

Real-life factors influencing journal selection

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Objective

- Criteria exist to guide author selection and engagement for manuscript development. However, how identification and selection of the target journal for submission are determined is a variable process.
- To understand the journal shortlisting process, across all therapy areas, including the key factors and individuals affecting choice, and gather insights from those involved in publishing research.

Research design and methods

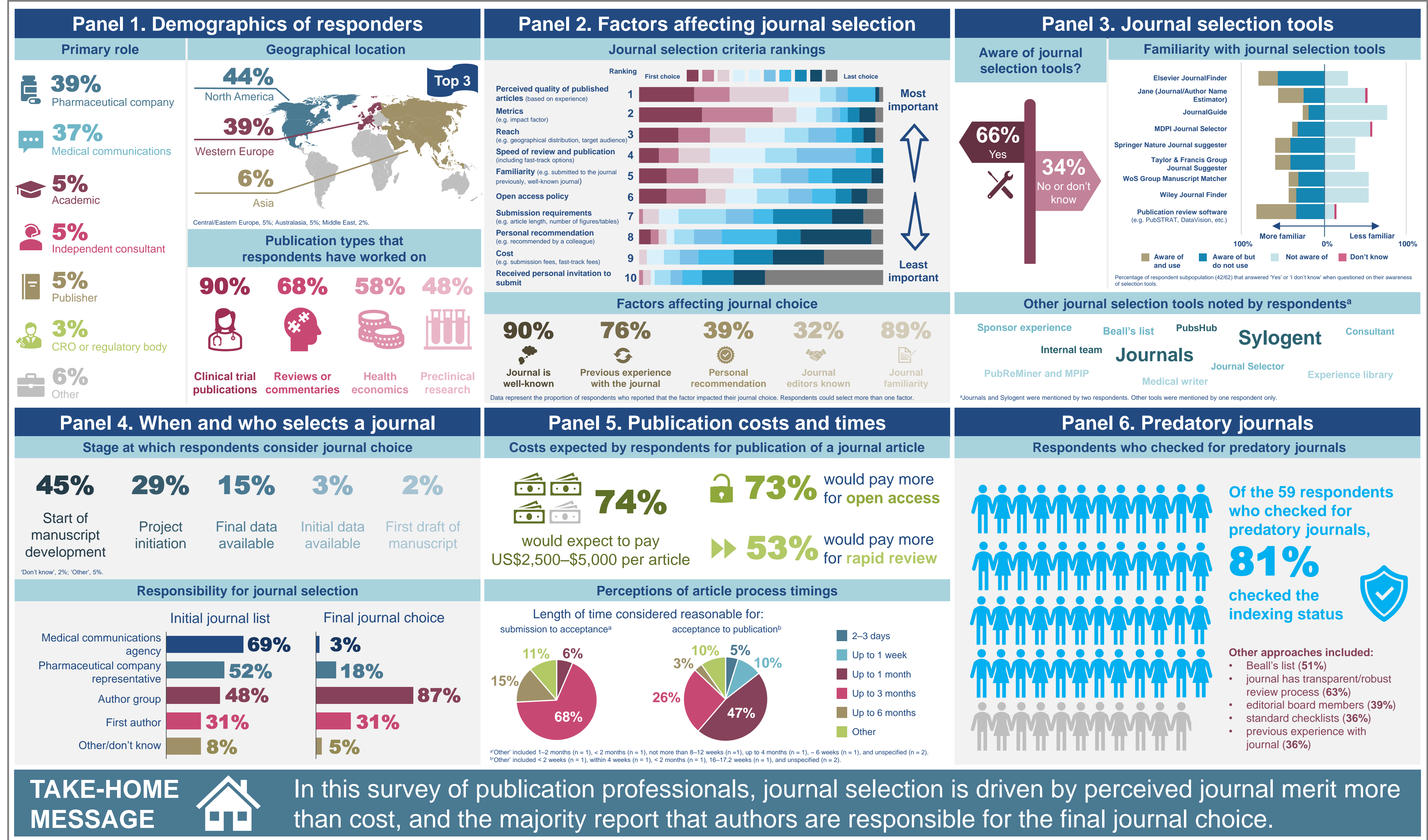
- An 18-item, online survey was developed to gather information on individuals' experiences of selecting journals, including questions on choice responsibility, use of selection tools, and review timings and cost.
- Circulated via LinkedIn, Open Pharma, the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP) Forum, the Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS) app MAPS Connect, and personal email invitations, the survey was active during the period 8–25 November 2021.

Results

- In total, 62 respondents completed the survey, with the majority from North America (44%) and Western Europe (39%) (Panel 1).
- Three-quarters of respondents were from medical communications agencies (39%) and pharmaceutical companies (37%) (Panel 1).
- Perceived quality of the articles published in the journal, journal metrics, and geographical reach were ranked the most important selection criteria; cost and personal invitation were ranked the least important (Panel 2).
- Only seven respondents (11%) reported that journal familiarity would not affect their choice (Panel 2).
- Two-thirds of respondents (66%) were aware of and used journal selection tools (e.g. Elsevier JournalFinder; Sylogent) (Panel 3).
- Almost half of respondents (45%) considered journal choice at manuscript initiation and 87% reported that authors had the final choice of journal (Panel 4).
- Most respondents reported that review times (87%) and publication times (85%) affected journal choice (Panel 5).
 - Of the 62 respondents, 68% reported 3 months or less as a reasonable time between submission and acceptance of a manuscript.
 - In total, 73% of respondents considered a period of up to 1 or 3 months as a reasonable time between manuscript acceptance and article publication.
- Most respondents (74%) expected to pay publication fees of US\$2,500–5,000 per article and would pay more for open access or rapid review (Panel 5).
- Almost all respondents (59/62) checked for predatory journals; of these, 81% checked the indexing status (Panel 6).

Conclusions

- Our findings show that individuals involved in scientific publications:
 - select journals primarily based on perceived journal merit (quality, impact factor, reach, and speed of publication)
 - are not dissuaded by publication fees and opt for open access and rapid publication when available.
- Gathering insights from a wider audience would help reduce any bias.



TAKE-HOME MESSAGE In this survey of publication professionals, journal selection is driven by perceived journal merit more than cost, and the majority report that authors are responsible for the final journal choice.

Abbreviations CRO, clinical research organization; MPIP, Medical Publishing Insights & Practices; WoS, Web of Science.

Author Contributions All authors made substantial contributions to study conception/design, and acquisition/analysis/interpretation of data. All authors drafted the publication and revised it critically for important intellectual content and approved the final publication.

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