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We found that symptoms of diarrhoea, pneumonia, were very high with low history of malaria. Many of the caregivers know the causes of malaria and its symptoms but the knowledge of preventive methods were lacking. Caregivers with no formal education and lived in rural have low knowledge on causes and preventive measures for pneumonia and diarrhoea. Appropriate health-seeking behaviour was highest for malaria (81%) followed by pneumonia (58.0%) and diarrhoea (49%)

BACKGROUND

- Pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria were responsible for approximately 30 per cent of global deaths among children under the age of five in 2019
- Unfortunately, progress in reducing pneumonia, diarrhoea, and malaria-related mortality has been slow.(WHO 2022)
- In the Gambia, number of children with symptoms of these diseases taken to health facilities for treatment is low (49.5%), especially in rural areas (Malaria Indicator Survey 2017)

We conducted this study with the following objectives

1. To assess the knowledge of under-five caregivers about pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria
2. To assess and identify factors associated with health-seeking behaviour of caregivers for pneumonia, diarrhoea, and malaria

METHODS

- A community-based cross-sectional study was conducted in October 2023 among caregivers in Upper River Region, The Gambia
- Data were collected using a mixed method approach comprising household survey, among 392 caregivers with children aged 24-59 months using a semi-structured questionnaire
- Data were displayed in charts, and tables using frequencies, and percentages
- Chi-square-test was used to examine the association between the socio-demographic characteristics and health-seeking behavior
- Logistic regression model was fitted to identify factors associated with health-seeking behaviours at the 5% significance level

RESULTS

- Majority of the caregivers were between the ages of **34 – 44** years, **married** and with **no formal education.183 (47%)** of the caregivers reported **Diarrhoea** symptom **Pneumonia 157 (40%)** and **Malaria 51(13%)**. Married women were more likely to practice appropriate care for their children compared to single, divorced and widowed

Table 1: Predictors of Health-seeking behaviour for Diarrhoea

Variable	aOR	p-value	95% Confidence interval (CI)
Diarrhoea			
Marital status			
Single (ref)	1		
married	3.33	0.007	1.38 - 8.02
Separated/divorced/widowed	2.93	0.038	1.06. – 1.54
Place of residence			
Rural (ref)	1		
1.urban	3.13	0.006	1.39- 7.04
Level of education			
No formal education (ref)	1		
primary	2.61	0.053	0.99-6.92
secondary	1.28	0.588	0.52-3.12
tertiary	3.08	0.034	1.09-8.71

