

# Activities of the Drug Information Centre of the Portuguese Pharmaceutical Society: 1984-2020

A. Simón<sup>1</sup>, J. Batista<sup>\*2</sup>, C. Torre<sup>3</sup>, AP. Mendes<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Drug Information Centre, Ordem dos Farmacêuticos (Portuguese Pharmaceutical Society), Lisboa, Portugal

<sup>2</sup> International Affairs, Ordem dos Farmacêuticos (Portuguese Pharmaceutical Society), Lisboa, Portugal

<sup>3</sup> Secretary General, Ordem dos Farmacêuticos (Portuguese Pharmaceutical Society), Lisboa, Portugal



## BACKGROUND

The “Centro de Informação do Medicamento” (CIM) is the Drug Information Centre of the Portuguese Pharmaceutical Society (PPS). It was created in 1984, with the purpose of providing objective and independent information about medicines to Portuguese pharmacists. It is staffed by two fulltime pharmacists and a part-time administrative assistant.

CIM's activities, such as answering drug information requests – passive information –, as well as the production of articles and technical documents, in anticipation of information needs – active information –, are executed according to standard operational procedures.

CIM's aim is to fulfil pharmacists' needs and expectations during their professional practice and, through this, the needs of their patients.

## AIM

To perform a retrospective and descriptive study of the activities developed by CIM over the last 36 years.

## METHOD

The details of the requests registered in a database programme were analysed. Specific analysis were conducted for the period: May 2017 to April 2020.

The active information activities and all other additional activities are also described.

