

# Community perceptions and practices in malaria and development of an educational intervention conducted in an endemic area of Colombia

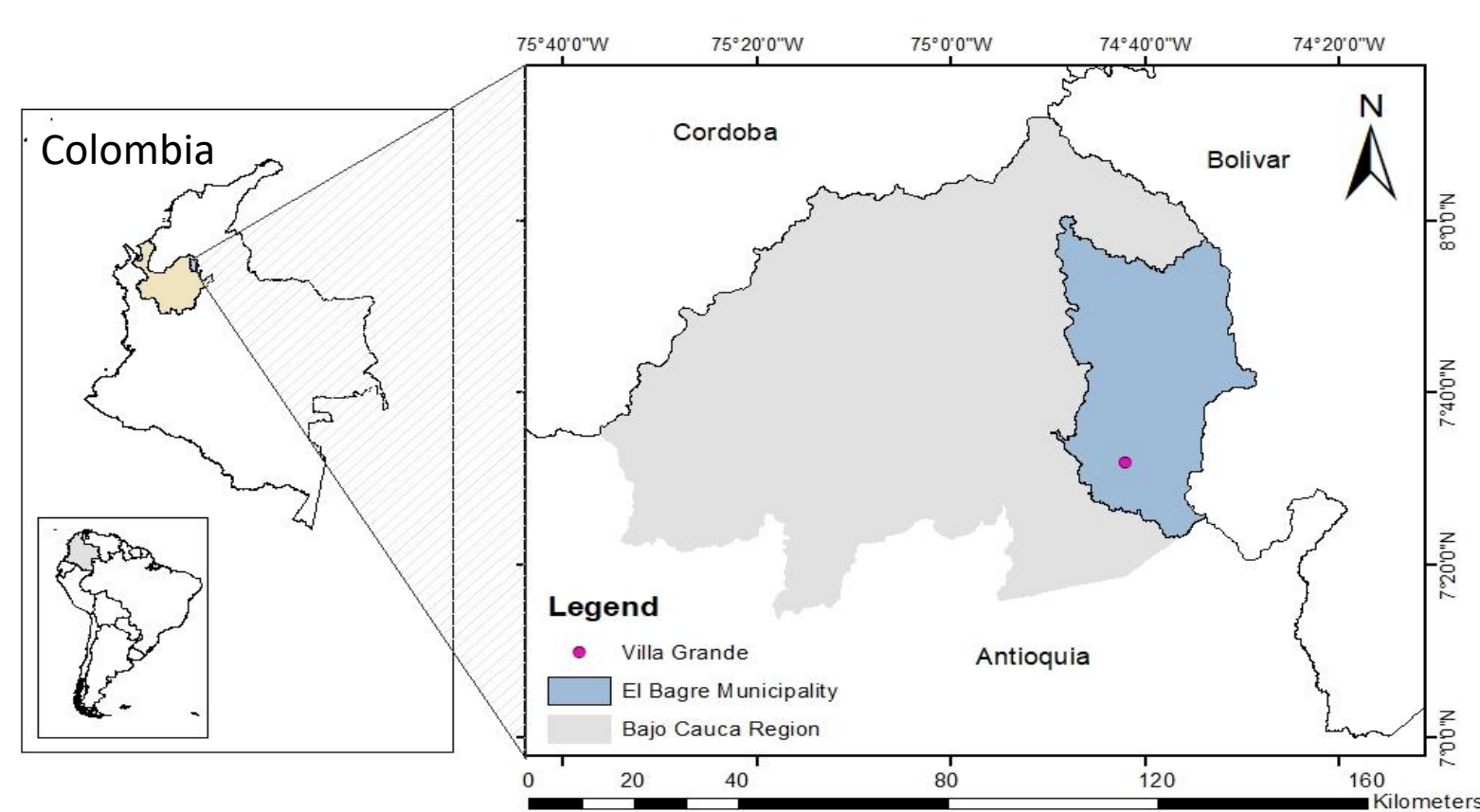
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## INTRODUCTION

Malaria prevention and control programs have primarily targeted the *Anopheles* mosquito vector, but this disease encompasses biological components and social aspects; thus, the design of prevention and control strategies should consider community beliefs and practices [1,2]. Therefore, the aim of this study was to determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) towards malaria in a community of a Colombian endemic area. The information identified through the KAPs survey contributed to the design of education strategies for malaria prevention and control; they have previously shown to enforce community adherence to achieve sustainable control [3,4].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Study design and setting.** A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted in Villa Grande locality and nearby area of El Bague municipality, in the malaria endemic region Bajo Cauca-BC, Colombia (Fig 1), from June to November of 2021.



