

Author guidelines and journal submission site congruence

Alanna Kennedy, Maureen Wallace-Nadolski, Christa Parisi, and Emily Cullinan | The Lockwood Group, Stamford, CT, USA | Poster #66

Introduction

- Careful review of both the author guidelines (AG) and a journal's submission site (JSS) are necessary to be fully informed as to what is required at the time of manuscript submission
- Discrepancies between the AG and the JSS can lead to delays in submission

Objectives

AG and JSS comparison

- To evaluate alignment between AG and JSS within a journal
- To assess differences in alignment frequency across therapeutic areas and journal impact factor (IF)

Survey of publication professionals

- To gather by survey and appraise real-world data on types of incongruence between AG and JSS encountered by publication professionals
- To understand impact of discrepancies between AG and JSS on manuscript submission efficiency

Methods

AG and JSS comparison

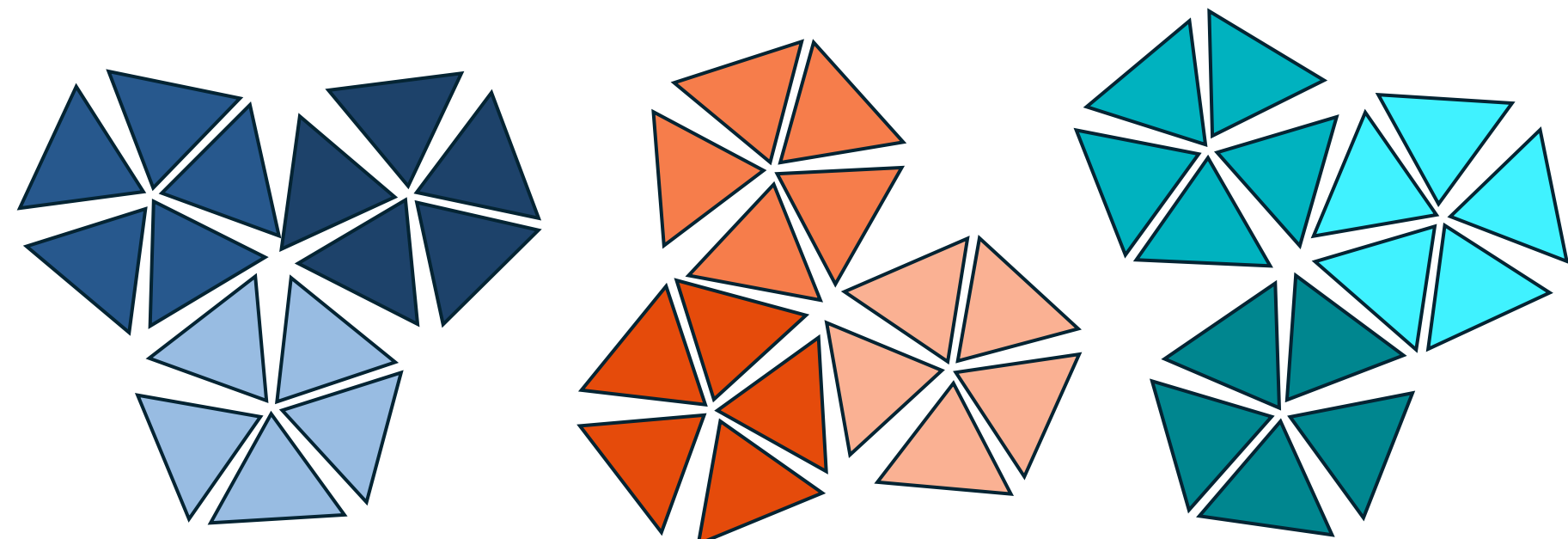
- AGs were reviewed against JSSs for points of omitted or conflicting guidance for required fields on the JSS
 - Omissions were defined as guidance not in the AG but required by the JSS
 - Conflicts were defined as differing guidance between the AG and the JSS
 - Supplemental Table 1 (available by QR code)** defines categories of omissions or conflicting guidance and provides examples of each
 - Journals were selected from 3 therapeutic areas (cardiology, oncology, and neurology) and represented a variety of publishers, were open access, and grouped by IF (low IF ≥ 1 to <5 , medium ≥ 5 to <10 , and high ≥ 10)