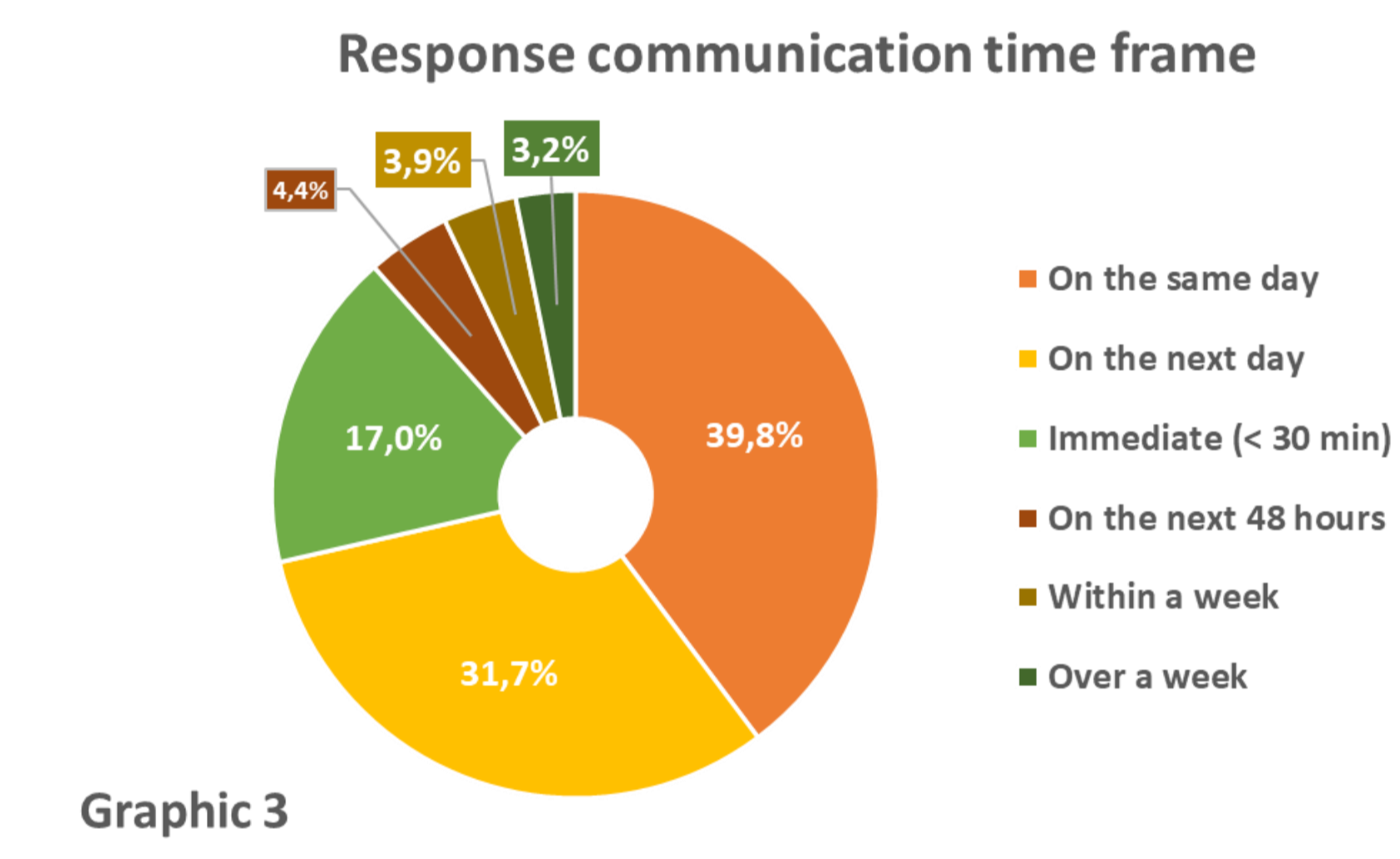
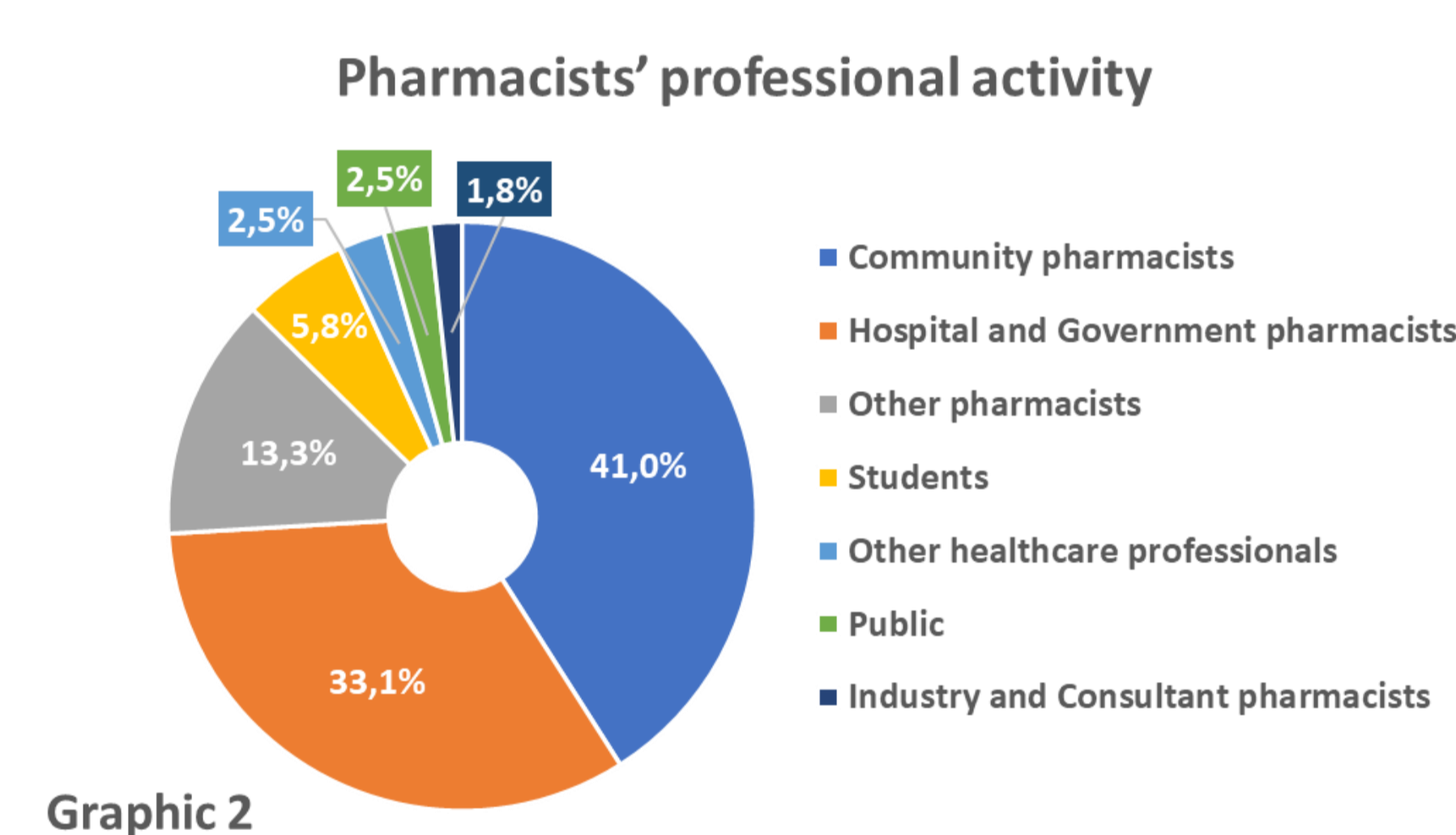
