

Availability and Prices of Generic Medicines in the Private Sector. Panama. 2012

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INTRODUCTION

Generic medicines are considered a cheaper alternative but of lower quality compared to the original medicines. The lower price of generic medicines may be related to the limited investment in clinical trials and marketing, or information to follow them up in the market.

AIM

Develop an information system to identify the price and availability of medicines in private pharmacies in Panama.

METHODS

We used the model proposed by the World Health Organization and Health Action International. Eighty four (84) private pharmacies were randomly selected in the country from the Pharmacy and Drugs National Direction database available at the Ministry of Health. The survey was conducted by staff from the Consumer Protection and Competition Authority, Ministry of Health, and the Gorgas Institute. It contained a list of 60 medicines: 14 global for comparison with international prices; 16, for regional comparison; and 30, for their local importance within the country. We verified their inclusion in the local interchangeability list. Geographic and web map based information technologies were used to visualize the data.

RESULTS

The average availability of medicines in private pharmacies in Panama was 67% for generics and 57% for the originals. Generic medicines recorded an average price 48% less than that of original medicines. In rural and indigenous areas the availability was lower, but the prices were higher. From the list of 60 medicines, 23 required interchangeability and only 8 were available in all 9 provinces. However, in the indigenous territories, private pharmacies are inexistent.