Survey of publication professionals

- An 11-question survey of medical publication professionals was also conducted
 - The survey was crafted in SurveyMonkey and distributed through ISMPPP Connect and LinkedIn. The survey comprised a combination of multiple choice and open-field responses
 - The survey was designed to capture the user experience during the manuscript submission process; responses were anonymous

Results

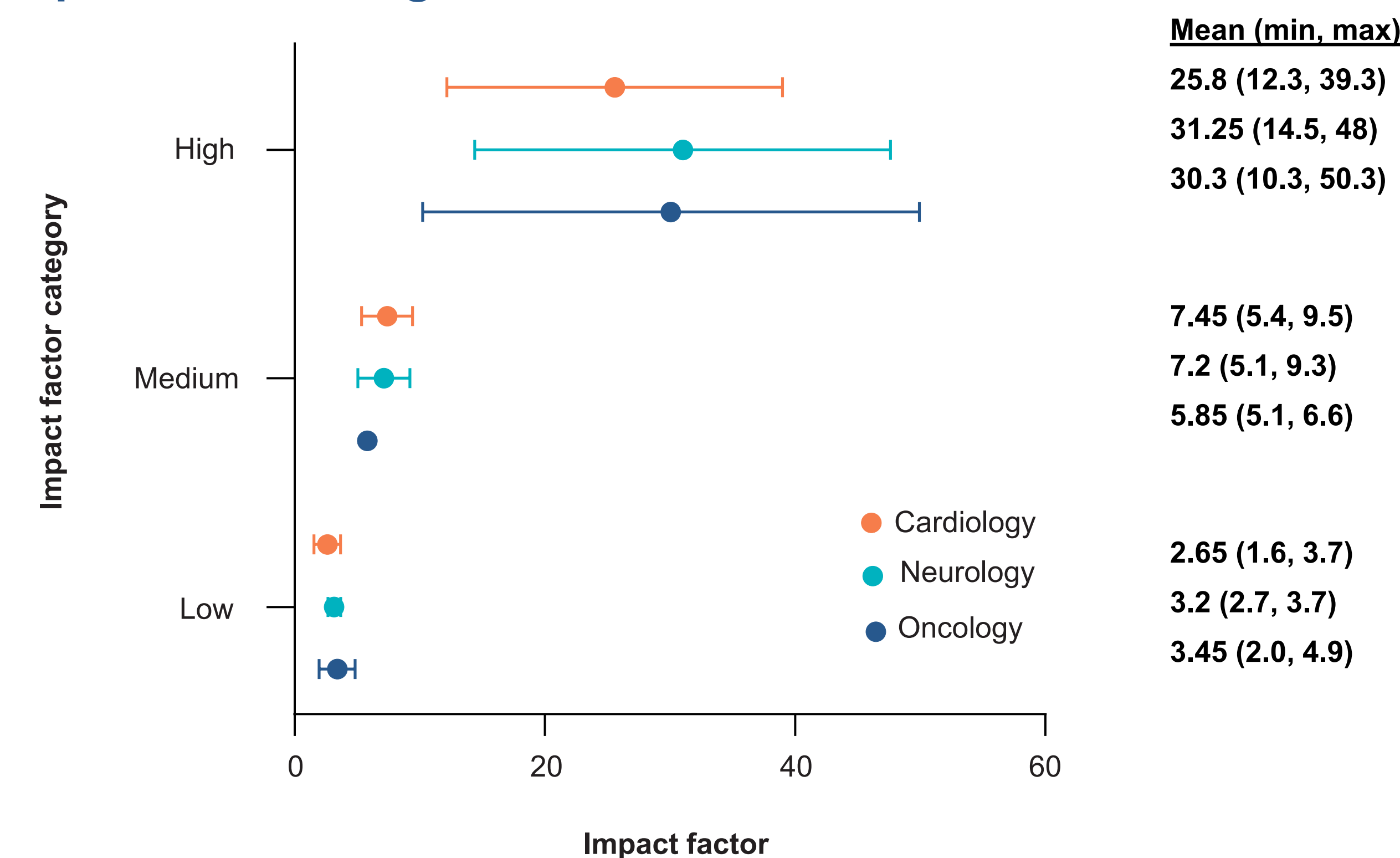
Figure 1. Analysis included 5 journals (triangles) in each of 3 therapeutic areas (blue, orange, teal) for each of the 3 impact factor categories (light, medium, dark)



