

AUTHOR INSIGHTS

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INITIAL FINDINGS

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Overview

The annual Author Insights Survey, run by Nature Publishing Group (NPG) and our sister company Palgrave Macmillan forms part of a wider research programme which aims to understand general author attitudes and behaviours around publishing, to track any changes over time. The survey enables us to provide the best service for our authors, and keeps us close to the views of our community.

The survey is conducted for internal purposes each year to provide longitudinal data and track changes in attitudes and behaviours.

This year's survey included questions on topics as diverse as factors that contribute to a journal's reputation, the value of services offered by publishers and authors' ideal audiences for their research.

Demographic questions were also included in the survey to enable analysis by fields such as region and discipline.

Results

NPG and Palgrave Macmillan are making the survey data publicly available on figshare (http://figshare.com/articles/Author_Insights_2015_survey/1425362), and welcomes others to use the data for further analysis and to share their findings in the spirit of an open dialogue on how we might improve the publishing process. Similarly, NPG welcomes any suggestions for improvements from the wider community to ensure the survey is a neutral representation of the author's perspective in future years. Some of the data has been redacted to ensure respondent privacy.

This report is intended to be a brief guide to some of the issues contained within the data. It is important to note that the survey is not designed to be a comprehensive piece of research into every issue, nor to be an academically rigorous study.

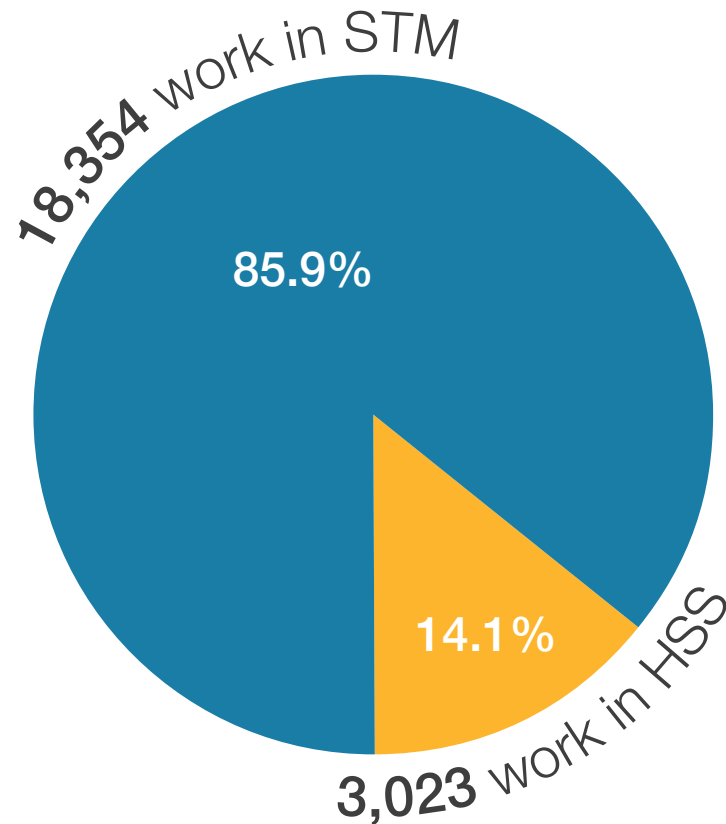
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Survey respondent profile

Survey respondents were authors of peer-reviewed articles from science, medicine, business studies, social sciences and humanities.