**Figure 1.** Villa Grande locality in El Bague municipality, Bajo Cauca region where the knowledge, attitudes and practices survey and educational strategy were applied.

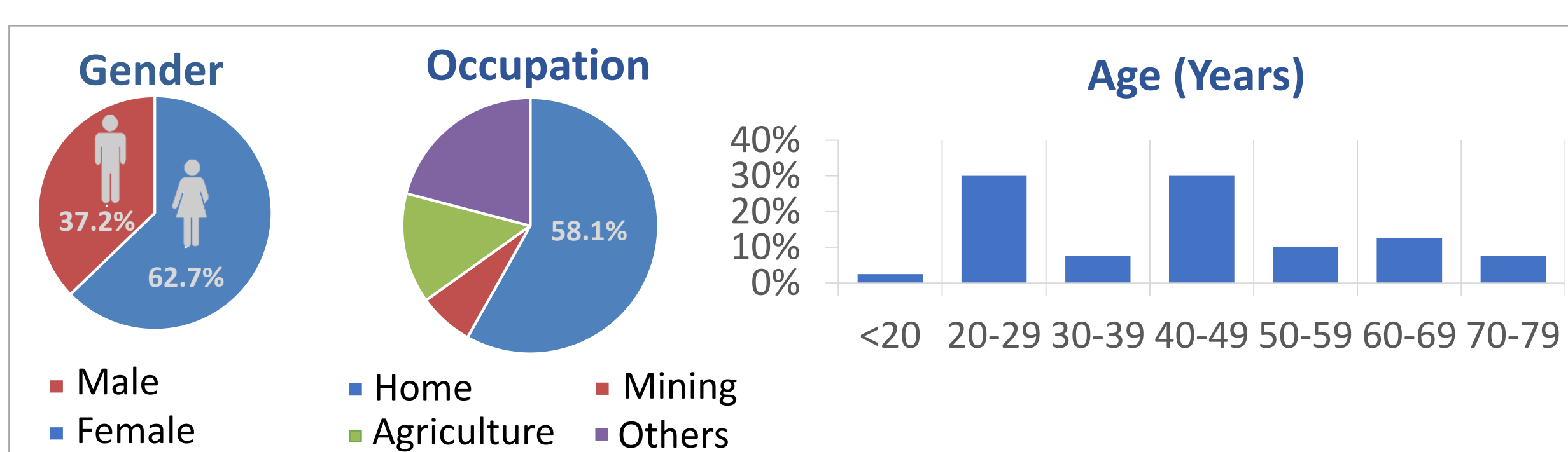
**Focus group discussion.** A discussion in a focus group of 11 people was conducted to explore community knowledge related to malaria and the practices towards its prevention.

**Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey.** The KAP survey was prepared according to a previous survey by WHO, adjusted to the local context [5]. It contained 42 questions distributed in Socio-demographic features, knowledge, attitudes and malaria prevention practices towards malaria.

**Educational strategy.** The educational strategy was designed and applied based on an information, education and communication approach. The aim of the strategy was to clarify important aspects related to malaria transmission, and also, to motivate adequate prevention practices in the community.