Results for AG and JSS Comparison

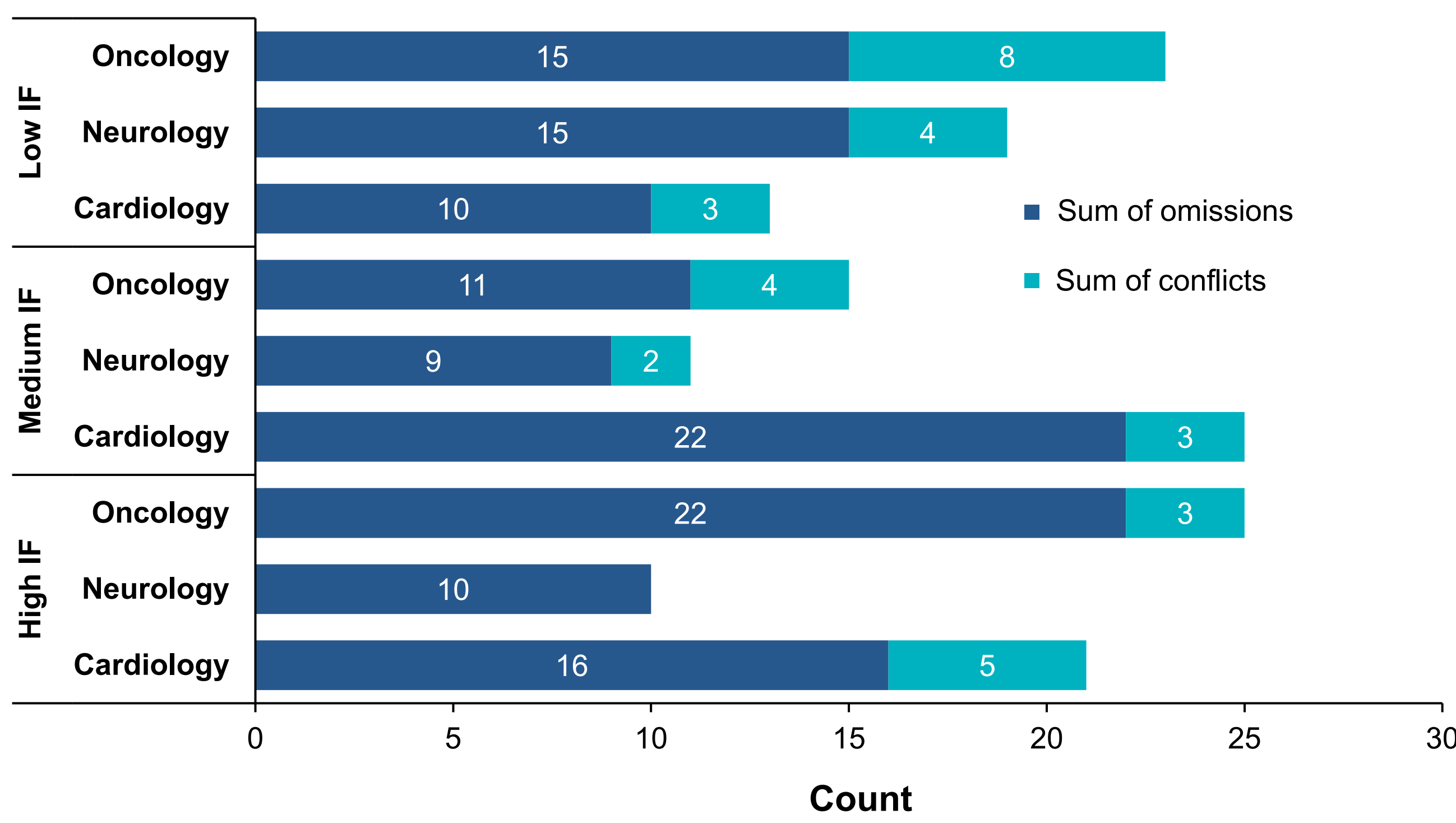
- A total of 45 journals were selected for review (**Figure 1**)
 - The 3 IF categories included journals with high (10.3-50.3), medium (5.1-9.5), and low (1.6-4.9) IFs (**Figure 2**)
 - Of 45 pairs of AGs and JSSs across the cardiology, neurology, and oncology journals, there were 130 instances of omitted requirements and 32 instances of conflicting information (**Figure 3**)
 - Omissions were consistent across high (48), medium (42), and low (40) IF journals
 - Low IF journals had numerically higher instances of conflicting information (15) compared with high (8) and medium (9) IF journals

Figure 2. Range of impact factors for high, medium, and low impact factor categories



Results

Figure 3. Quantification of AG omissions and conflicts with required JSS fields



Key Insight

Discrepancies between author guidelines and journal submission sites occur frequently and can result in manuscript submission delays.

