



# ENHANCING AWARENESS OF ORAL CANCER PREVENTION AND EARLY DETECTION AMONG PRIMARY HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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## INTRODUCTION

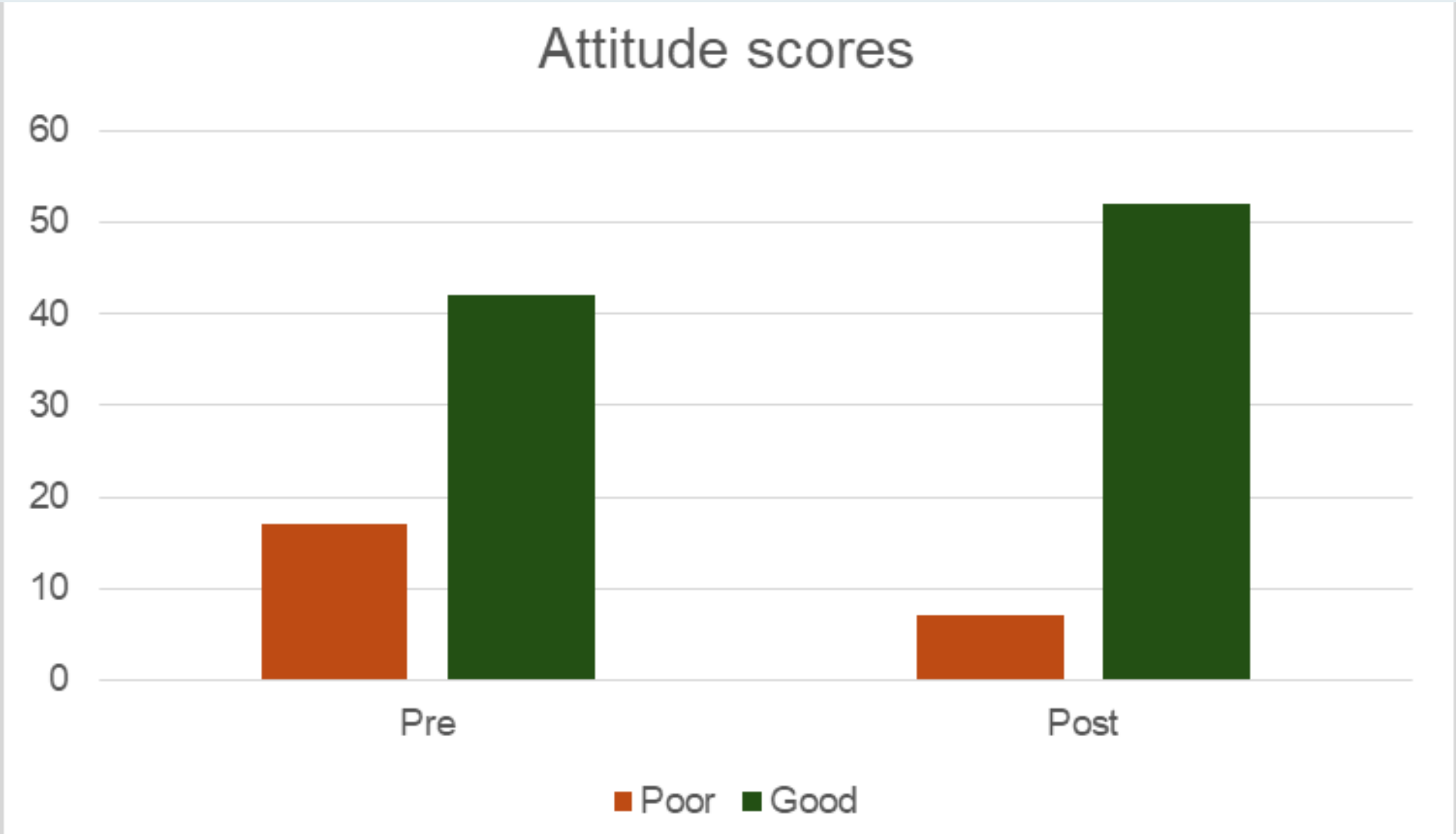
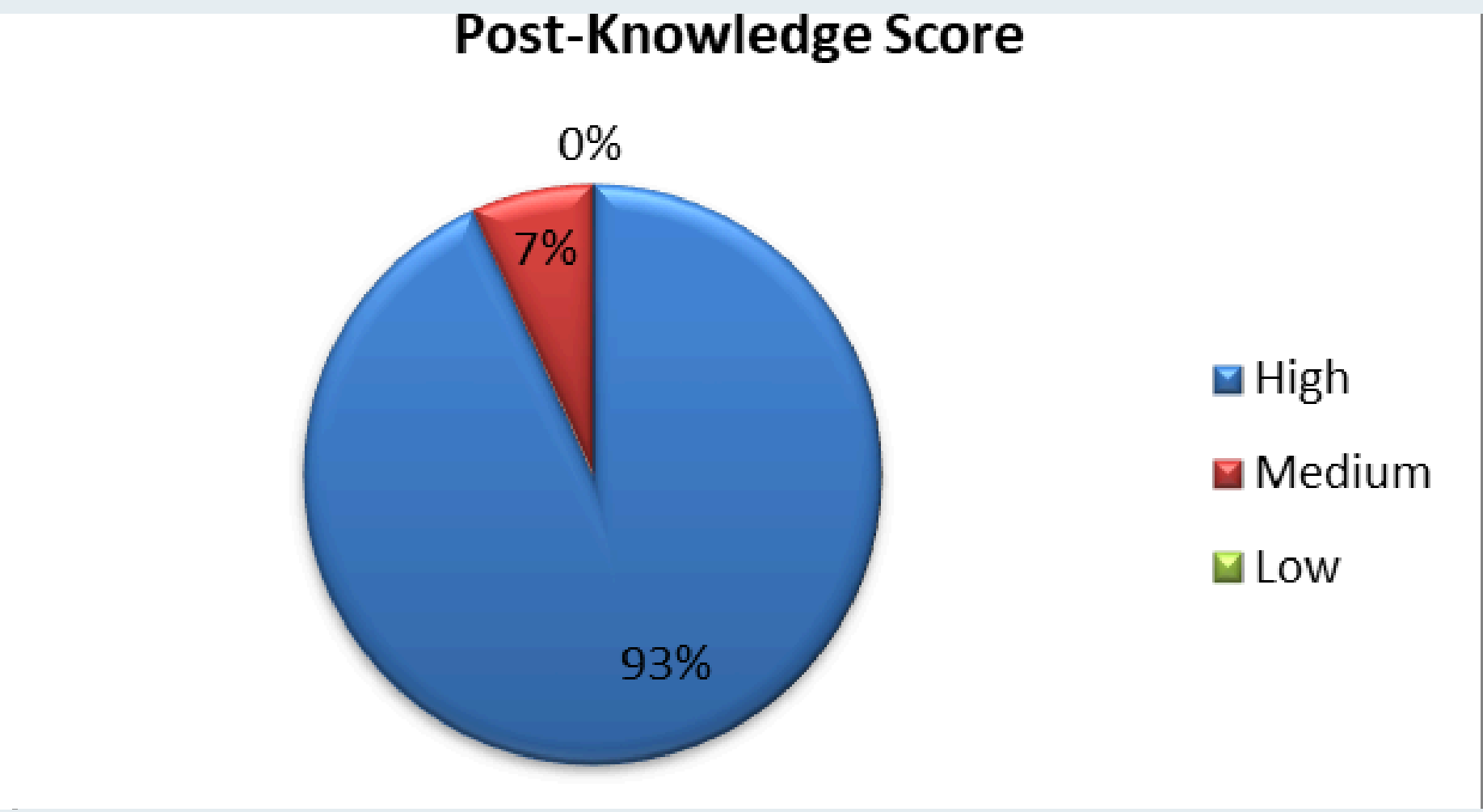
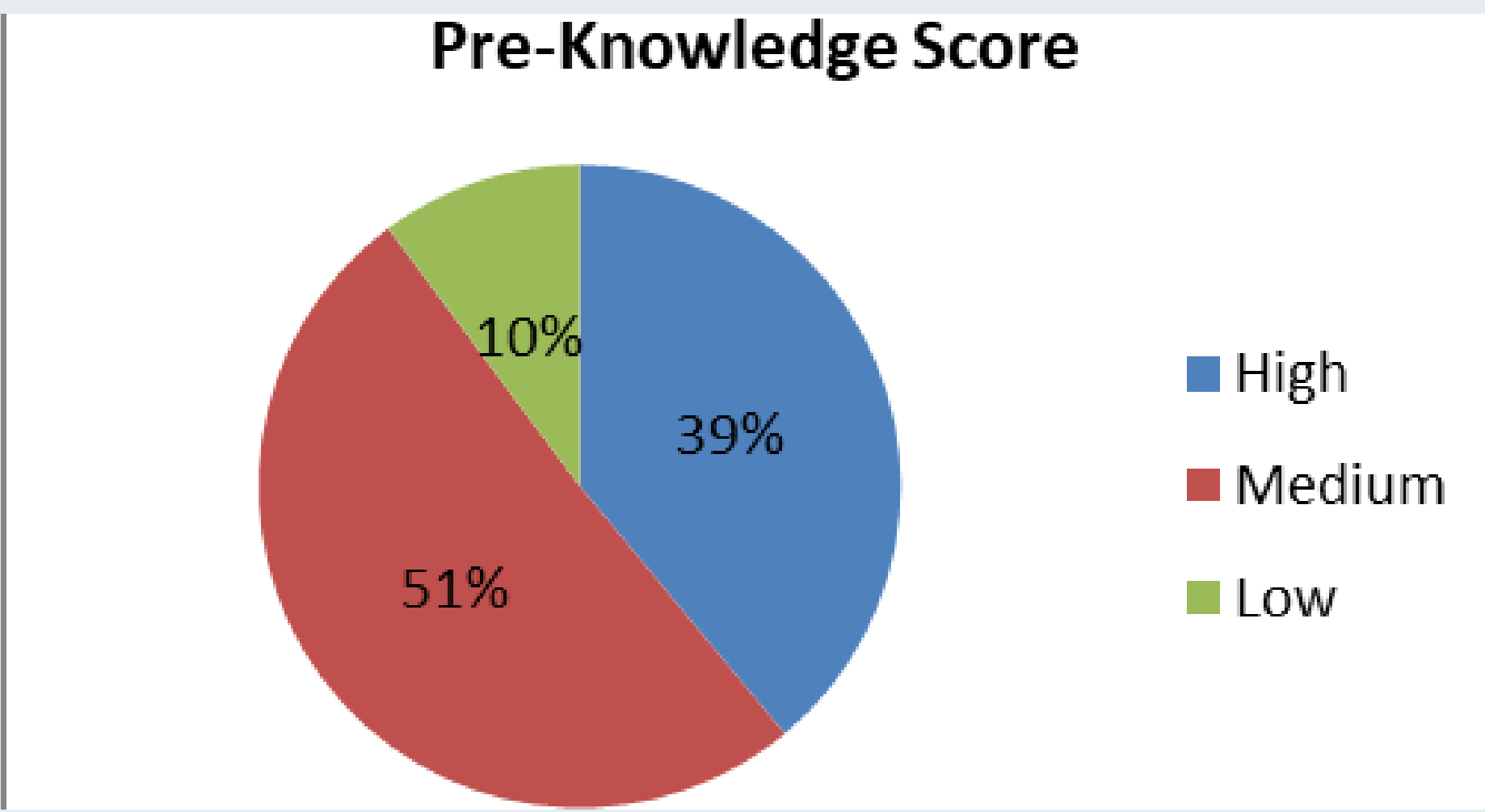
- Oral cancer ranks as the 13th most common malignancy worldwide and poses a significant burden in Ethiopia and across Africa. Primary healthcare workers play a crucial role in the prevention and early detection of oral cancer. Therefore, raising awareness and equipping these professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills is essential for improving early diagnosis, reducing treatment delays, and enhancing patient outcomes.