RESULTS CONTINUED

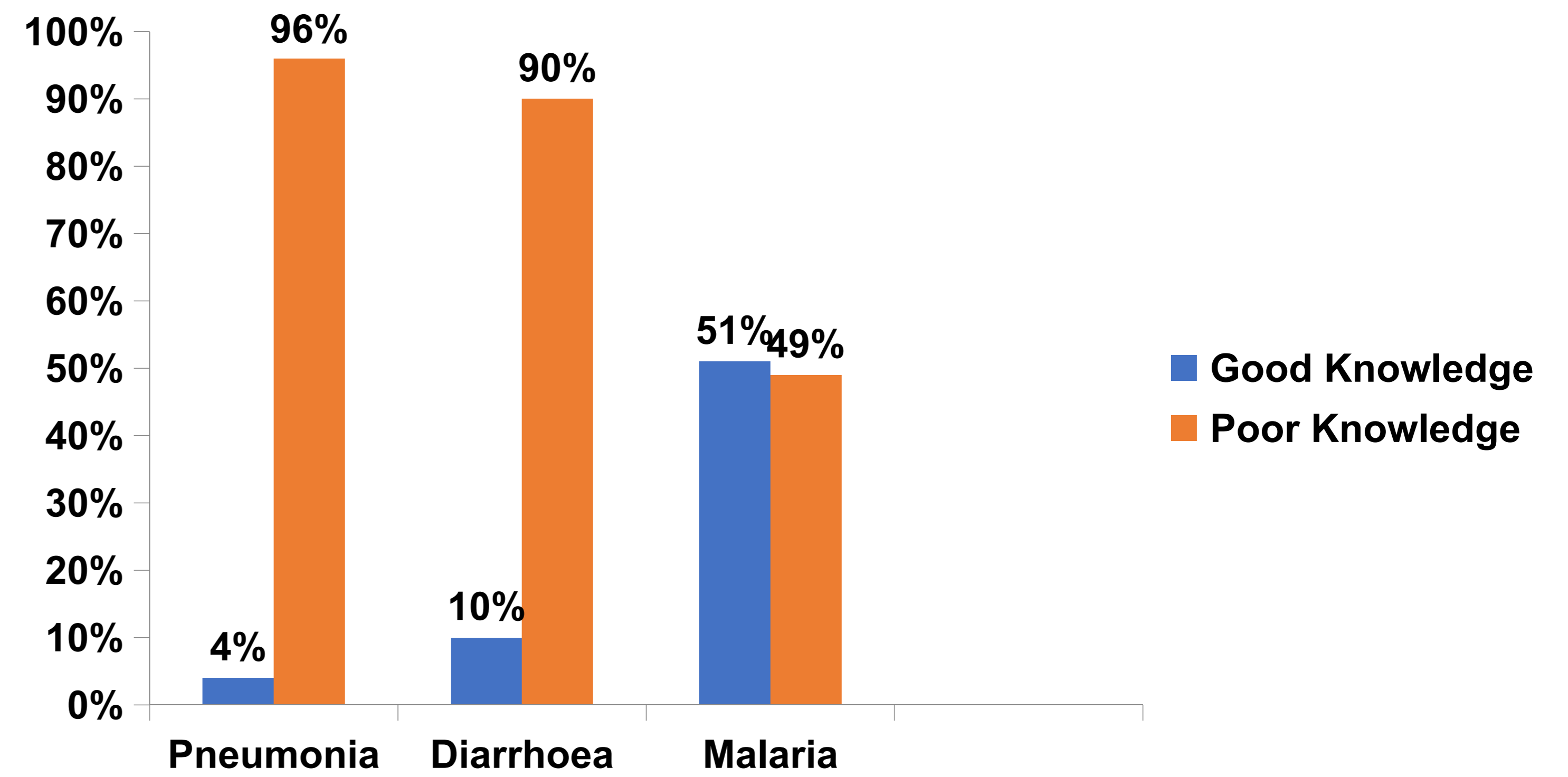


Figure 1: Knowledge of caregivers on pneumonia, Diarrhoea and Malaria

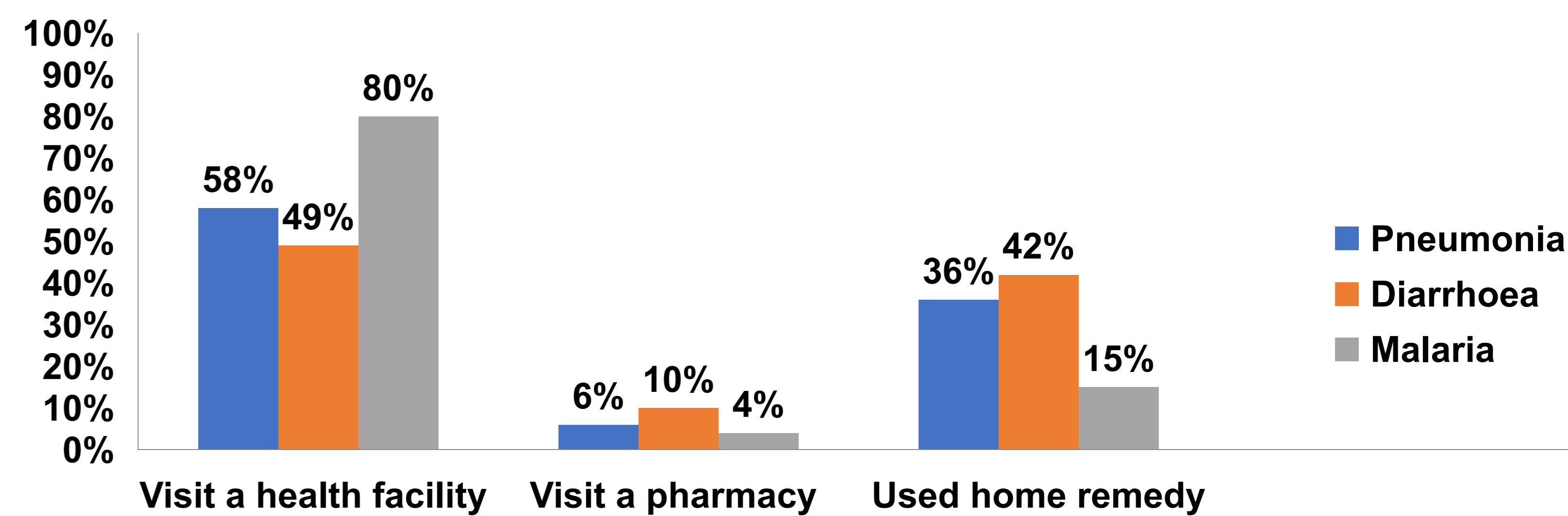


Figure 2: Health seeking behavior of Caregivers for pneumonia, Diarrhoea and Malaria Symptoms

CONCLUSIONS

- Appropriate health-seeking behaviour was observed in malaria and pneumonia.
- Caregivers who live in urban areas were more likely to practice appropriate care for their children
- Caregivers aged <35 practice more appropriate care for their children. Marital status plays a vital role in the health-seeking behaviour of the carer. Married women were three (3) times more likely to seek appropriate care for diarrhoea than single, separated, divorced, and widowed women
- Qualitative studies are needed to better understand reasons for health-seeking behaviour across childhood diseases.

ADDITIONAL KEY INFORMATION

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