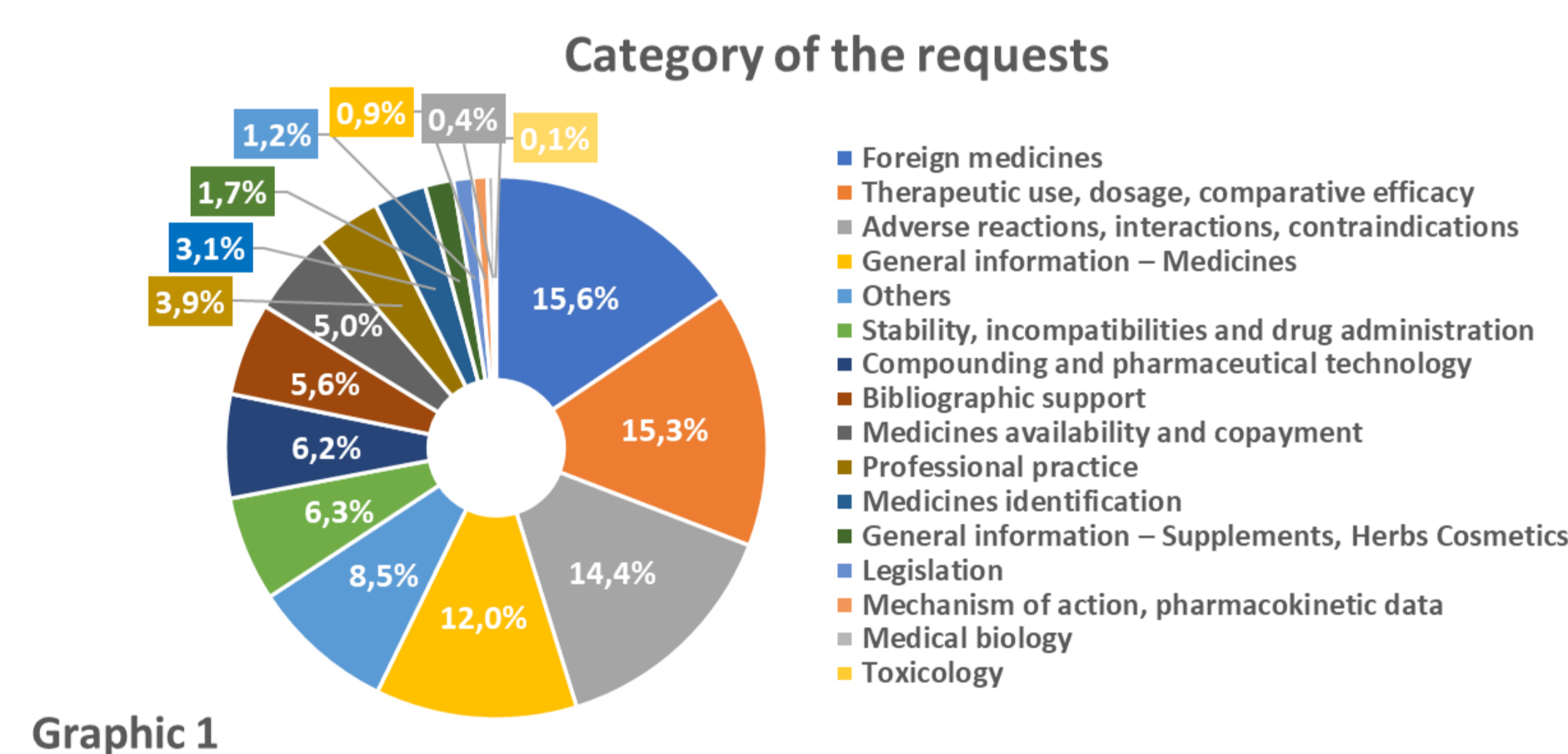
## RESULTS

