Social media metrics of plain language summaries on Figshare

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Background

- The qualitative value of plain language summaries (PLS) alongside journal articles is well established, and efforts to quantify this via article metrics and other methods are ongoing.[1–3]
- In addition to journals hosting PLS directly with the article, PLS can also be hosted on external sites such as Figshare, which assigns digital object identifiers (DOIs) to content.
  - This allows for direct citation of the PLS, potentially improving discoverability via social media and search engines,[4] although it is difficult to search for PLS directly on Figshare.

Objective

To assess how social media and sharing metrics of PLS on Figshare compare with those of the associated article.

Methods

- All articles with a PLS hosted on Figshare as of 15 August 2022 were identified from across the Adis portfolio of journals.
- Metrics for article DOIs and corresponding Figshare DOIs were gathered via PlumX Metrics (Plum Analytics, Philadelphia, PA, USA) on 8 September 2022.

Results

- Article identification resulted in 54 paired article and Figshare PLS DOIs.

Social media and article-sharing activities were identified for 59% of articles, but only for 2% of the corresponding PLS on Figshare
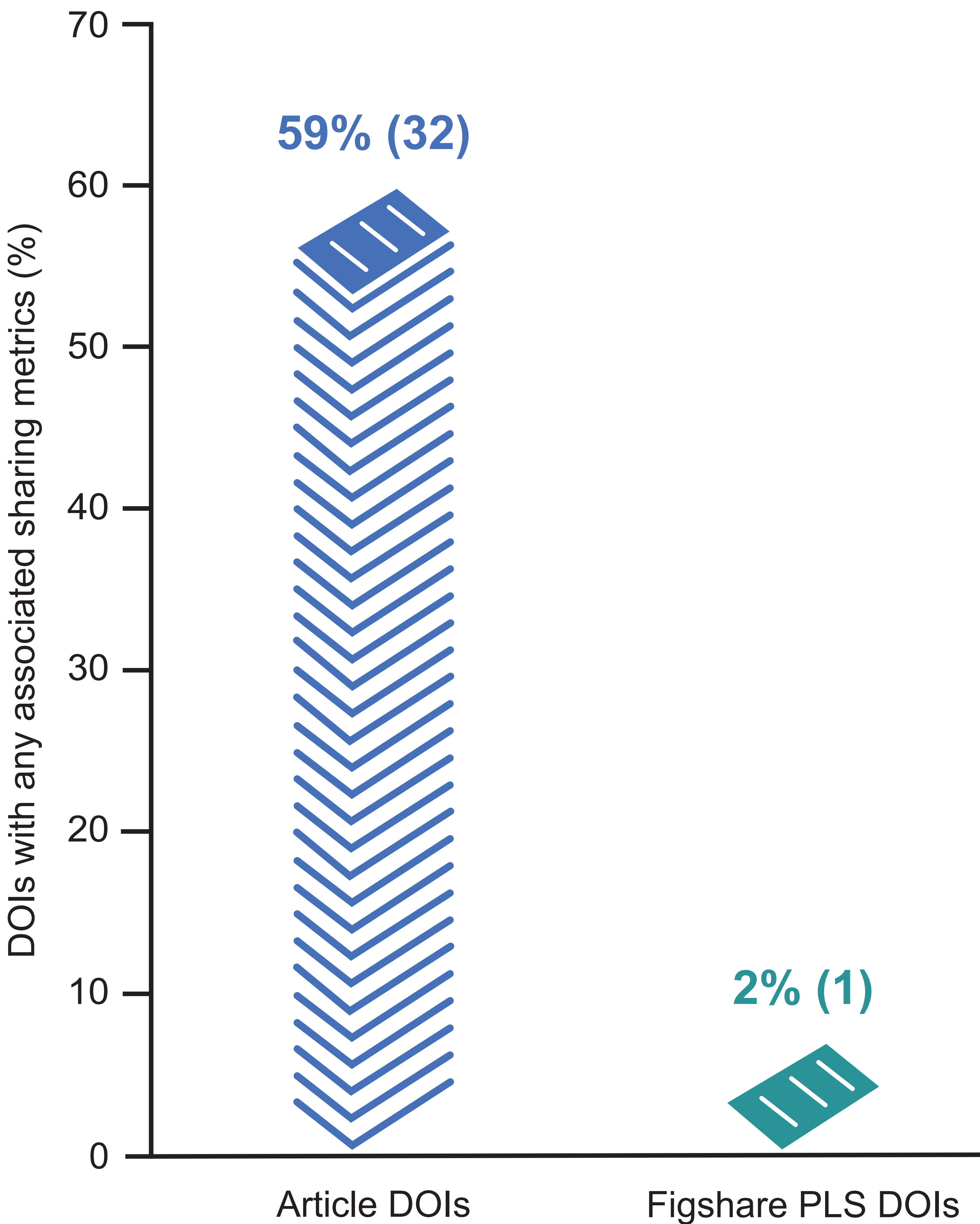
Sharing metrics were defined as metrics in the 'Twitter', 'Facebook', 'Blogs' and 'News' categories. DOI, digital object identifier; PLS, plain language summary.

Publishers' perspectives: what can be done?

Caroline

"To improve visibility of Figshare PLS, authors and sponsors could share them socially or within their peer circles. Another option could be a cross-publisher hub where all PLS (regardless of journal source) could be hosted and searched for."

Mike

"Journals need to push for authors and sponsors to share their Figshare PLS via their social media and also through microsites and press releases. This will help increase visibility of these useful extenders."

Joanne

"Social media is a great way to find PLS, yet our research shows this is not the case for PLS hosted on Figshare. Publishers can help by ensuring the metadata they provide to Figshare is optimized, such as using a good, discoverable title explaining that the content is a PLS. Coupled with more proactive sharing of Figshare PLS by journals, editors and authors on social media, this can help ensure PLS reach the wider audience they are intended for."

Conclusions

- Possible improvements to PLS discoverability via Figshare rely on readers being aware of content, and reader awareness requires being alerted to the presence of the PLS, for example, through social media sharing, search engine optimization or even a central PLS indexing platform or repository.
- **The near absence of metrics shown here highlights a need for better social media sharing of PLS on Figshare to alert and direct readers to these resources, helping to ensure they can be discovered and used. Publishers, research sponsors and authors should explore options for addressing this need.**

References

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