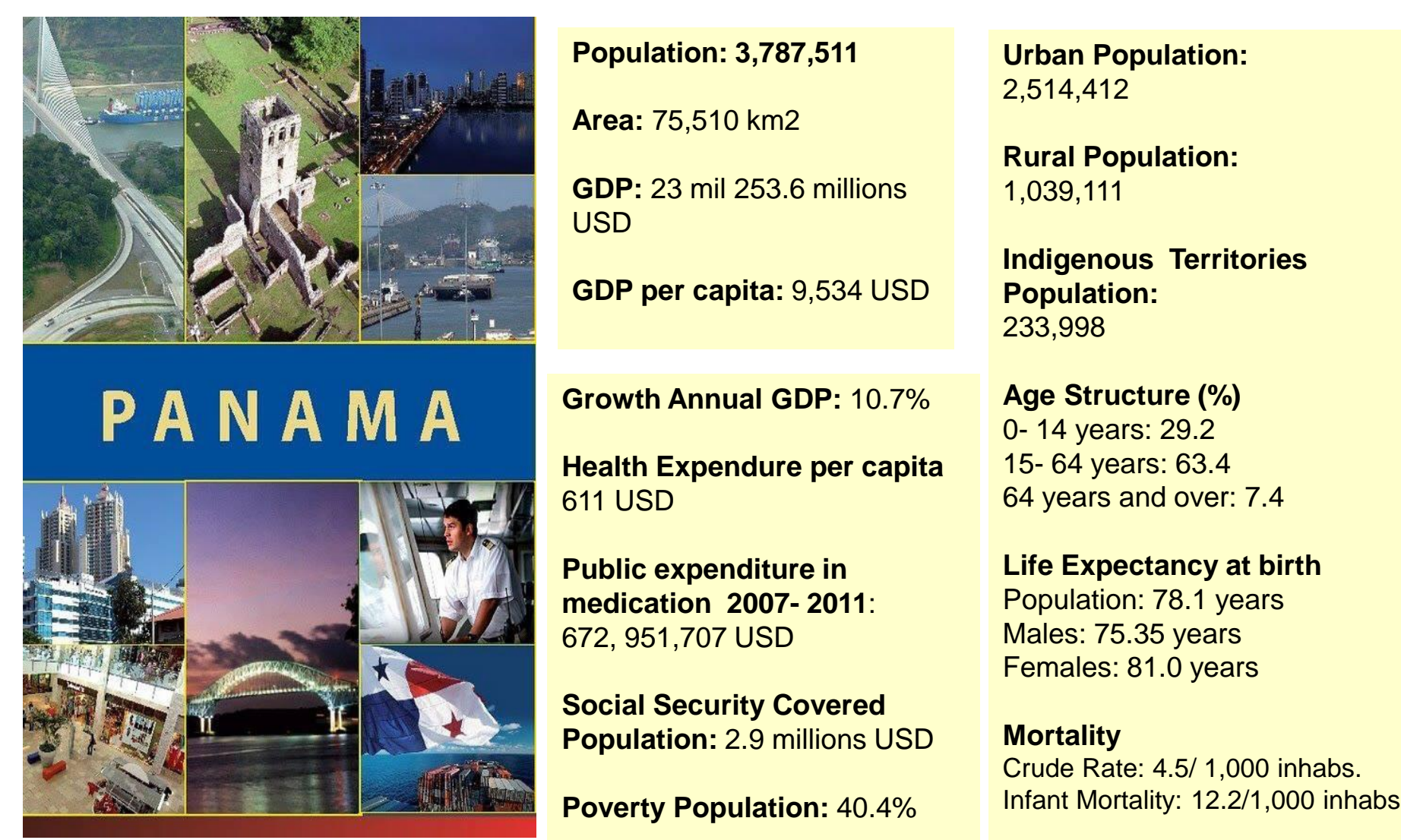
CONCLUSIONS

The challenge facing the medicine market is the limited information on generic medicines. The information system that we developed has allowed (1) the implementation of a systematic price monitoring by Consumer Protection and Competition Authority regularly and (2) the creation of the "Basic Basket of Medicines" (CABAMED), whose goal is to provide price information of a generic medicine group in the market available for pharmacological treatment. Likewise, CABAMED offers interchangeable product information and therapeutic equivalence of the generic medicines efficacy, becoming a mechanism for improving market price, availability and affordability.

