



“Non Judgemental, Treated with Care and Respect”:

First Reporting of Client Experience of Pharmacist-Administered Depot Buprenorphine

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Introduction:

Depot buprenorphine/long-acting injectable buprenorphine (LAIB) is a subcutaneous formulation with many benefits. LAIB funding in Australia privileges pharmacists. Therefore, pharmacist LAIB services must be of high quality and be palatable to clients.

Across 2022-23, 52 NSW pharmacies took part in a world-first government-sponsored Pilot to administer LAIB in community pharmacy.

After training (see **Poster 32**) pharmacists administered LAIB to clients who received the service in community pharmacies without cost.

Total Clients:	129
Total LAIBs:	509

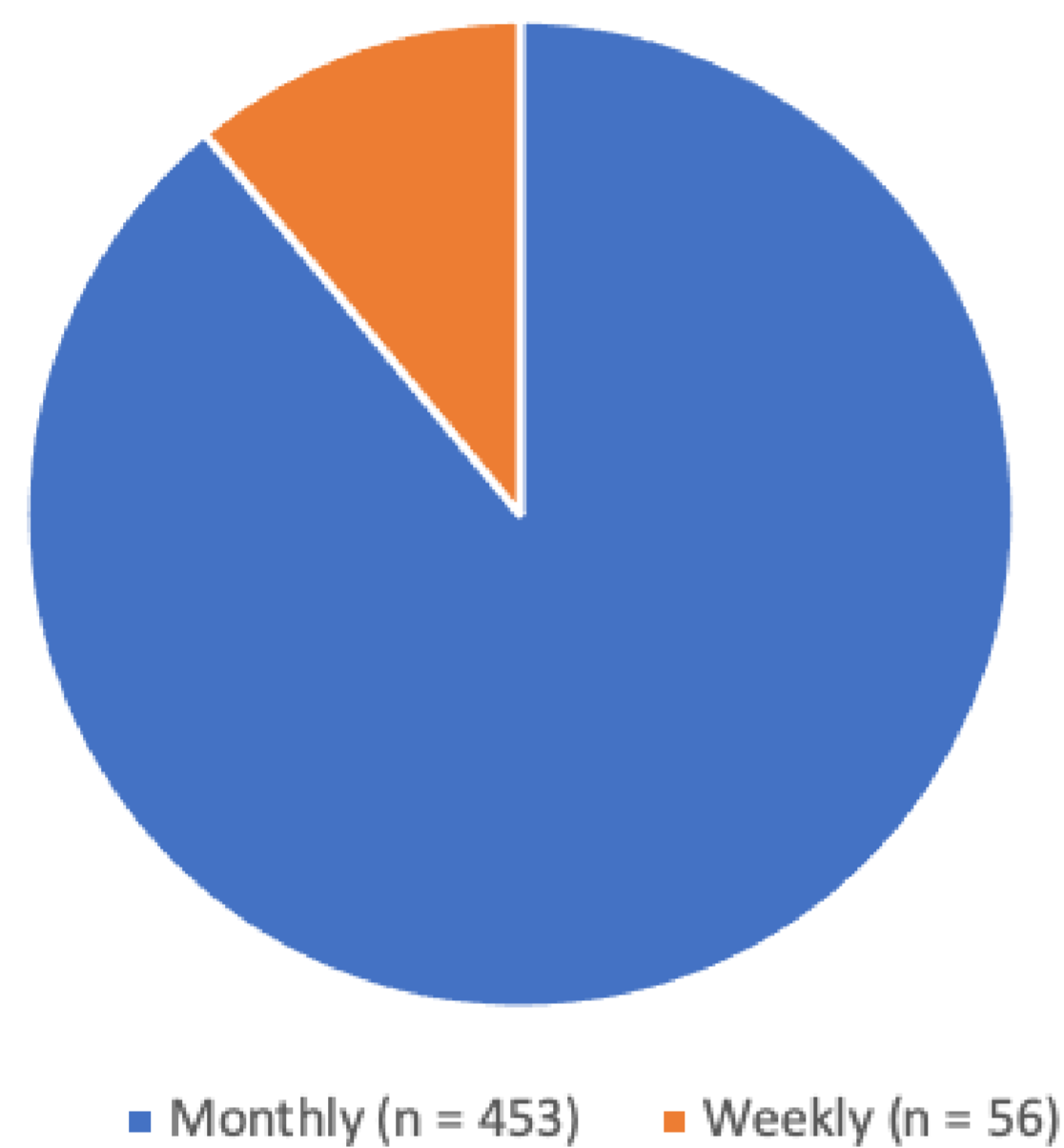


Figure 1: Summary of Pilot statistics, with chart showing proportional LAIB administration frequencies.

Methods:

Semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys were administered to clients, pharmacists, and stakeholders.

Clients were asked about pharmacist care interactions, receiving treatment in a community pharmacy setting, expectations and needs, accessibility of care, and overall palatability.

Clients were also asked to indicate preferences for treatment providers and settings by discrete choice.