21,377 authors

- Scientific, technical and medical
- Humanities and social sciences



STM authors have published a median of **6 papers** in **3 years**



HSS authors have published a median of **4 papers** in **3 years**

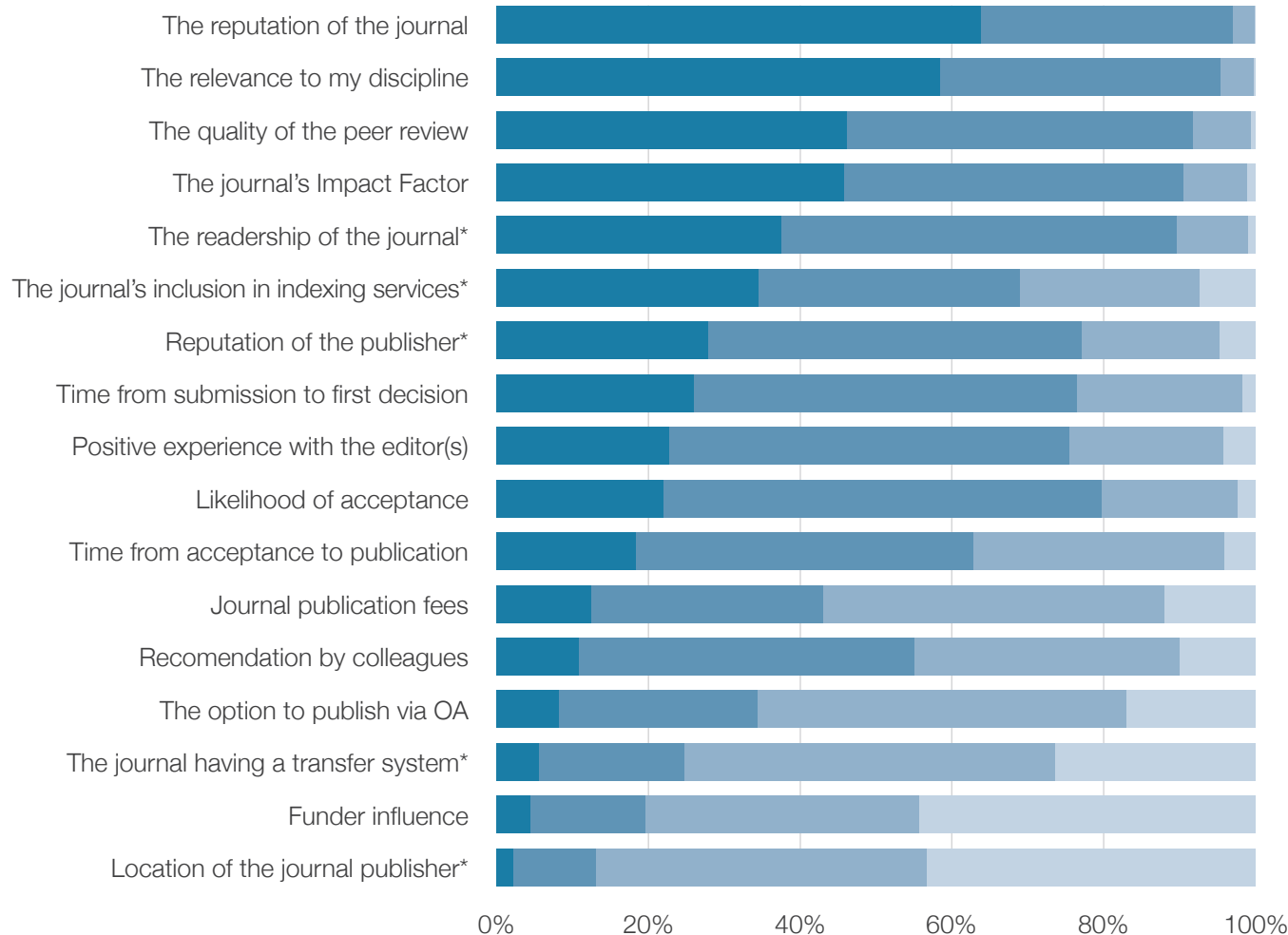
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Factors driving choice of where to submit: STM

“Please consider your most recently published paper: how important were the following factors when choosing where to submit that paper?”

Base: 18,354 ■ Very Important ■ Quite Important ■ Not very important ■ Not at all important

Largely unchanged from 2014



Most important factors

% of respondents who rated 'Important' or 'Very important'

	2015	2014
The reputation of the journal	97%	96%
The relevance to my discipline	95%	96%
The quality of the peer review	92%	93%
The journal's Impact Factor	90%	90%



Least important factors

% of respondents who rated 'Important' or 'Very important'

	2015	2014
Location of the journal publisher*	13%	N/A
Funder influence	20%	15%
The journal having a transfer system*	25%	N/A
The option to publish OA	35%	37%