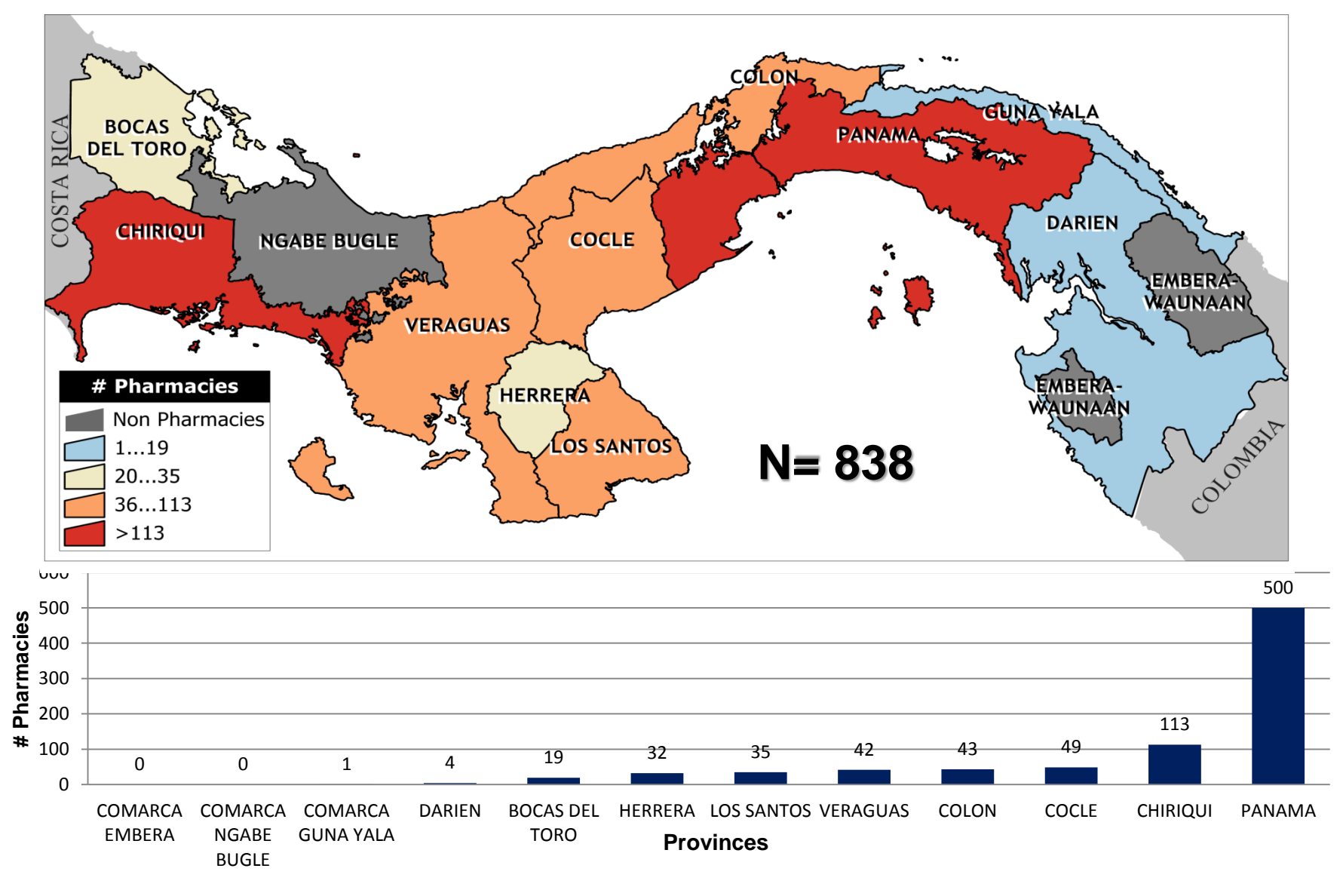
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