

Safety care for patients at risk of suicide in an acute mental health unit. Results of the implementation of recommendations

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Introduction

In 2020, suicide was the leading cause of unnatural death in Spain, with a rate of 8.3 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants and a high influence of mental health factors (1-4), highlighting the need to promote preventive measures.

For this reason, at the Torrecárdenas University Hospital, Almería, Spain, we decided to begin the implementation of the **Best Practice Guideline on Assessment and Care of Adults at Risk for Suicidal Ideation and Behaviour** in an acute patient unit of the Mental Health area that had not previously received such interventions.

Aims

After the first semester of implementation, we aimed to evaluate the impact of the implementation on the detection of patients at risk and the deployment of preventive care in the mental health field.

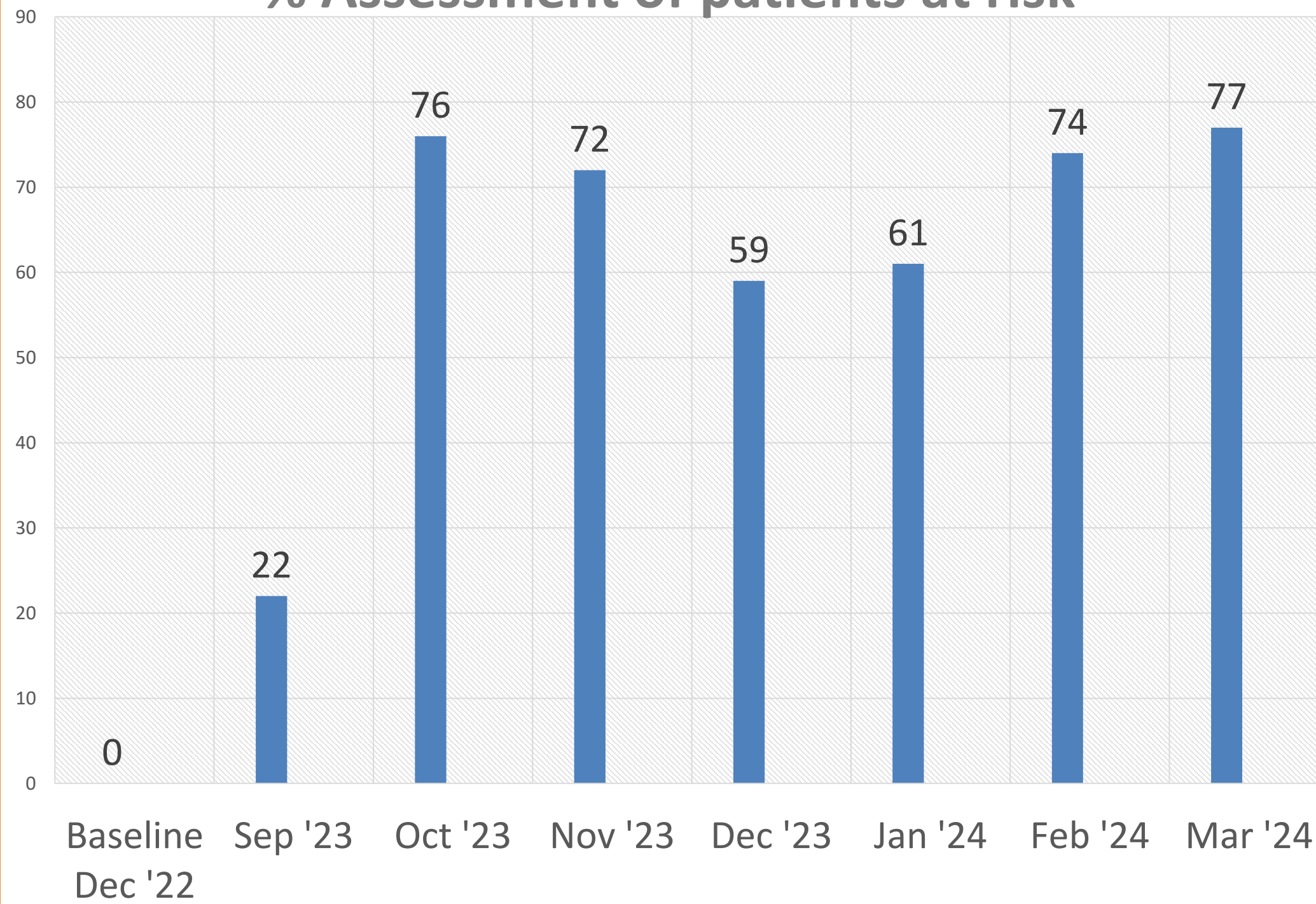
Methodology

An evaluation was conducted in December 2022, prior to the centre's designation as a candidate BPSO centre. Subsequently, variables were collected from all patients treated in the unit during the first months of guideline implementation, from September 2023 to March 2024.

