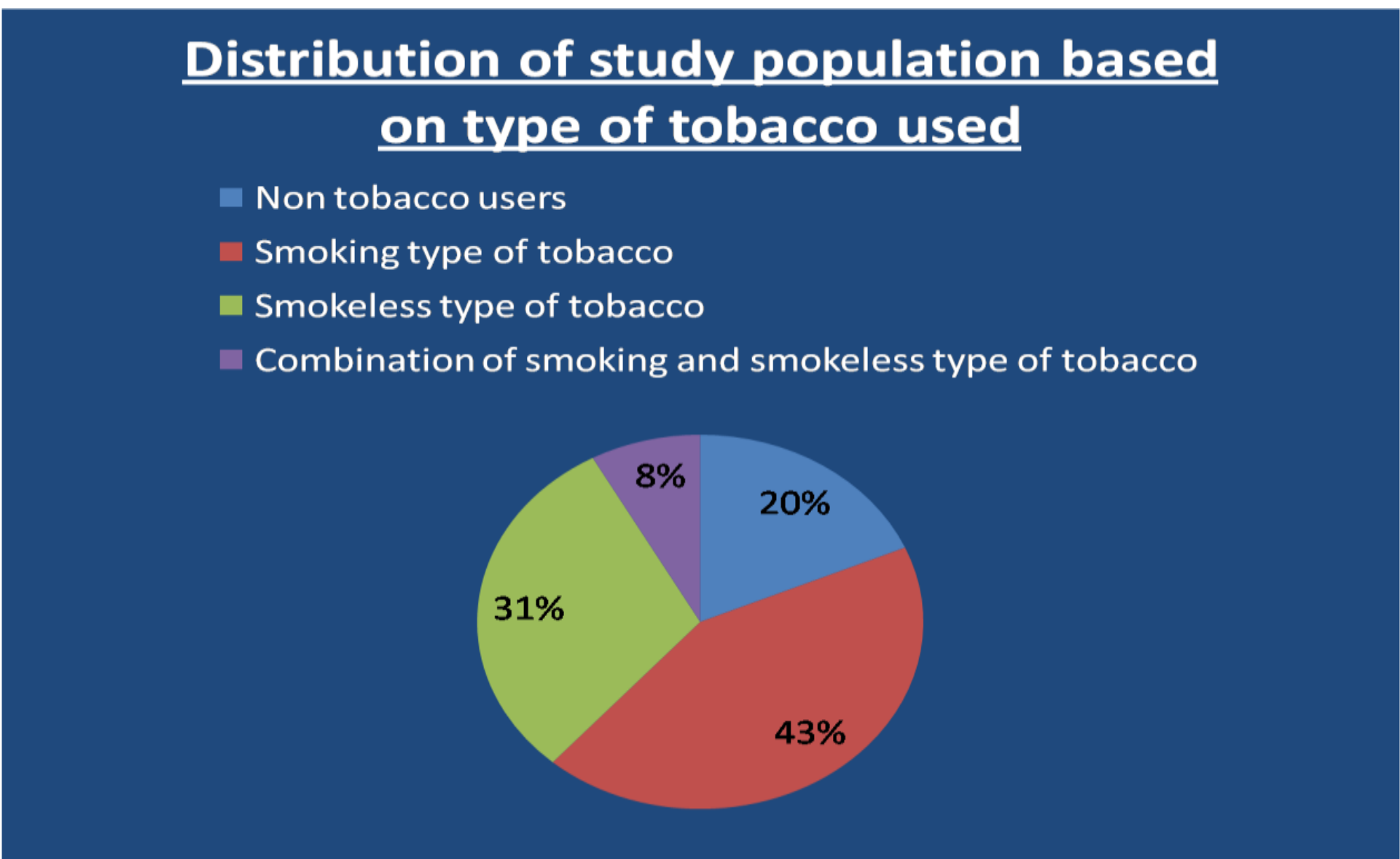
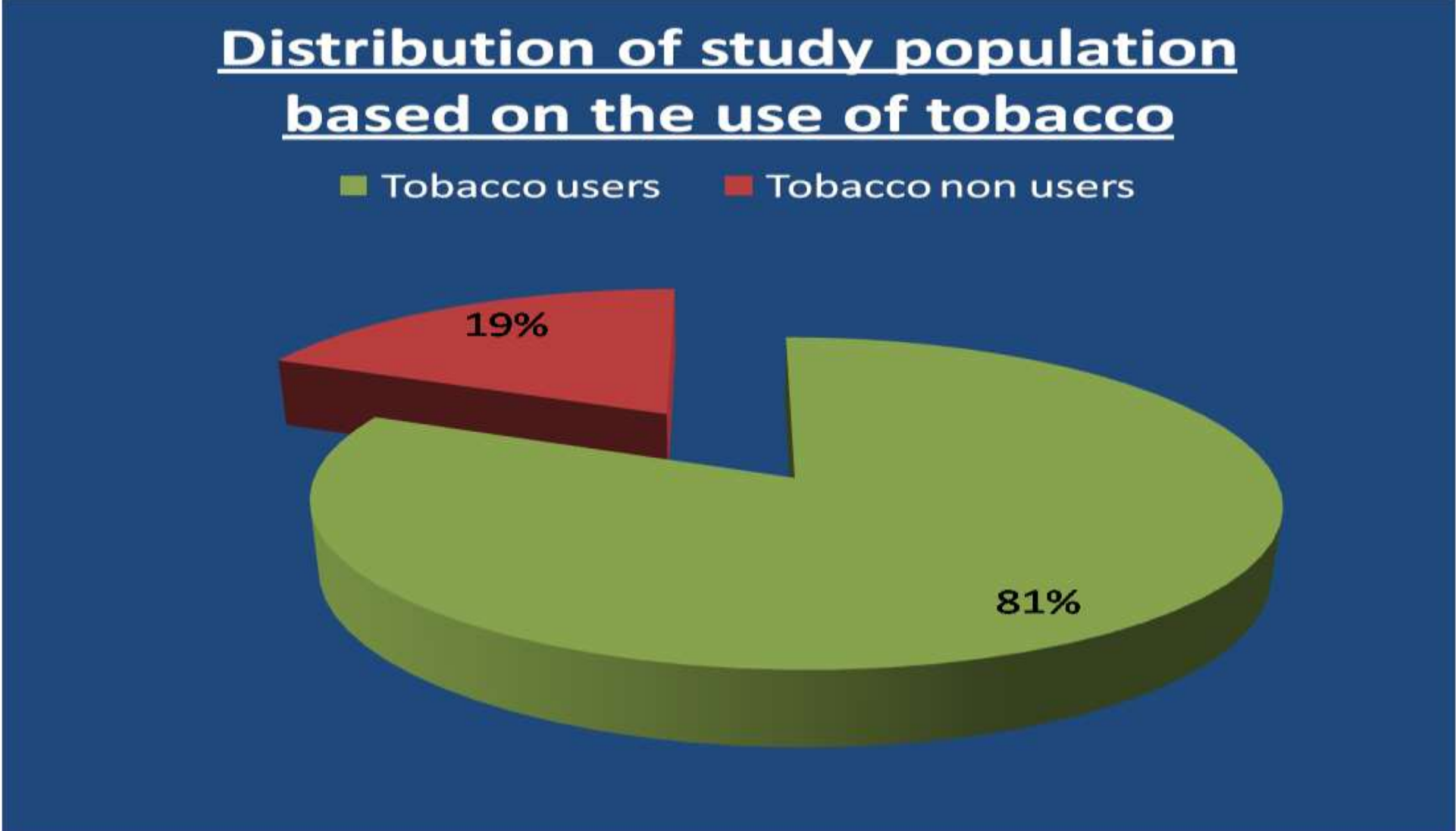
Aim - To assess tobacco consumption pattern, its dependence, and oral cancer awareness among silk weavers.

