

Over-The-Counter Insulin: How Big of a Problem is This?

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INTRODUCTION

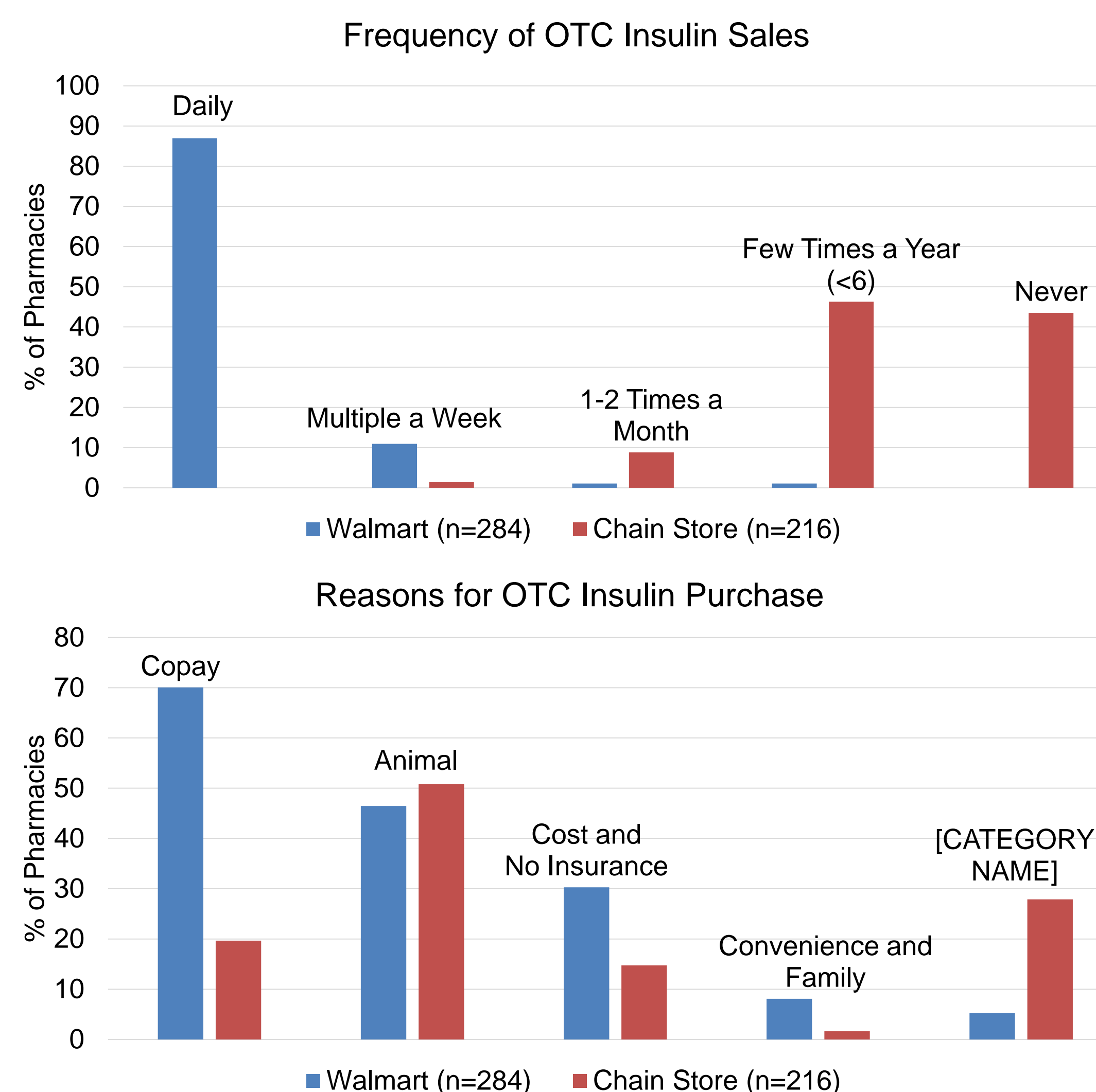
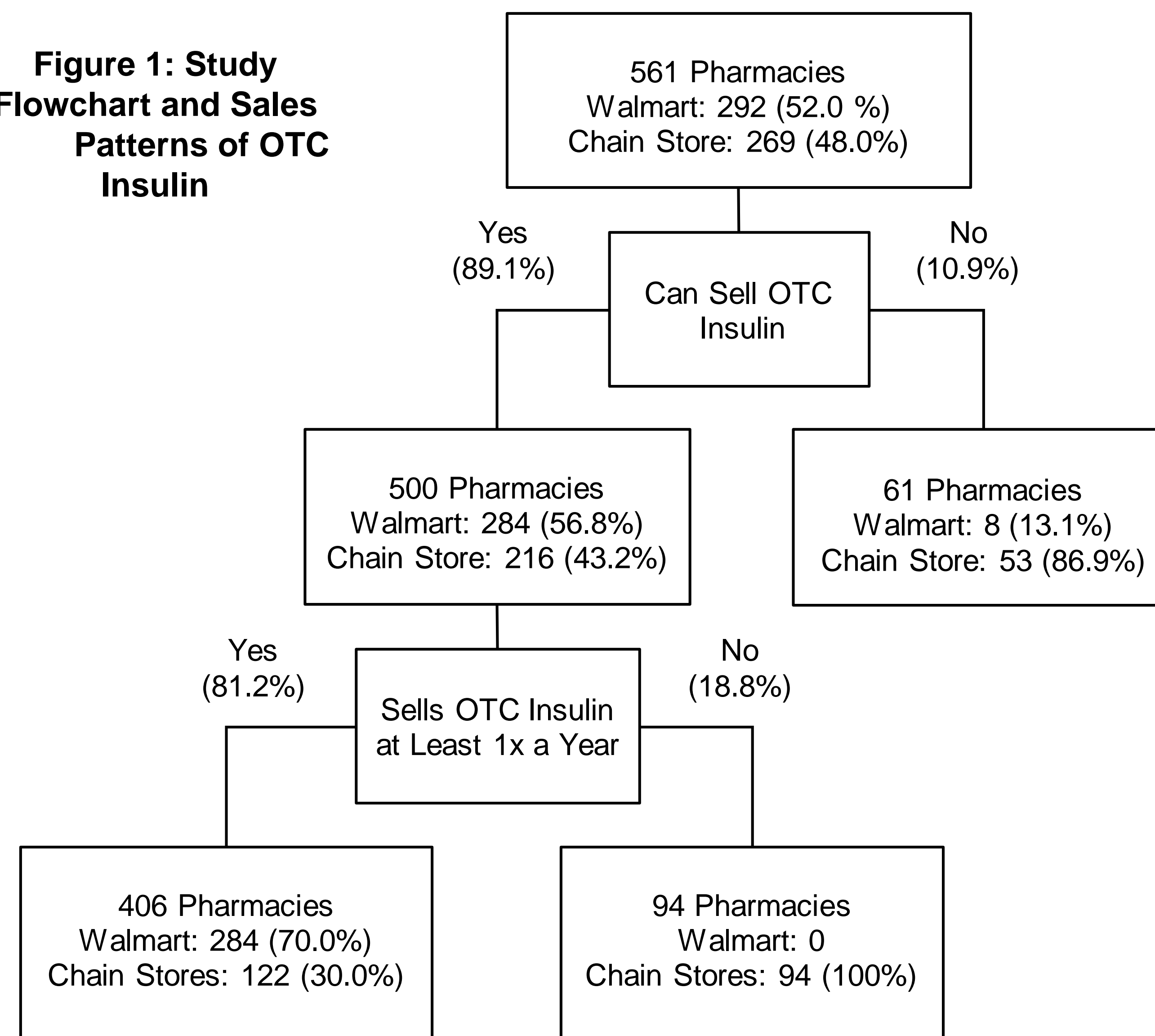
- Certain forms of insulin are available over-the-counter (OTC)
- Walmart sells their own brand, ReliOn for \$25 a vial
 - * Far less expensive than other chain store pharmacies
- Low price makes ReliOn a practical option for patients with diabetes who lack insurance coverage
- Currently, there is no available data on the amount of OTC insulin being sold.