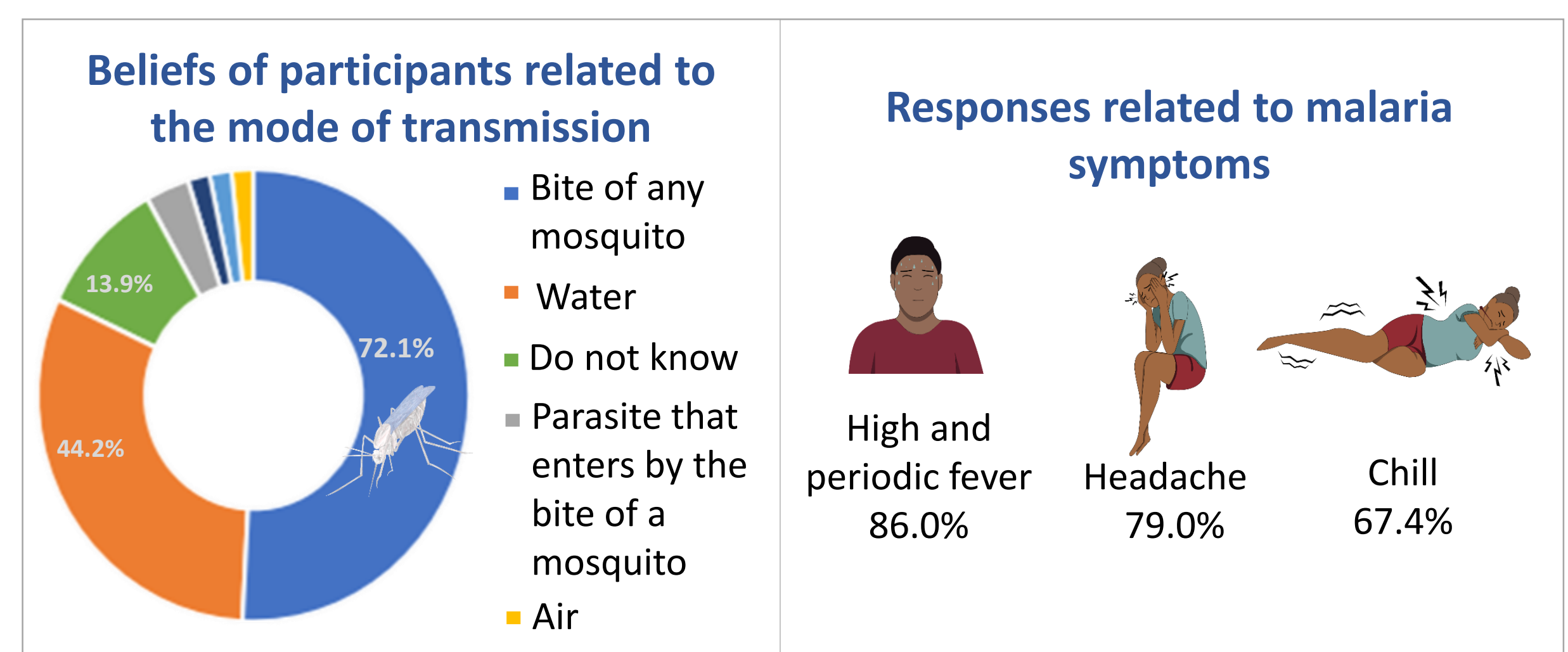
## RESULTS

**Focus group discussion and KAP survey.** The Focus group qualitative analysis allowed grouping the responses into categories and helped to establish a base line of community knowledge. In addition, answers from a total of 43 people taking the KAP survey were obtained.