*not included in 2014 survey

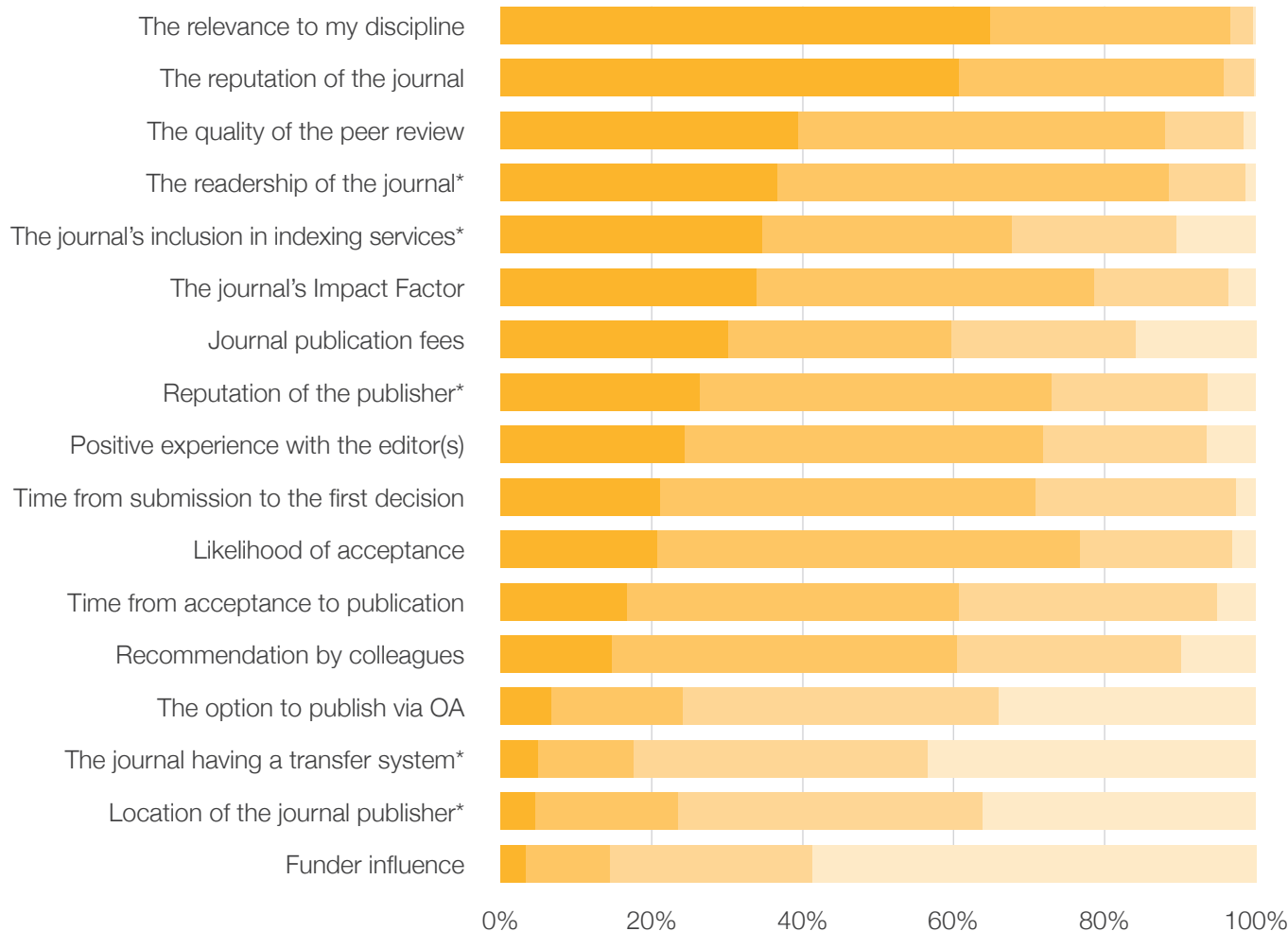
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Factors driving choice of where to submit: HSS

“Please consider your most recently published paper: how important were the following factors when choosing where to submit that paper?”

