

Can Pharmacology Be Made Easy? Improving Student Performance and Satisfaction

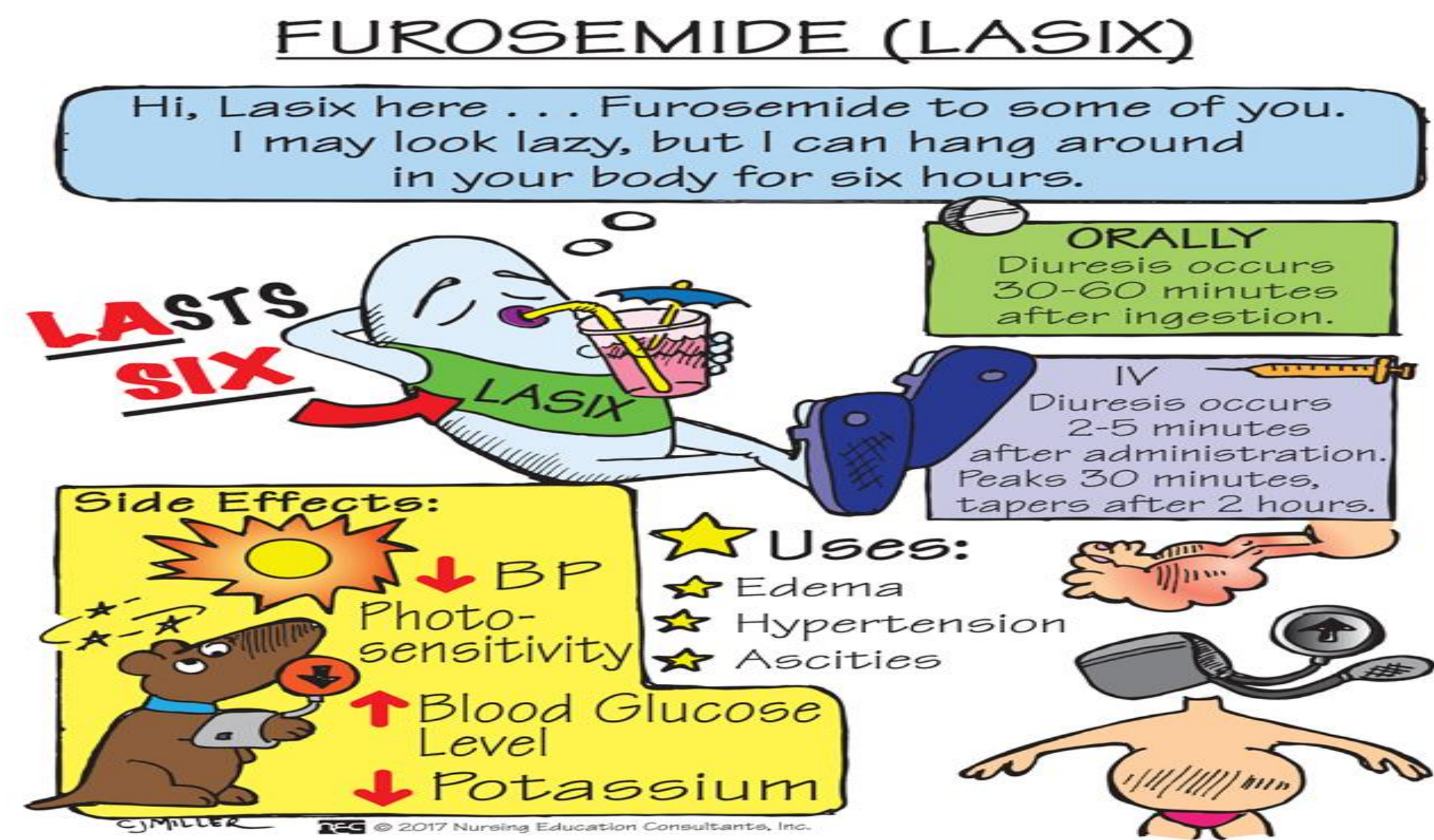


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Introduction

- Pharmacology is one of the most challenging courses and often contributes to a high attrition rate in nursing programs. National attrition rates can be as much as 50% in some baccalaureate nursing programs (Merkley, 2016).
- Furthermore, students' difficulty demonstrating the application of pharmacological knowledge on exams motivated faculty to rethink how pharmacology was being taught and incorporated ATI Pharmacology Made Easy 3.0.