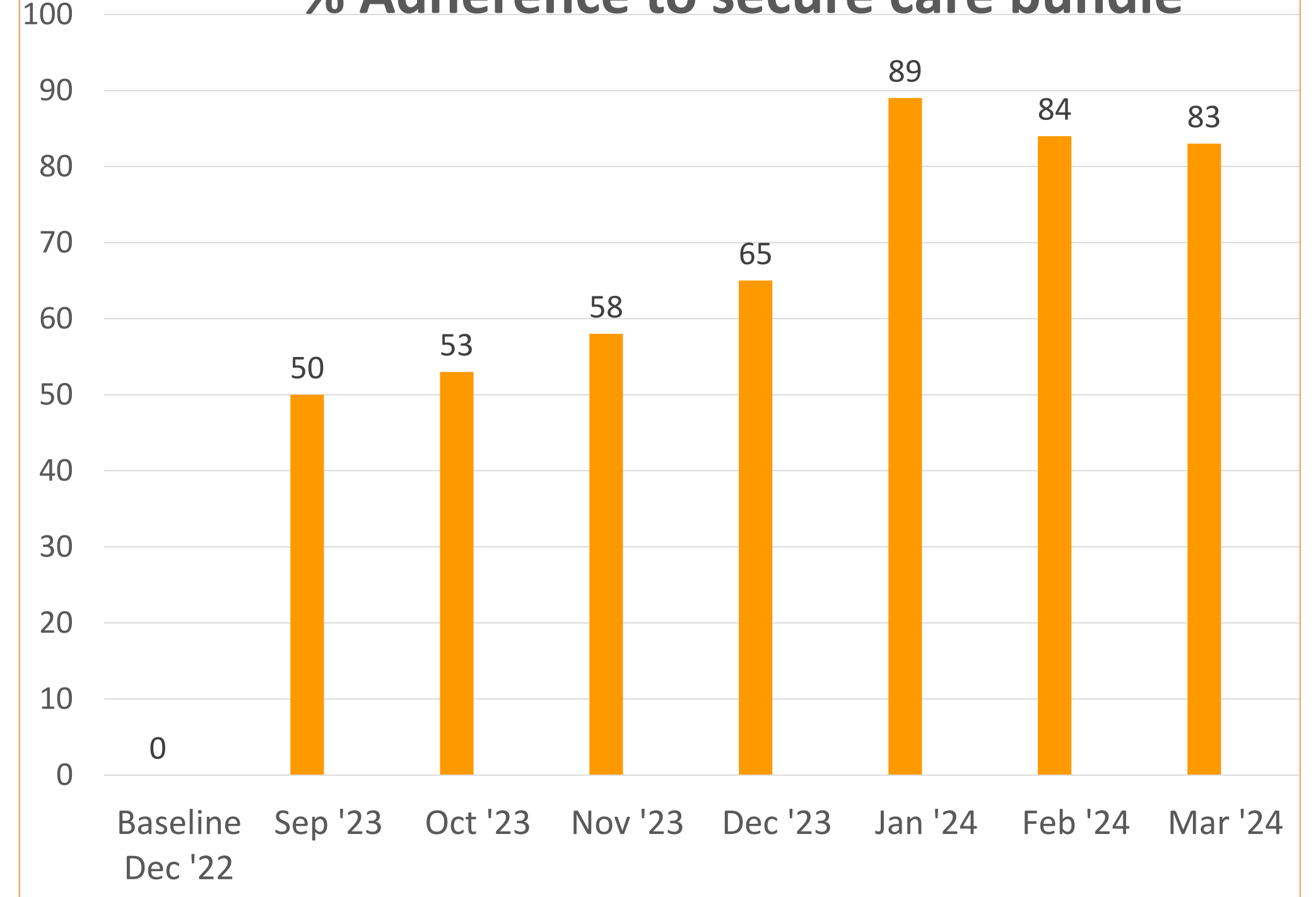
Results

A total of 325 patients were included, with a mean age of 43.75 years and a predominance of males (54.54%). In the baseline assessment (n=40), no records of suicide risk assessment or specific care for at-risk patients were found. During the intervention, all variables gradually increased, reaching 77% in risk assessment (n=41). In the March 2024 evaluation, 51.11% of the assessed patients presented a risk of suicidal ideation (n=23) and 82.61% (n=19) received safety care actions such as restricted access to medications or modifications in the physical environment.