Base: 3,023

■ Very Important
 ■ Quite Important
 ■ Not very important
 ■ Not at all important



Most important factors

% of respondents who rated 'Important' or 'Very important'

	2015	2014
The relevance to my discipline	97%	97%
The reputation of the journal	96%	97%
The quality of the peer review	88%	89%
The readership of the journal*	89%	N/A



Least important factors

% of respondents who rated 'Important' or 'Very important'

	2015	2014
Funder influence	15%	14%
The journal having a transfer system*	18%	N/A
Location of the journal publisher*	24%	N/A
The option to publish OA	24%	25%

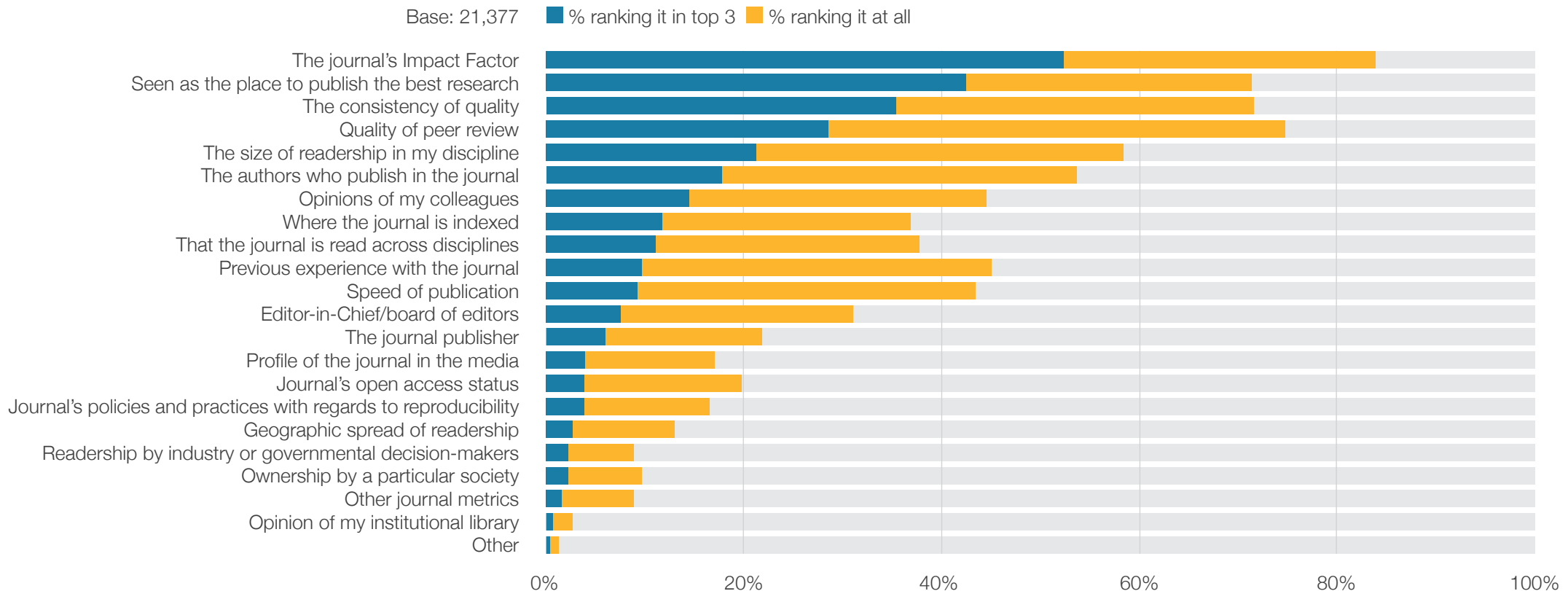
*not included in 2014 survey

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Factors contributing to journal reputation

“What is it about this journal that gives it a high reputation? Please select the 8 most significant factors from the list below, in terms of how you judge the reputation of this journal.”

Factors that contribute most to the perception of a journal’s reputation are **Impact Factor** and **‘seen as the place to publish the best research by my community’**.