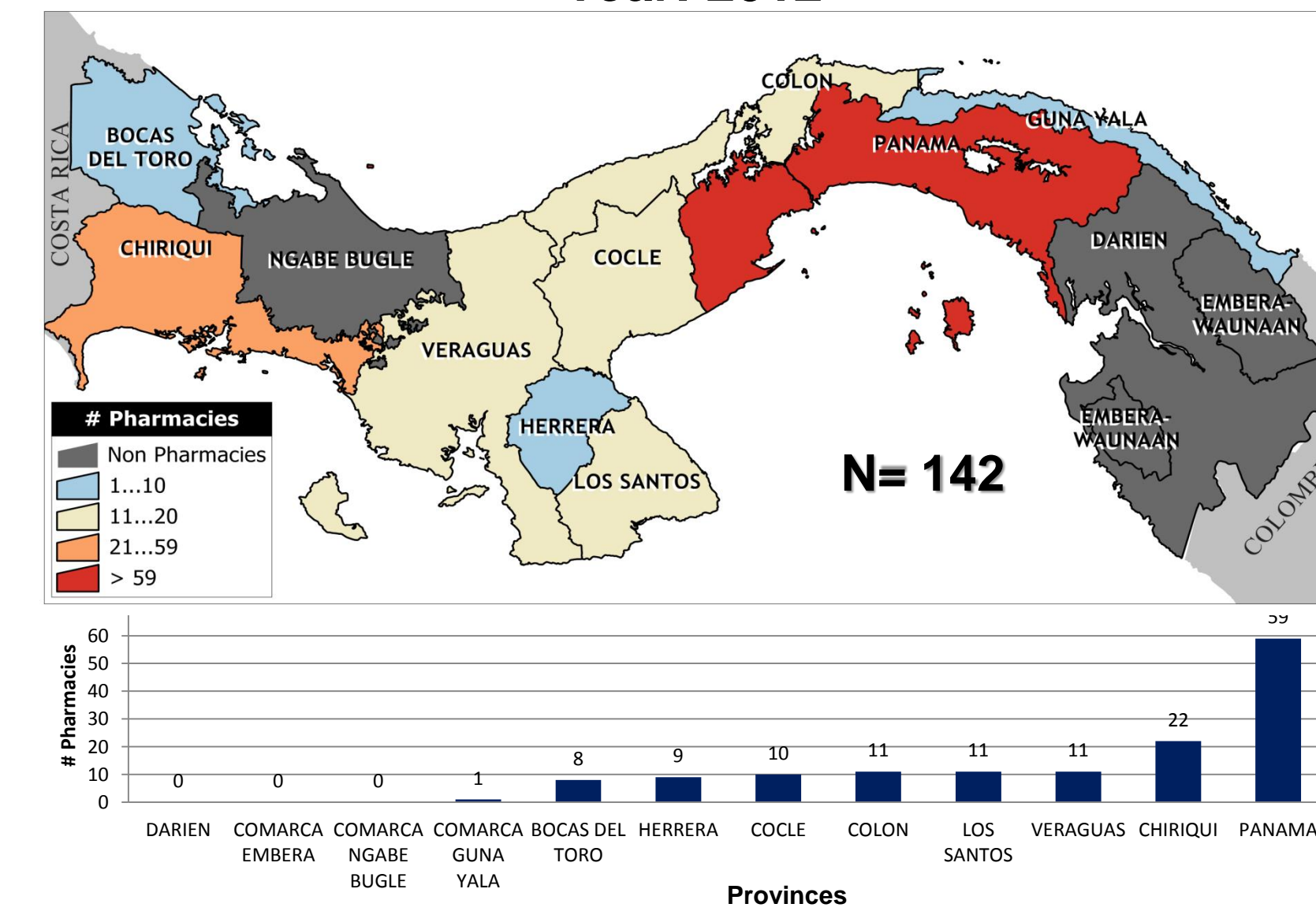