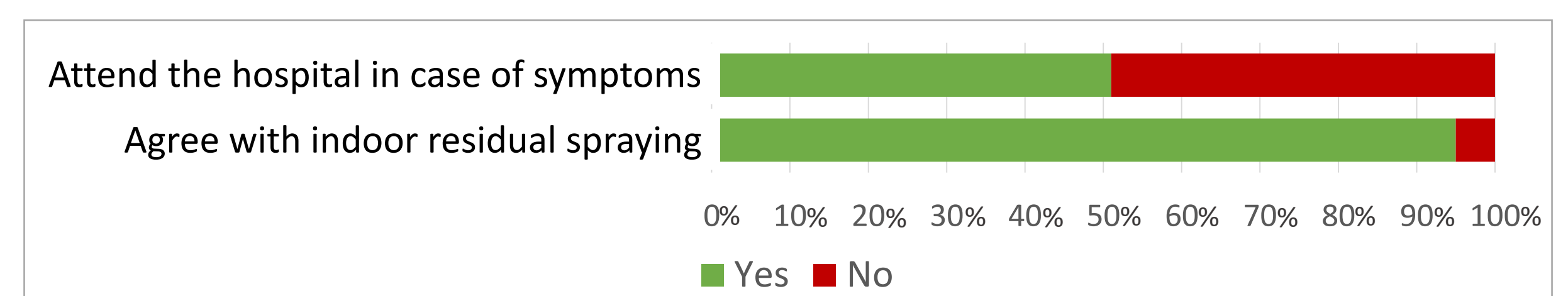


**Figure 2.** Socio-demographic features of community including sex, main occupation and age.

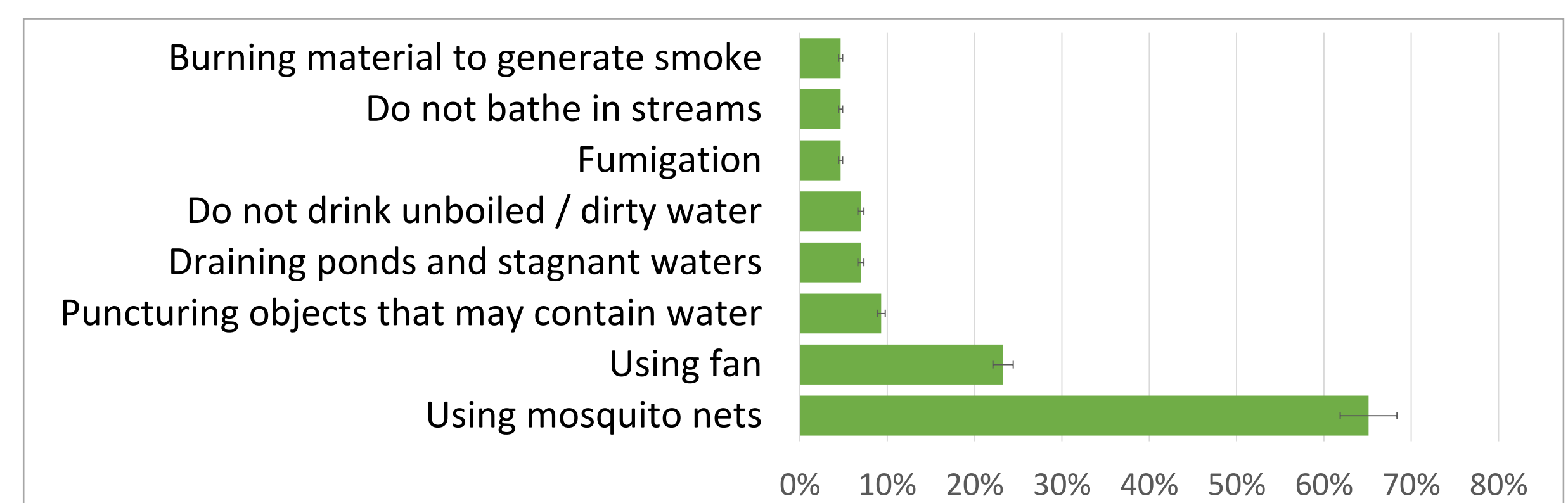
## RESULTS



**Figure 3.** Knowledge about malaria in the community.



**Figure 4.** Attitudes towards malaria in the community.



**Figure 5.** More common prevention practices in the community.

## Educational strategy

This was focused on strengthening community knowledge related to the transmission mode, attitude towards seeking healthcare assistance and prevention practices. This was done by means of educational material and games in 4 workshops carried out with the community.



## CONCLUSION

- The results of the malaria KAP survey in an endemic community in Colombia show that there was a misconception about the mode of transmission and low community attitudes toward the search for timely diagnosis and treatment. These points were reinforced during the development of the educational strategy.
- KAP surveys need to be considered in the design of local control and prevention strategies to involve community participation.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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