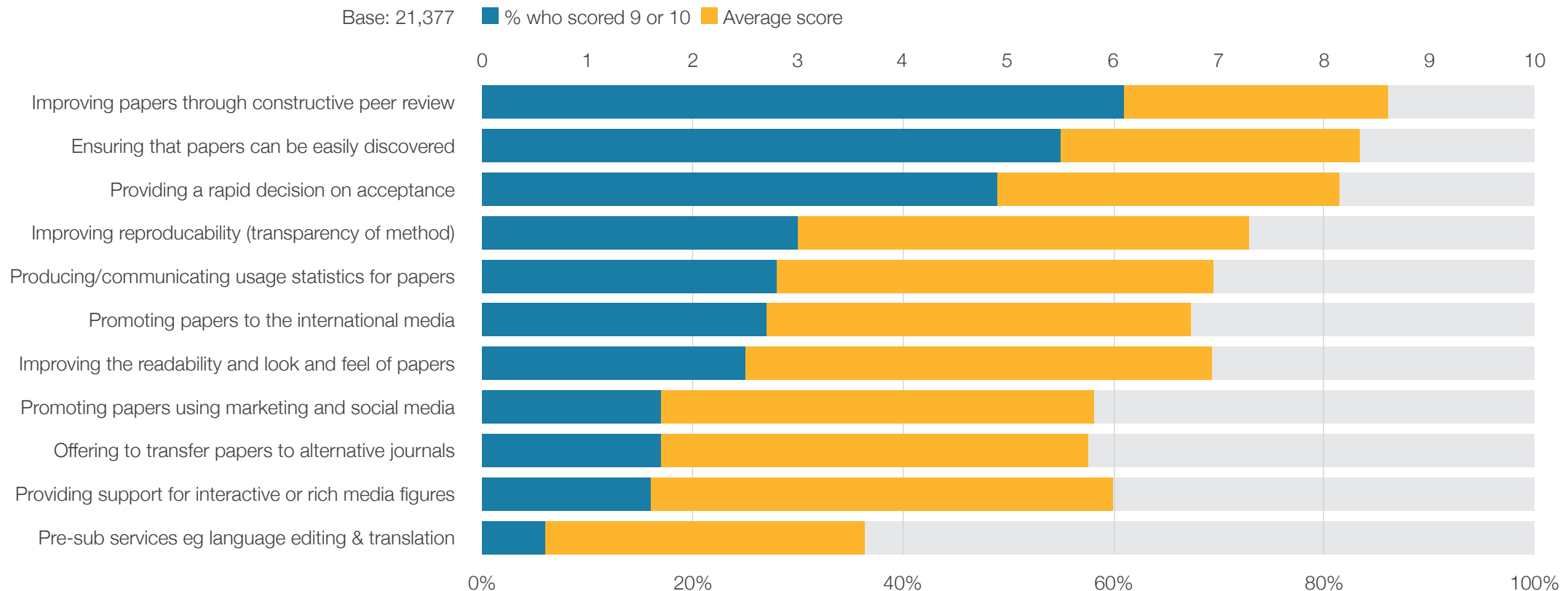


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Value of publisher activities

“The next part of this questionnaire is about the various services that publishers offer to authors of research publications. How valuable are each of these services to you, as an author?”

There is a clear distinction between **highly valued core services** (peer review, discoverability) and **value-add services** (language editing, social media promotion).