Public and Private Pharmacies Distributed by Province. Panama. Year: 2012



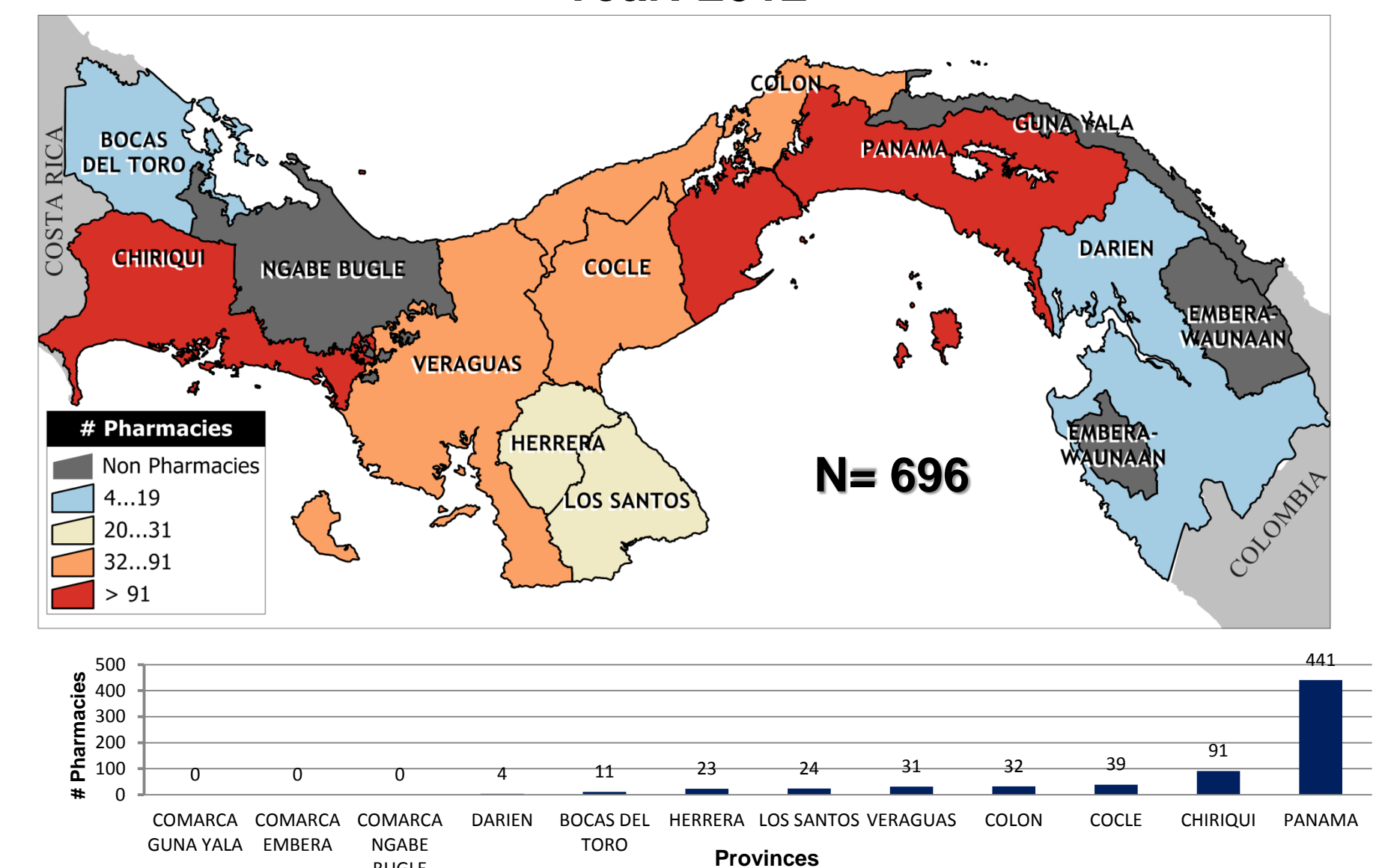
Source: Database of the National Direction of Pharmacy and Drugs