Objective: Obtain data from Walmart and chain store pharmacies regarding the sale of OTC insulin and the reasons why patients purchase insulin OTC rather than through prescription.

MATERIALS & METHODS

- National survey of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians at Walmart and chain pharmacies (CVS, Walgreens, Rite-Aid)
 - * 49 states total (OTC insulin is not legal in Indiana)
- **Selection of pharmacies**
 - * By using Google Maps Walmart and chain pharmacies were located
 - 6 Walmart pharmacies per state (1: North, 1: South, 1: East, 1: West, 2: Central)
 - If less than 6 pharmacies are found within a state, all Walmart pharmacies are surveyed regardless of location
 - 6 chain pharmacies (1: North, 1: South, 1: East, 1: West, 2: Central)
 - Based on proximity to corresponding Walmart
 - Mileage distance kept within 25 miles of the Walmart
 - If two chains had similar distances, one was chosen based on diversity
- **Survey**
 - * Administered over the phone
 - * Self-created questionnaire consisting of 4 questions (3 closed-ended, 1 open-ended)
 - Sale frequency of OTC insulin
 - Ability to purchase syringes over the counter
 - Reasons why patients purchase OTC insulin purchases
 - * REDCap
 - Collect demographic information about the pharmacy
 - Record answers to questionnaire
- **Analysis**
 - * Descriptive statistics using Excel

**Figure 1: Study
Flowchart and Sales
Patterns of OTC
Insulin**



RESULTS

- Of 582 total pharmacies, 561, (96.4%), surveys were completed
- 99% of surveys were completed by pharmacists or pharmacy technicians
- 89% of pharmacies reported ability to sell OTC insulin
- 73% of pharmacies reported selling OTC insulin at least 1x a year
- 87% of Walmart pharmacies sold OTC insulin multiple times per day compared to 0% of chain pharmacies
- 46% of chain pharmacies sold OTC insulin a few times a year and 44% of chain stores did not sell OTC in the past year
- Walmart reported selling a median of 4 vials of OTC insulin a day
- Popular reasons for purchase of OTC insulin varied by pharmacy
 - * Walmart : Expensive copay
 - * Chain Store: Emergency, travel, and no prescription

LIMITATIONS

- Results are based on self reported estimates not sales data
- Pharmacist/Technician provided perceived reasons behind OTC purchases by patients
- Not all states have 6 Walmart pharmacies
- A chain pharmacy was not always in close proximity to a Walmart pharmacy
- Walmart stores in North Dakota do not have pharmacies
 - * Reduction in the number of available pharmacies to contact

CONCLUSIONS

- OTC insulin is sold more commonly at Walmart
- Majority of Walmart pharmacies sell OTC insulin daily
- Chain store pharmacies sold OTC insulin a few times a year or not at all
- Patients with diabetes who purchased OTC insulin at Walmart credited expensive copays
- Chain store patients had a tendency to purchase OTC insulin for emergency and travel reasons
- Both pharmacy types attribute animal use for OTC insulin sales

FOCUS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

- Further examine patient reported motivations for OTC insulin use
- Patient outcomes from using OTC insulin

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