Materials and Methods

A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among 400 silk weavers after obtaining prior consent and ethical clearance from the institutional review board using random sampling method. A pre-tested questionnaire which included Demographic data, tobacco habits and oral hygiene practices was used. An intra-oral examination was carried out by a single examiner to assess the Oral Health Status using WHO Oral Health Surveys – Basic Methods Proforma (1997). Silk weavers aged 18 to 75 years who were working for more than 2 years and present on the day of examination were included and individuals who have less than 2 years of experience and who were not willing to participate were excluded. The data was analyzed statistically using SPSS version 27.

Results

A total of 400 silk weavers were included in the study.



Discussion

The present study showed that among 400 study population, 57% had no formal education. Of those who had tobacco habit; 43% smoked tobacco (beedi and cigarette), 31% smokeless tobacco (chewed raw tobacco, Hans and pan), 8% had a combination of smoking and smokeless tobacco usage. 34% of oral precancerous lesions were observed. On observing the prevalence of oral mucosal lesions, it was mainly due to tobacco usage. Also the increase in prevalence of dental disease might be due to lack of proper oral hygiene practices, tobacco habits, lack of awareness about oral health and probably indigenous brushing habits. From the results of this study it may be concluded that the silk weavers were characterized by a lack of awareness about oral health, lack of previous dental care and high treatment needs.

Oral health is an important part of everyone's well-being. It is a neglected issue in the case of silk weavers. The findings, however limited, may also bring to the light the magnitude of the oral health problem that exists among this population. They are in definite need of oral health care.

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