Public Pharmacies Distributed by Province. Panama. Year: 2012



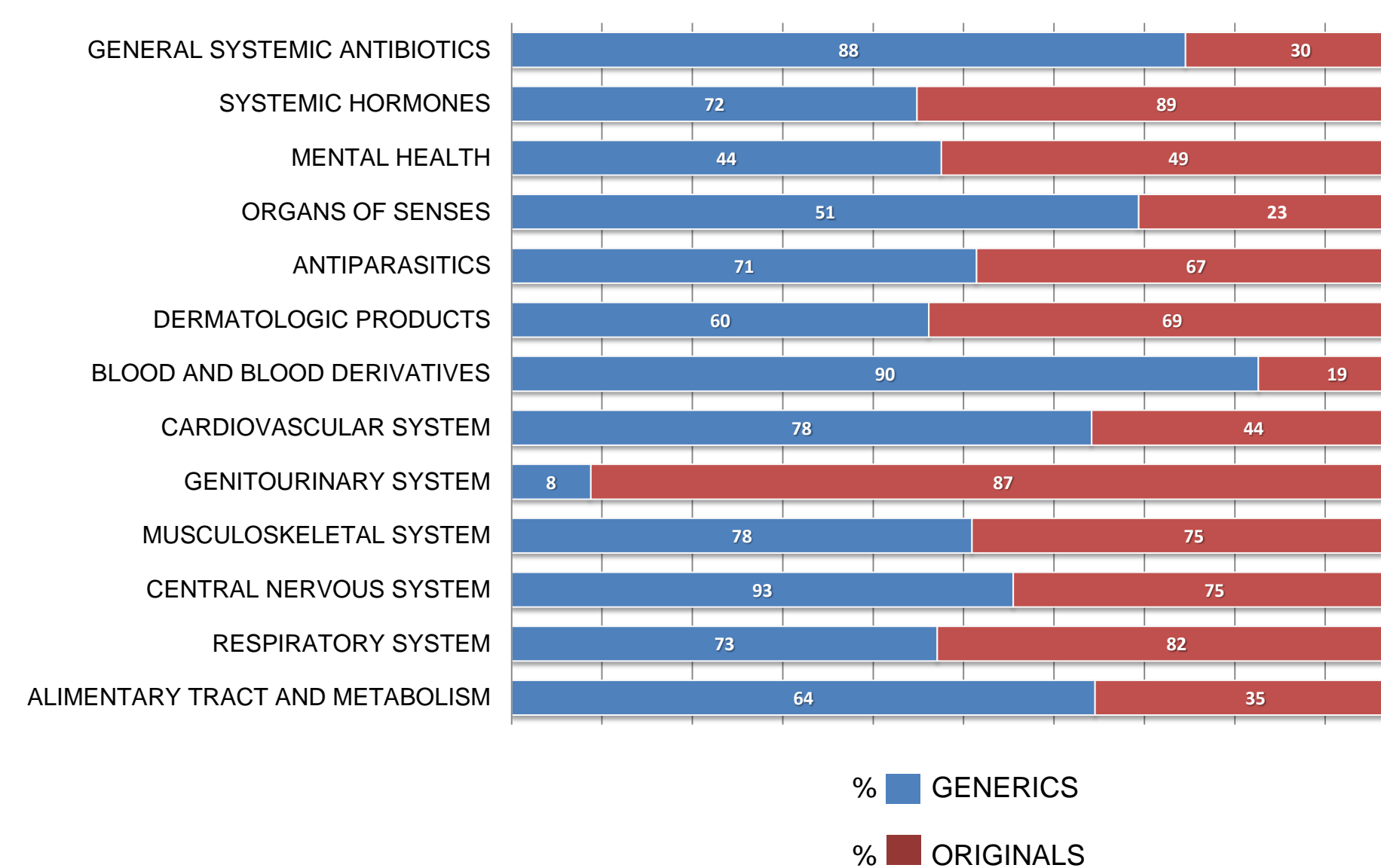
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Private Pharmacies Distributed by Province. Panama. Year: 2012