### Passive Information

Since May 1984 until April 2020 (in a total of 36 full years) CIM has received 45.598 inquiries. From the 1.889 requests received between May 2017 and April 2020, the following parameters were analysed: category of the requests, pharmacists' professional activity, time required to elaborate the response, response communication channel and response communication time frame.

The main categories of the requests were “Foreign medicines”, “Therapeutic use/dosage/comparative efficacy” and “Adverse reactions/interactions/contraindications” (Graphic 1). The information requests came from pharmacists of all sectors of the profession, but mainly from community (41.0%) and hospital (33.1%) pharmacists (Graphic 2). The time necessary to gather the information needed to answer a request is variable, essentially depending on its complexity. Many of the questions require the consultation of a large amount of information resources and adequate time to compile, analyse and synthesize the data collected: 47.4% of the requests took more than an hour's work and 11% took even longer than 3 hours. Despite this, 88.5% of the requests were answered within 24 hours, (Graphic 3) and 57.3% of the answers were accompanied by bibliographic support.

The answers were provided mostly by email (68.6%), keeping up with the technological evolution, allowing for a faster and more complete answer, with the immediate availability of the bibliographic support.



### Active Information

Accomplished by editing a Bulletin and producing articles and documents, published on the [PPS website](#) for direct and immediate access for Portuguese pharmacists, as well as for the ones living in Portuguese speaking countries.

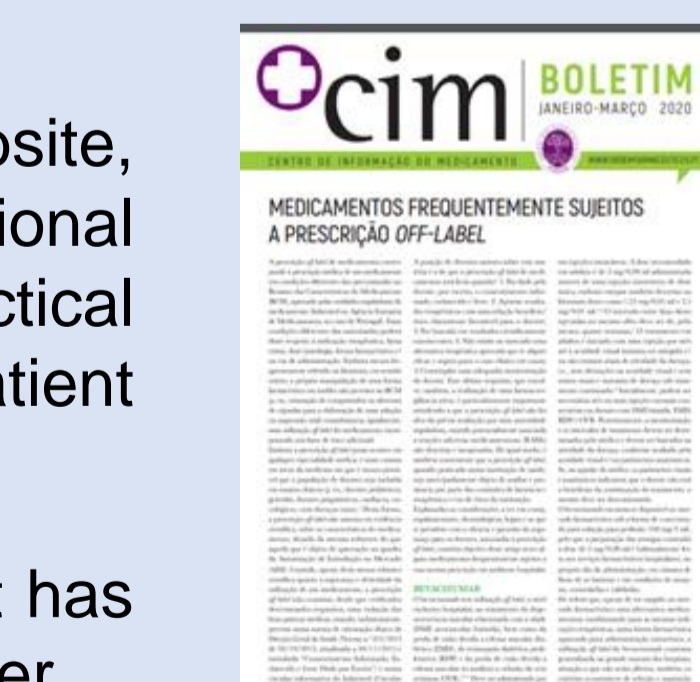
“Boletim do CIM”. Bulletin published since 1986, including until now 180 editions with 260 articles. The Bulletin includes short reviews regarding mostly medicines, pharmacotherapy and professional practice.

“e-Publicação”. Published since 2015 on the PPS website, replaced “Ficha Técnica”, included in the PPS institutional magazine between 1984-2015. Articles containing practical information to support pharmacists' intervention in patient advice and promote the safe use of medicines.

“Breves Questões Terapêuticas”. Initiated in 2019, it has the format of a concise question with an objective answer.

“Atualidade Terapêutica”. Synthesis of recently published articles or documents that may be of interest to support pharmacists' interventions.

“Recursos de informação”. Compilation of useful resources freely available online.



### Educational activities

- Cooperation with academic institutions in the development of skills in drug information through lectures or students' visits.
- Short drug information internships, mostly for hospital pharmacists.
- Pre-graduation internships in drug information.
- Co-writing of practical cases for the annual Patient Advice Contest, organized by the Portuguese Association of Pharmacy Students.
- Educational meetings in the early years and, since 2017, oral presentations based on articles published in the Bulletin – “CIM à tarde na Sociedade Farmacêutica”, also broadcasted online.

### Other activities

- Involvement in external and internal projects, such as the development and review of documents about medicines and health for the public, as well as Good Practices and Professional Standards for pharmacists.
- CIM has been regularly producing articles, poster presentations, and oral communications about the activities developed and themes related to medicines information.
- In support of the activities developed by PPS Board and Social Bodies, CIM responds to internal information requests and provides the required technical and scientific support.

## CONCLUSIONS

CIM's current activities are the culmination and evolution of those initiated 36 years ago, trying to keep up with the technological changes and the evolving needs and expectations of pharmacists.

CIM has been developing new publications in various formats, promoting new events and resources, while maintaining the ones that existed and improving the performance in the provision of passive information. CIM will continue to support Portuguese pharmacists' everyday practice.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Ordem dos Farmacêuticos | Rua da Sociedade Farmacêutica 18. 1169-075 Lisboa, Portugal | Tel.: 213 191 380 | [cim@ordemfarmaceuticos.pt](mailto:cim@ordemfarmaceuticos.pt)