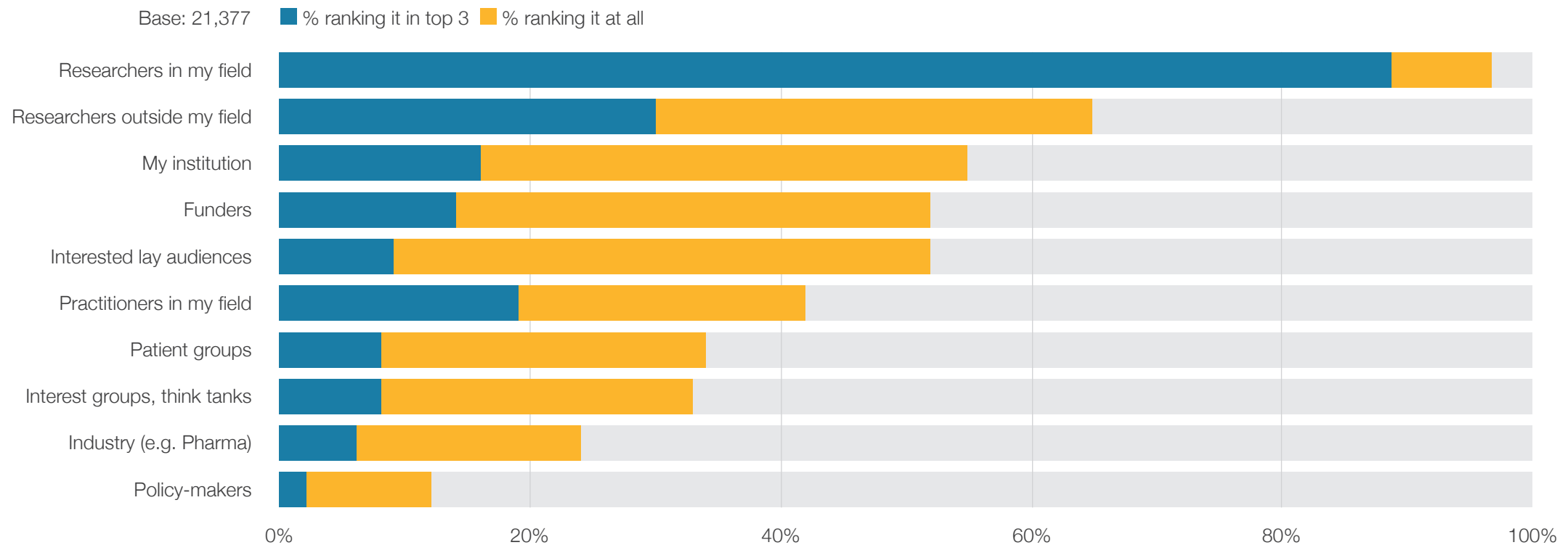


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Author's ideal audience

"Thinking about your most recent paper, who would you most want to be made aware of your published research? Please rank the top 5 groups of people in order of their importance to you."

Apart from **their peers**, the majority of authors are also interested in reaching **researchers outside their own field**. Fewer authors are interested in other groups such as policy-makers and industry.

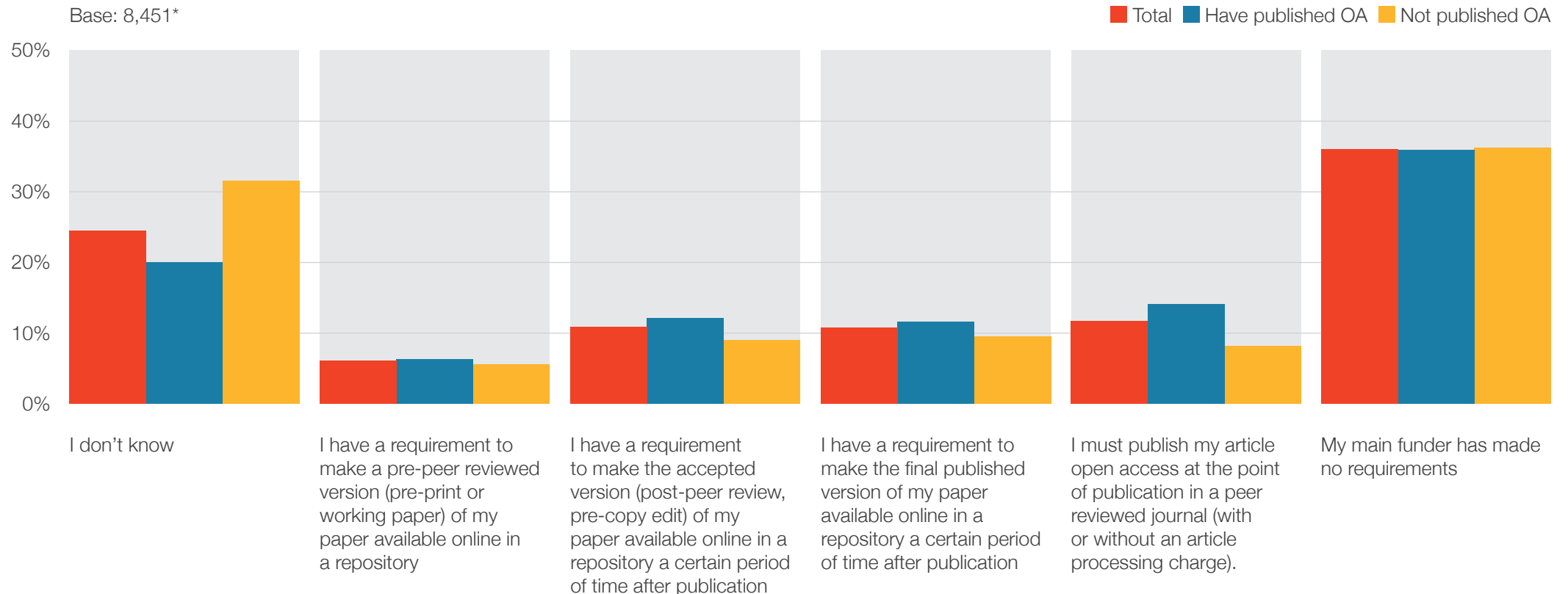




Understanding of funder requirements

“What is your understanding of your main funder’s requirements with respect to open access?”
[select one only]

A quarter of respondents said that they did not know their funder’s requirements with respect to open access.