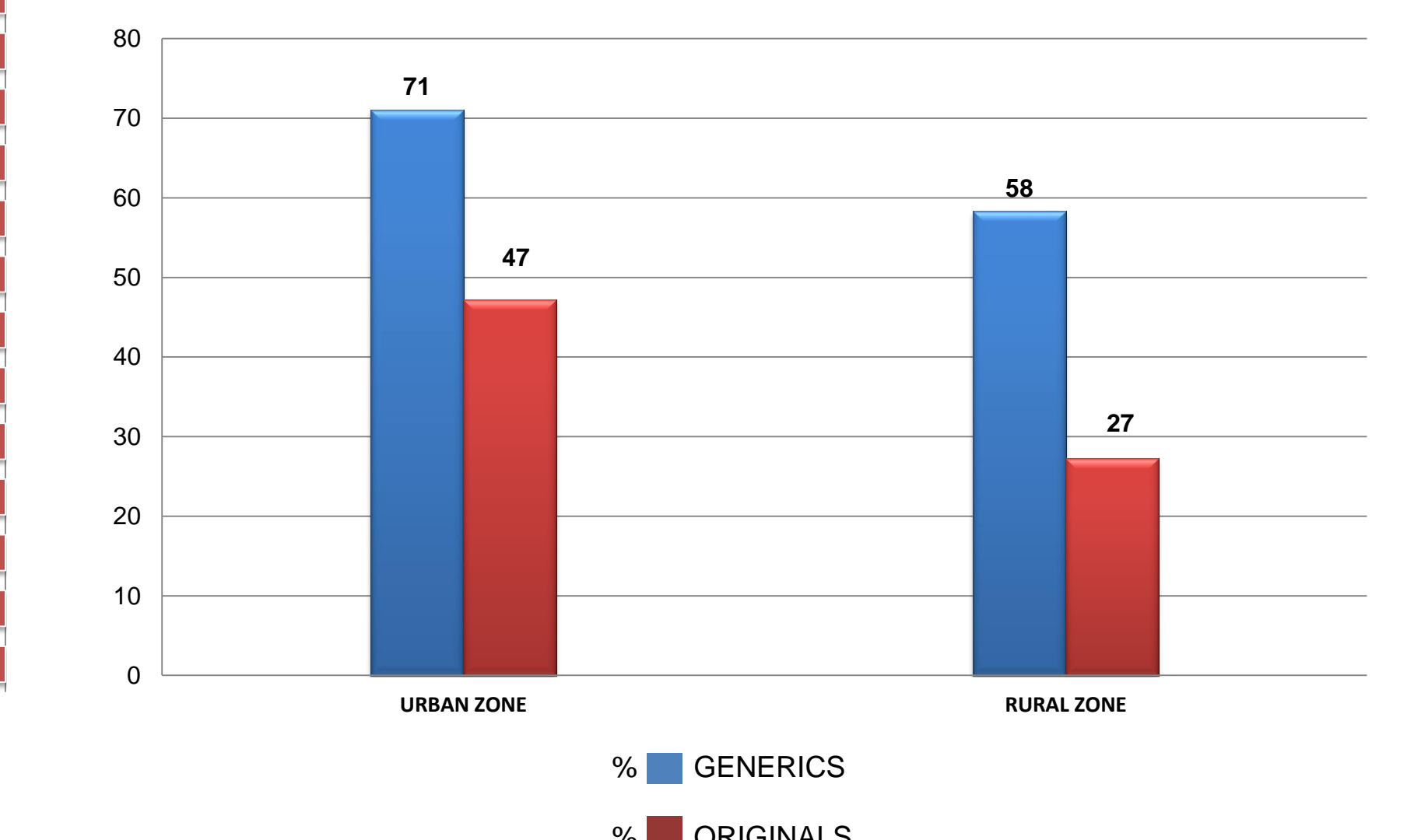


Source: Database of the National Direction of Pharmacy and Drugs

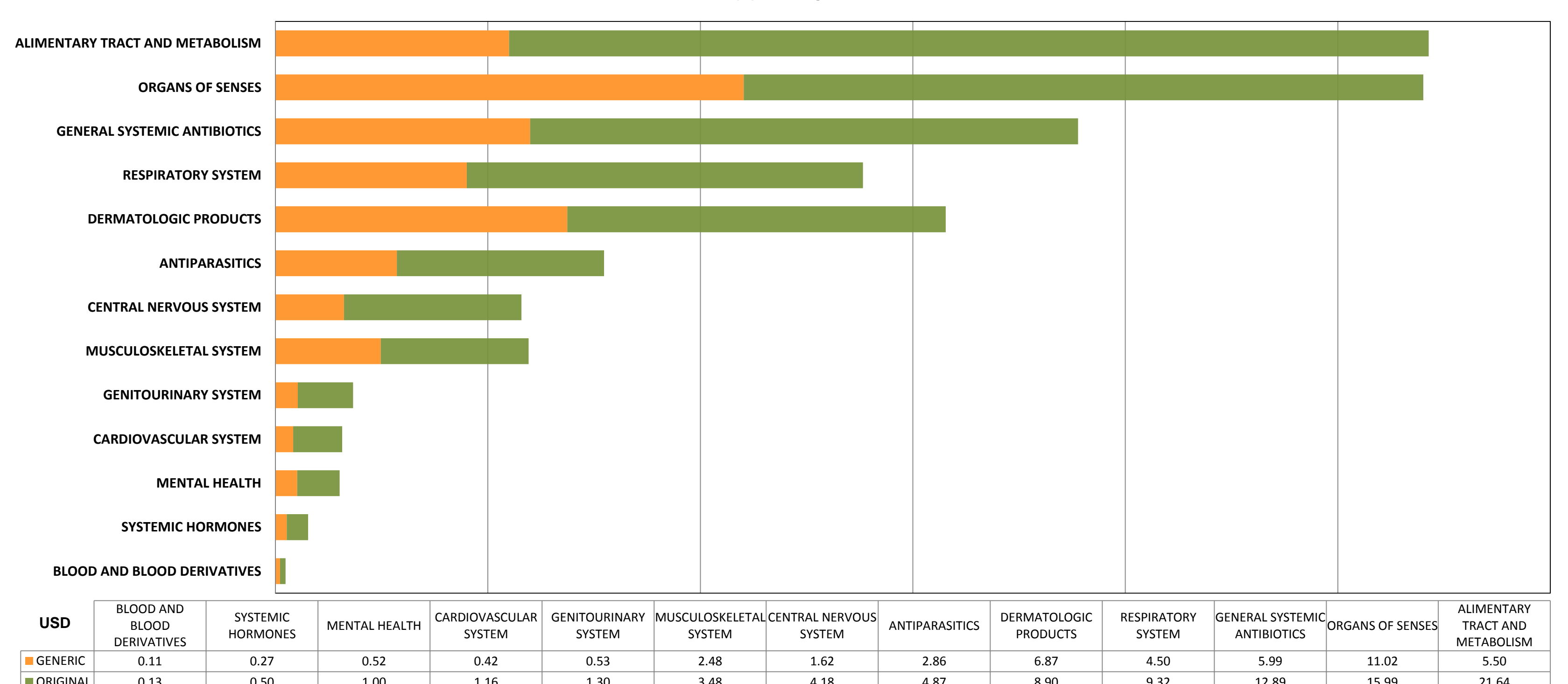
Average Availability of Original and Generic Medicines by Pharmacological Groups. Panama. Year: 2012