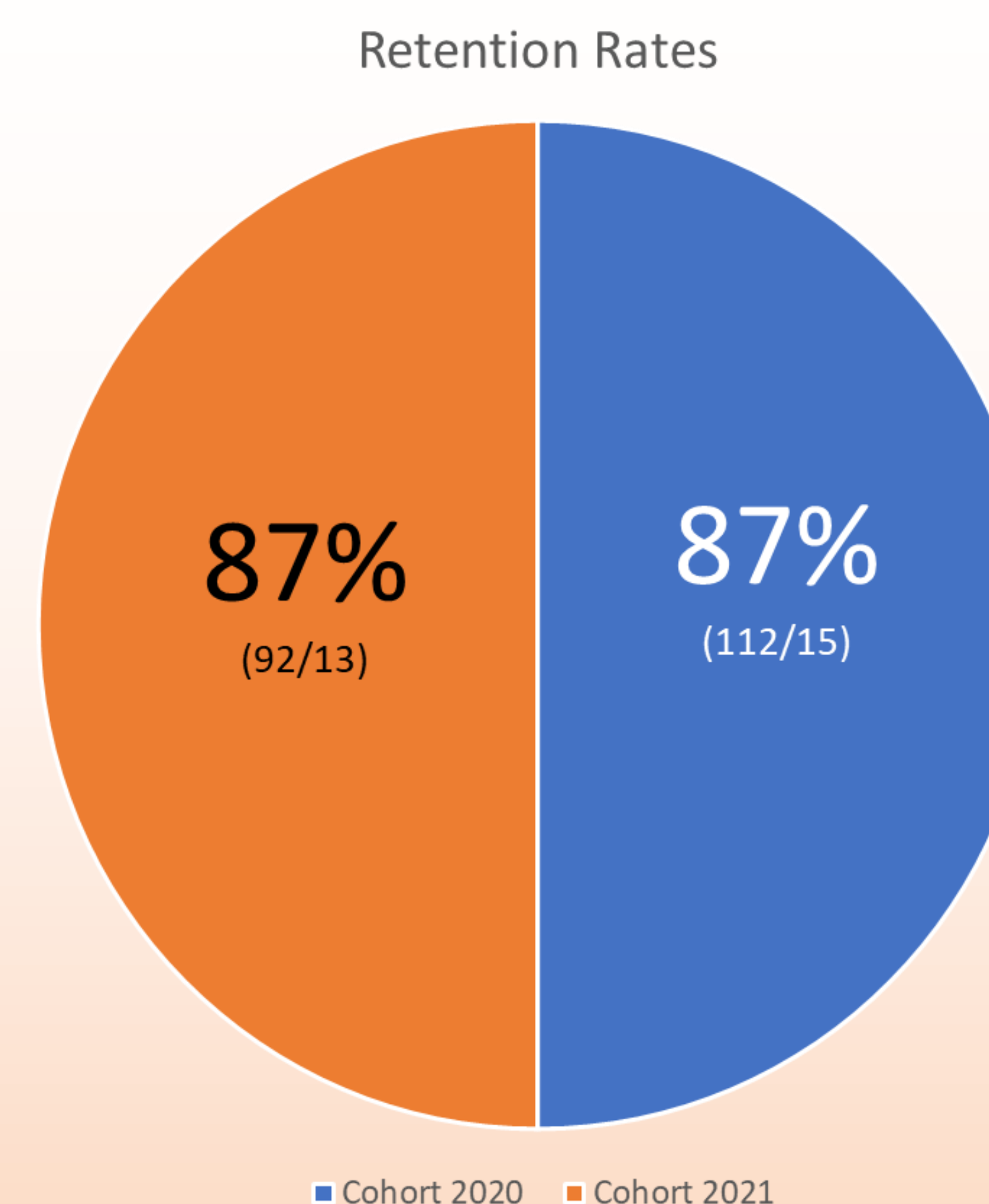
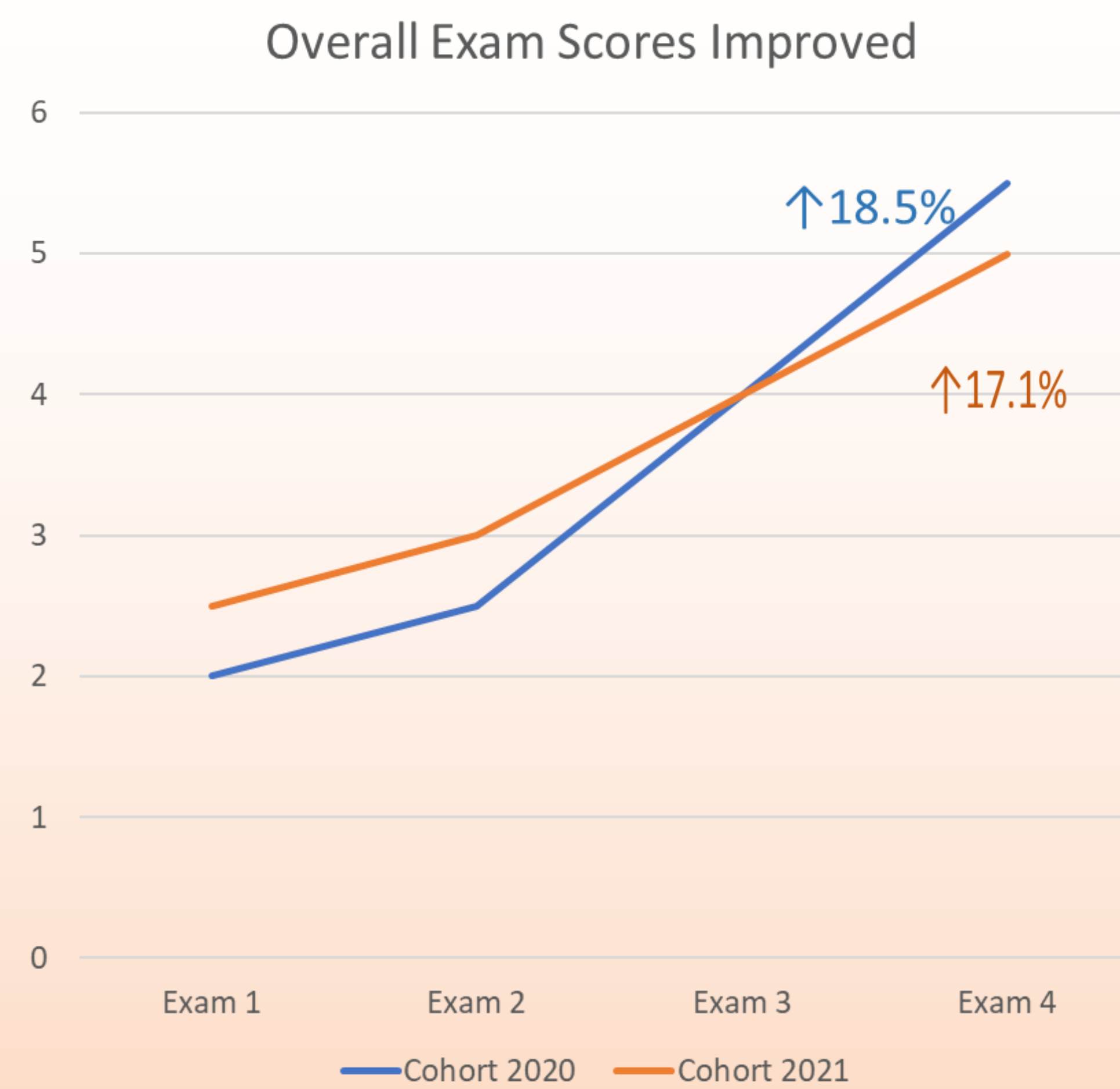
Purpose