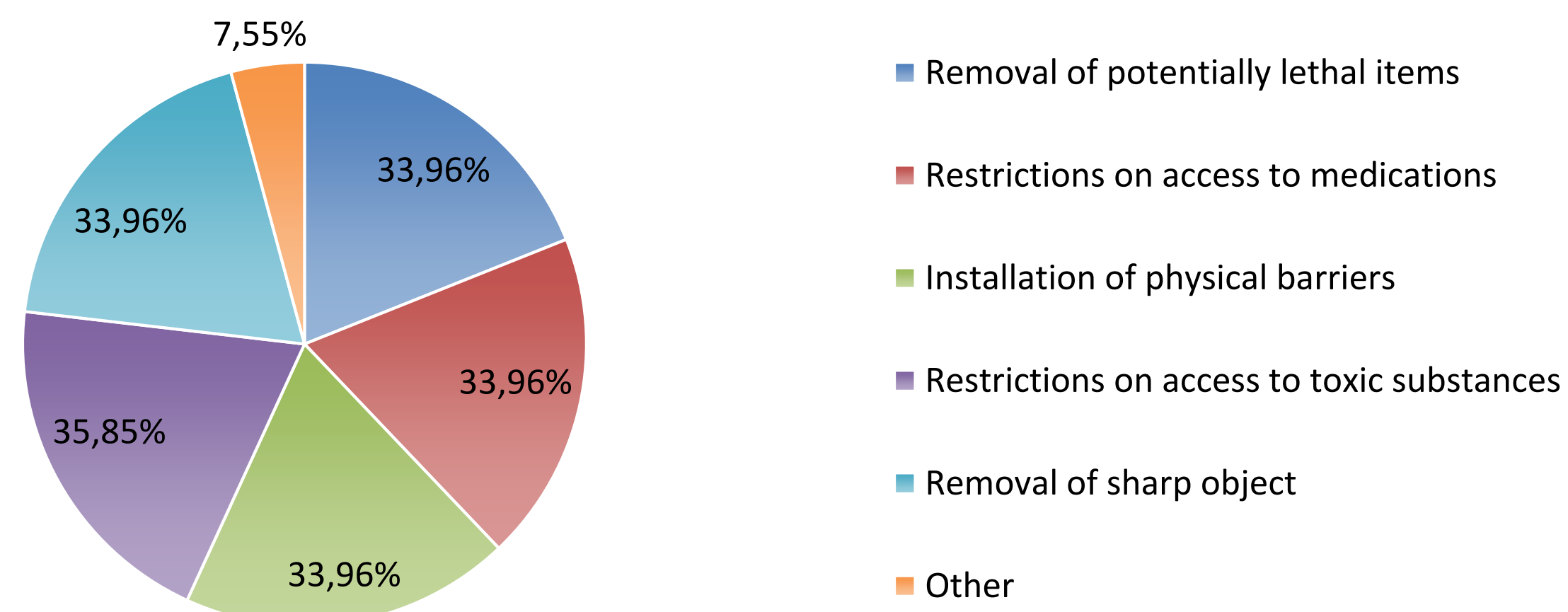
% Assessment of patients at risk



% Adherence to secure care bundle



Type of security measures that have been applied to the patient



Conclusions

The implementation of the recommendations increased the detection of patients at risk and the provision of safe care within the unit.

El presente trabajo ha sido realizado utilizando datos y metodología del Programa de implantación de guías de buenas prácticas en Centros Comprometidos con la Excelencia en Cuidados®, parcialmente financiado por el Centro español para los cuidados de salud basados en la evidencia: un Centro de Excelencia del Instituto Joanna Briggs. Los autores expresan su agradecimiento al "Grupo de Trabajo del Programa de implantación de buenas prácticas en Centros Comprometidos con la Excelencia en Cuidados®"