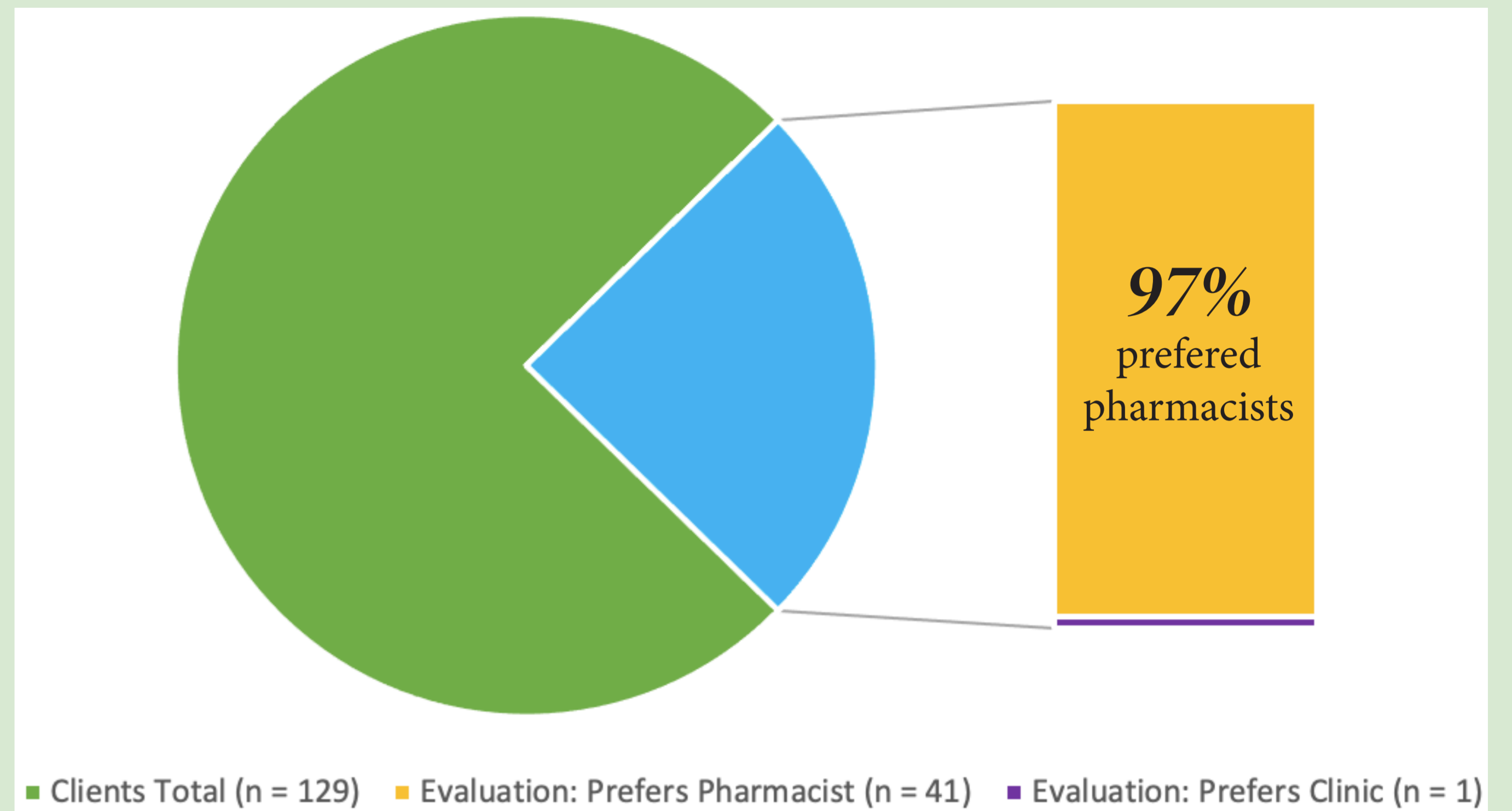
Emphasis was placed on electronic or non-face-to-face data collection. Participants received small (\$20) honoraria.



Figure 2: The depot buprenorphine device *Buvidal* (sponsor CAMURUS AB), one of two formulations available in Australia.

Results:

Figure 3: Of overall client participants, n=42 consented to evaluation. Of these, only n=1 client **did not** prefer pharmacist LAIB administration



Clients (n= 42 in evaluation) had complex views, primarily around stigma, provider satisfaction, and treatment setting.

Clients felt pharmacy dosing was “*excellent*”, “*professional*”, “*convenient and safe*” and “*much better*” than prior treatment settings.

Clients liked normalising their treatment, which was “*exactly the same as getting any other script*”.

Clients found pharmacy a “*much easier and less stressful*” setting, where “*nobody looks down on you*”, noting community dosing was “*not as stigmatized as going to a drug clinic*”.

The pharmacy setting was highlighted by many as “*safer.. [avoiding] old associates at the clinic*”.

Overall, clients were “*really confident*” in pharmacist skill, with some expressing that “*the pharmacist is way better trained*” or when administering that their pharmacist “*actually does it better than most nurses*” or “*hurts... less than it did at the local clinic*”. Some even felt they were “*more confident getting it from my pharmacist*”.

Some clients contrasted their positive community experiences to “*judgemental, painful, hostile and impersonal*” treatment in previous clinic settings where some staff had been “*mean and cold*”.

One client described receiving LAIB from his local pharmacy as

“the best thing that ever happened to me”

Conclusions:

Administration of LAIB by NSW community pharmacists was feasible and highly perceived by all participant groups.

Clients “*couldn’t be happier*” overall. Clients were overwhelmingly satisfied with pharmacist-administered LAIB, strongly appreciated community treatment settings, and cited highly positive experiences.

A striking majority of clients (97%) indicated preference for pharmacist administration of LAIB in community over other treatment settings.