- The purpose of this project was to **improve exam scores, student satisfaction, and retention rates in a first semester undergraduate pharmacology course** by implementing a four-strategy approach of teaching pharmacology
 - (1) ATI Pharmacology Made Easy 3.0,
 - (2) ATI Content Mastery Review Module: RN Pharmacology for Nursing (eBook),
 - (3) Prototype drugs only focus, and
 - (4) Deciphering "Need to Know" from "Nice to Know" content consistently throughout the course.

Methodology

- Two cohorts of students were asked to complete a survey in the spring semester of 2022 (n=85). The survey was designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data related to which teaching strategies students valued the most in assisting them in successfully completing the pharmacology course.
- Secondly, the faculty incorporated the innovative teaching strategies which were assigned and due prior to class so class time focused on student-centered learning activities.
- Finally, the faculty structured their powerpoints in the same format to include NCLEX style questions to practice the application process.

Results



Evaluation

- The overall exam scores improved by 17.8%
- Maintained an 87% retention rate over the past two years,
- The teaching strategies that participants valued the most were the deciphering "Need to Know" from "Nice to Know" (n=84, 98.82%) and prototype drugs only focus (n=83, 97.65%). The ATI Pharmacology Made Easy 3.0 was the least valued strategy by the participants (n=80, 94.12%).
- Five themes emerged from the qualitative analysis of the survey:
 - Brief pathophysiology review
 - Prototype drugs only
 - ATI Pharmacology for Nursing (eBook)
 - ATI Pharmacology Made Easy 3.0
 - National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX®) style questions

Conclusions

- This simplified approach utilizing ATI products improved exam scores and student satisfaction while maintaining retention rates at 87% over the past two years, which is encouraging given that the National League for Nursing set the desirable retention rate at 80% (Merkley, 2016).
- Therefore, the faculty recommended incorporating the ATI Test-Taking Strategies Seminar to retain more nursing students past their first semester and beyond.
- It is essential to identify factors contributing to retention rates to help to meet the nursing shortage in the future.

References Cited

Merkley, Brett. (2016). Student nurse attrition: A half century of research. Journal of Nursing Education and Practice. 6. 10.5430/jnep.v6n3p71.

| Teaching Strategies Most Valued By Successful Students (n=85) | | 1 = Most Valued and 4 = Least Valued | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|----|
| | | Percentage | n |
| 1 | Deciphering "Need to Know" from "Nice to Know" content consistently throughout the course | 98.82% | 84 |
| 2 | Focus on Prototype Drug Only | 97.65% | 83 |
| 3 | ATI Content Mastery Review Module: RN Pharmacology for Nursing (eBook) | 95.29% | 81 |
| 4 | ATI Pharmacology Made Easy 3.0 | 94.12% | 80 |

Note: Overall Comprehensive Course Evaluation Rating
2021 Cohort = 4.5 (on a 5-point scale)
2020 Cohort = 4.2 (on a 5-point scale)

Acknowledgments

All the undergraduate nursing students at Georgia Baptist College of Nursing of Mercer University

= Prototype Drugs