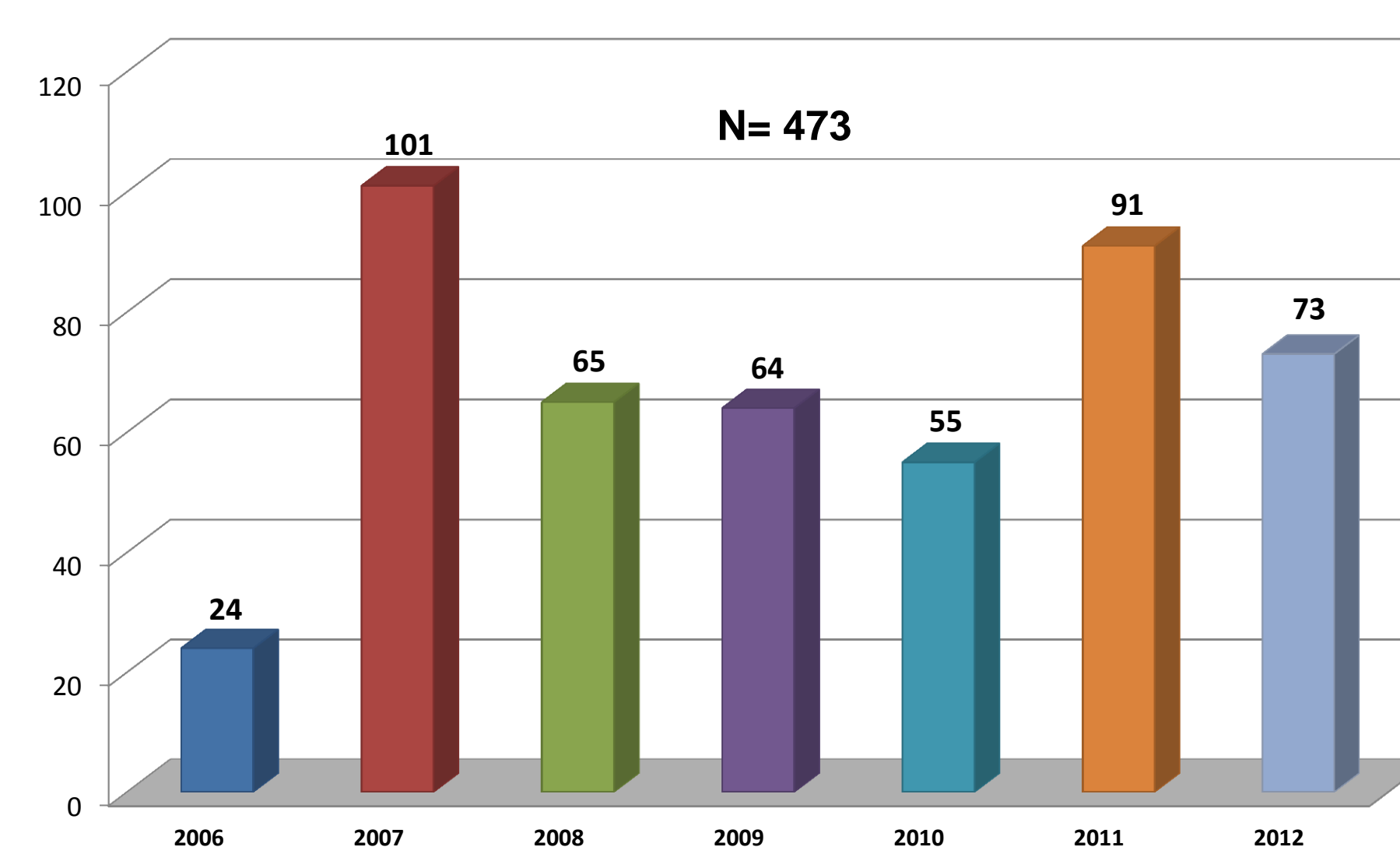
Average Availability of Original and Generic Medicines by Urban and Rural Zone, as Pharmacological Groups. Panama. Year: 2012



Average Price of Original and Generic Medicines by Pharmacological Groups. Panama. Year: 2012



Interchangeability Certificates Issued by Generic Medicines. Years: 2006-2012



Source: Database of the National Direction of Pharmacy and Drugs

Basic Basket of Medicines



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