*Base size updated from original published edition which incorrectly labelled base size as 21,877

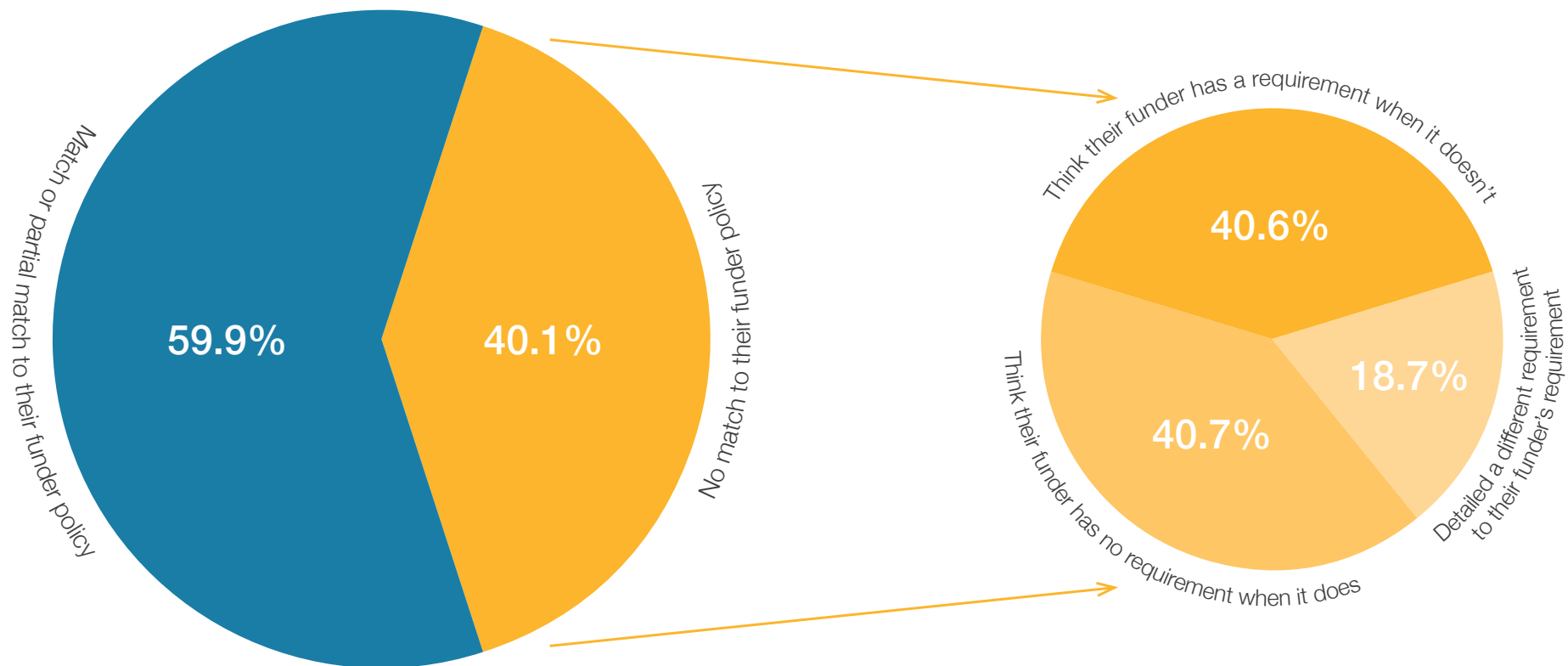


Understanding of funder requirements

“What is your understanding of your main funder’s requirements with respect to open access?”
[select one only]

59.9% of STM authors had a full or partial understanding of their funder’s requirements.