## OBJECTIVES

- Enhance the knowledge and skills of primary healthcare workers in Addis Ababa regarding oral cancer prevention and early detection.
- Training healthcare workers and evaluating their impact based on a pre- and post-questionnaire to improve patient outcomes and reduce the burden of oral cancer in the region.

## METHODOLOGY

- A pre- and post-training assessment was conducted to evaluate the impact of a structured oral cancer training program on 59 primary healthcare workers at Michew and Entoto Fans Health Centers in Addis Ababa.
- I delivered a one-day training at each site using a PowerPoint presentation originally developed by our university’s oral and maxillofacial surgeons. I revised it for clarity and relevance to primary healthcare providers, and it was approved by the original lecturers.
- Baseline knowledge and attitudes were measured through a pre-training questionnaire, followed by a targeted training session. Post-training assessments used the same questionnaire to evaluate changes.



- The proportion of participants demonstrating a high level of knowledge increased significantly from 39% at baseline to 93% post-intervention. Concurrently, the percentage of participants with a moderate level of knowledge decreased from 51% to 7%, indicating a clear shift towards higher knowledge acquisition. Notably, the percentage of participants with poor knowledge, initially at 10%, declined to 0% following the training. These findings suggest a substantial improvement in knowledge levels among primary healthcare workers after the structured oral cancer training program. Regarding attitudes, participants were categorized into those with good and poor attitudes. The percentage of participants demonstrating a good attitude toward oral cancer prevention and early detection rise from 71% before the training to 86% after the intervention, reflecting a 15% improvement. Conversely, those with a poor attitude decreased from 29% to 14%.

## CONCLUSION

This project demonstrated that a structured oral cancer training program can significantly enhance the knowledge and attitude of primary healthcare workers toward early detection, prevention, and timely referral of oral cancer cases. By empowering frontline healthcare providers who often serve as the first point of contact, this project contributes to building a stronger and more responsive referral system. These findings underscore the critical role of targeted educational initiatives in bridging knowledge gaps and reinforcing early oral cancer detection capacities within the primary healthcare setting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

## REFERENCES