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Results for survey of publication professionals

- A survey of medical publication professionals was conducted between November 20, 2023, and January 4, 2024
- Of the 30 respondents, oncology was the largest program therapeutic area represented (30%), followed by cardiology, metabolic disease, and neurology, with each at 10%
- Half of the 30 survey respondents reported that JSS-required information was omitted by AGs for $\geq 41\%$ of their recent submissions
- Mock submissions are done to proactively assess discrepancies and omissions between the AG and JSS before manuscript submission (**Figure 4**)
- Delay length varied owing to omitted guidance; 80% experienced a delay, with 50% delayed by <1 week and 26.7% experienced a 1- to 2-week delay (**Figure 5**)

Figure 4. Frequency of mock submissions

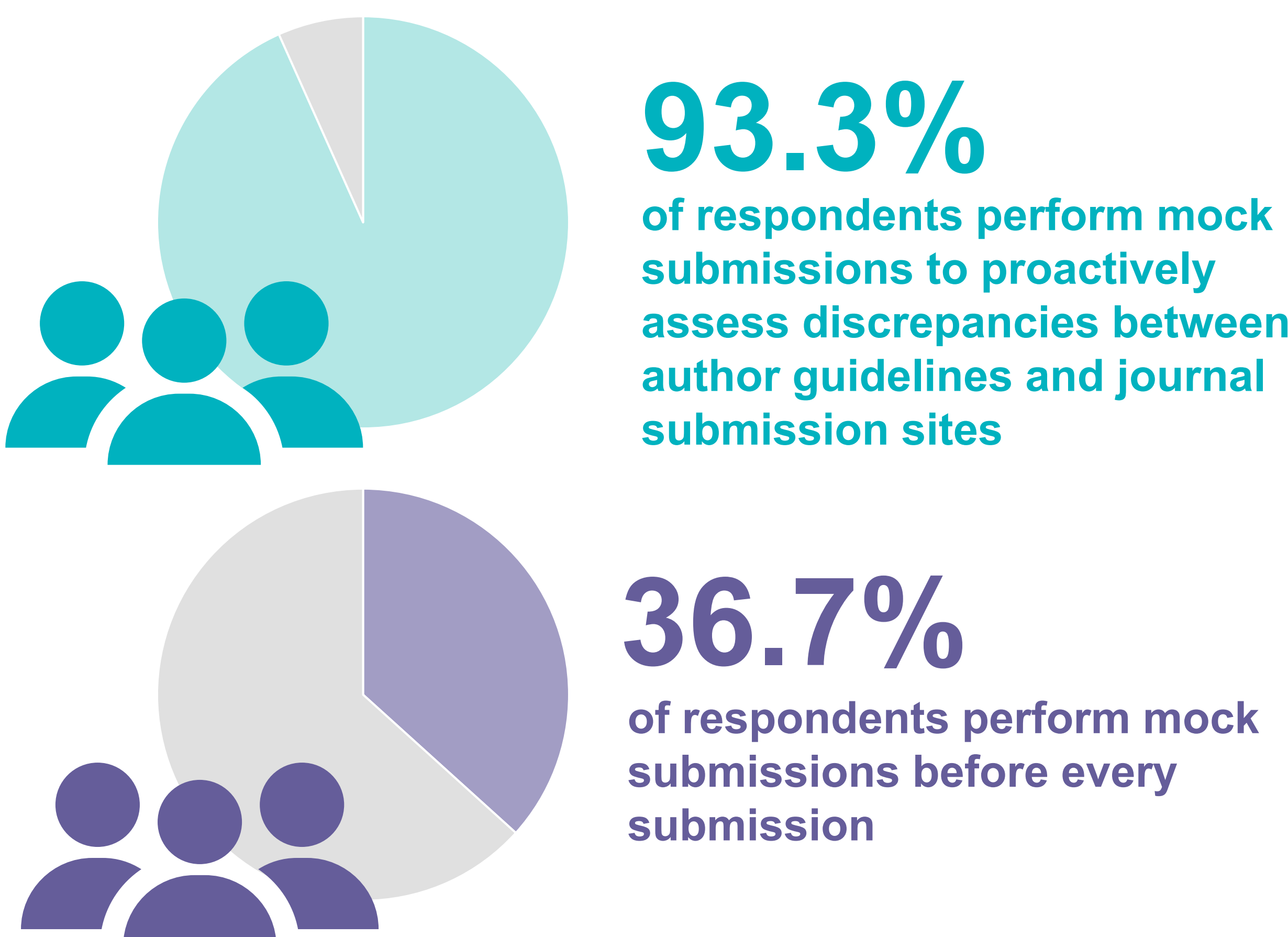
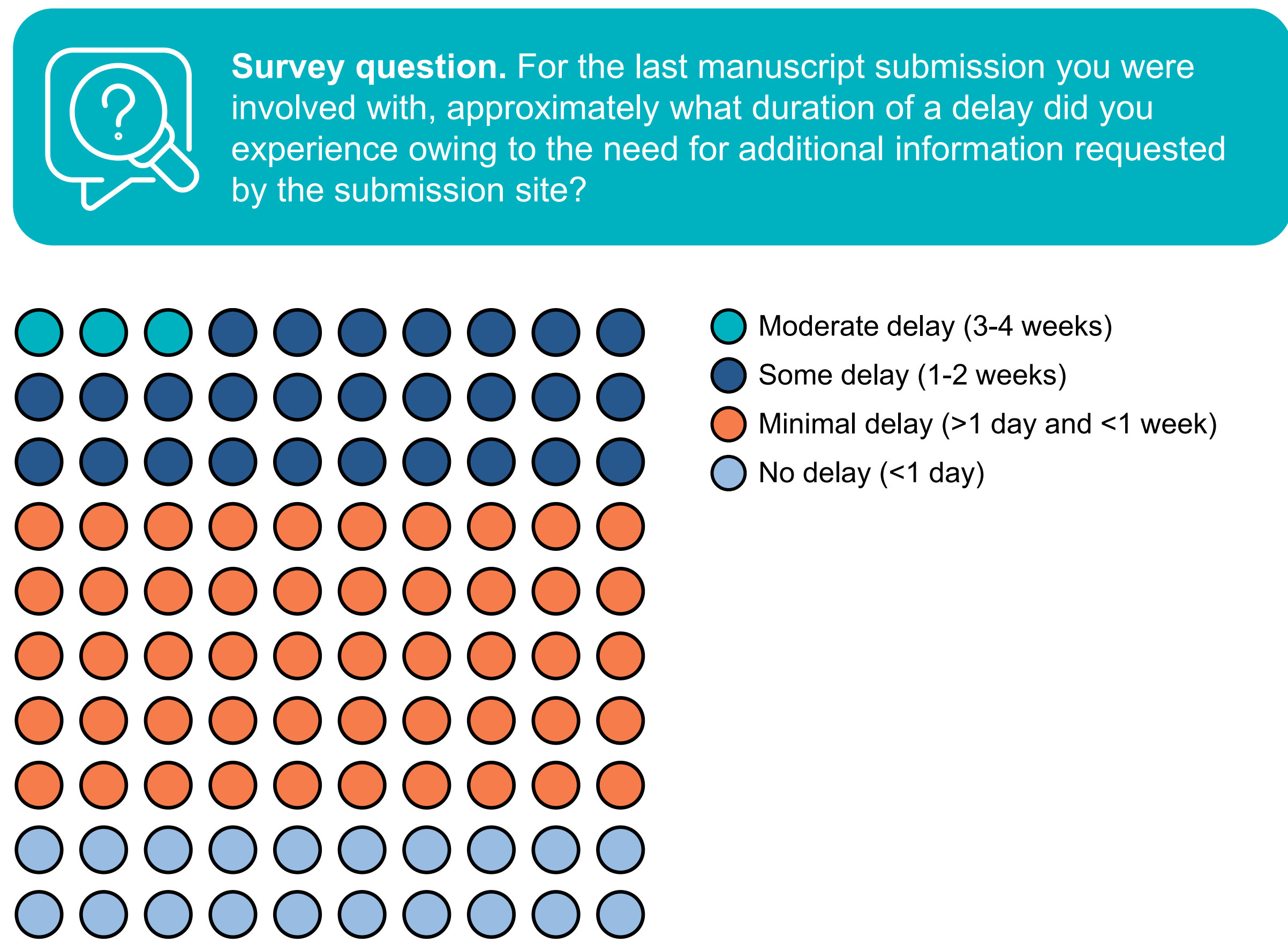