Base: STM authors who were aware of their funder’s policy and where funder policy was available (n=8,305)



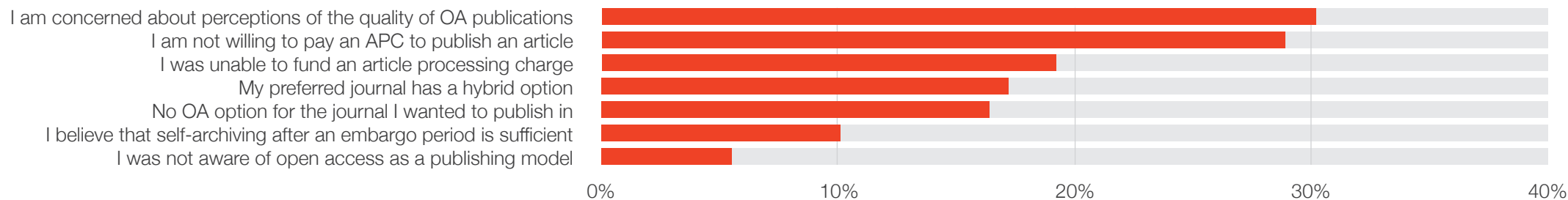
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Reasons for not publishing OA?

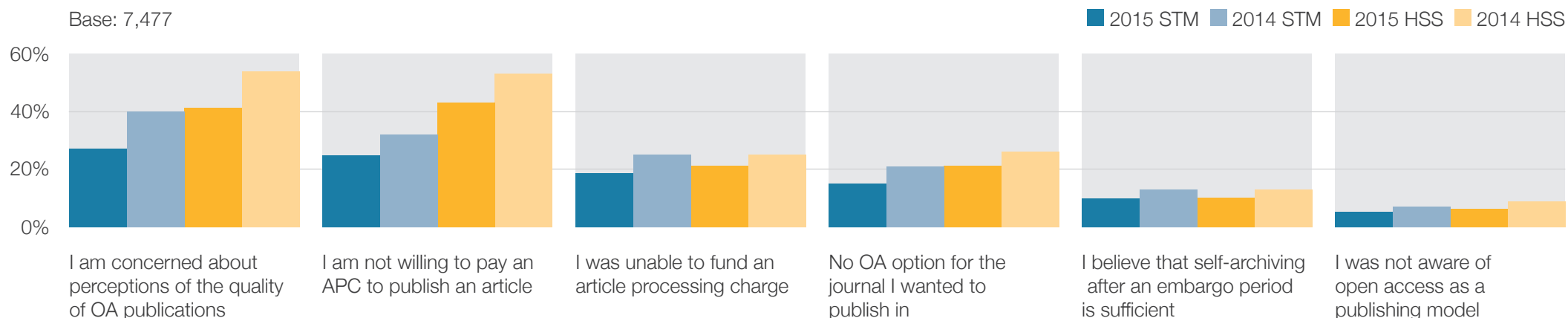
“Which of the following are reasons why you haven’t published any of your articles via an immediate open access model in the past three years?” (select all that apply)

The most common reason given for not publishing Open Access is a concern about perceptions of quality, but the proportion of authors with this opinion seems to be in decline.

Base: 7,955



Base: 7,477



10 | Methodology

Methodology

The survey was sent by email from a nature.com email address to a sample of internal and external author contacts. As an incentive to complete the online survey, respondents were entered into a prize draw to win one of three Macbook Airs.

In total, NPG invited 553,800 individuals to take the Author Tracker Survey, which was live from 18 March to 14 April 2015.

The survey received 22,090 completed responses (4%), of whom 21,377 had published a paper in the last 3 years. Those who reported that they had not authored a paper in the last 3 years have been excluded from this analysis.

Caveats

As with any research that is survey-based, the respondents have self-selected to an extent, as both busier authors and those who publish infrequently are less likely to take an extensive author survey. This may have led to a certain bias, but the demographics of the respondents broadly match with NPG's overall audience.

Secondly, it is important to point out that the majority of respondents to this survey were reached through Nature Publishing Group and Palgrave Macmillan's author mailing lists. This will have naturally led to a bias towards authors of papers published in NPG and Palgrave Macmillan journals, who may not necessarily be representative of the wider researcher market.

In the 2014 survey we reached out to Frontiers authors (a company in which Holtzbrinck has an investment). Frontiers publishes solely open access content. We have not used Frontiers lists for the 2015 survey, which may account for some changes in views with respect to open access.

NPG is a member of the Market Research Society (MRS) and abides by the MRS Code of Conduct, ensuring the highest standards of professional research and privacy (visit the MRS Code of Conduct page for more information). NPG and Palgrave Macmillan are making the anonymised survey data publicly available on figshare.

Respondents	Authors	Non-authors
Internal lists	18,484	677
External lists	2,893	36