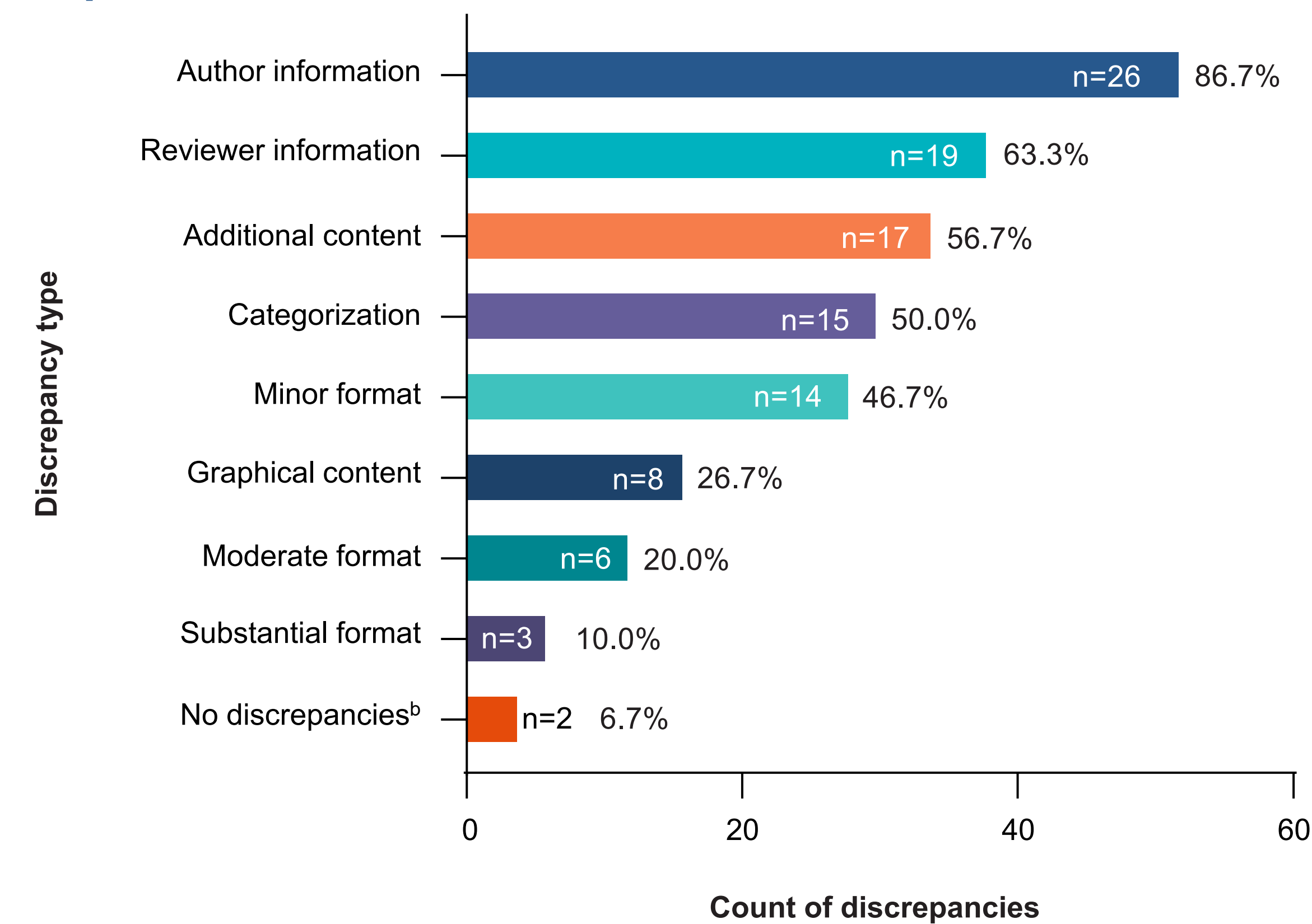
Figure 5. Duration of delay survey question^a



^aNone of the respondents reported significant delays >4 weeks.

- Of all respondents, 86.7% found discrepancies for author information, 63.3% for reviewer information, and 56.7% with additional content needed beyond what was stated in the AG (**Figure 6**)

Figure 6. Type of discrepancies reported by survey respondents^a



^aMore than 1 response was permitted for each of the 30 respondents. Percentages are calculated based on total respondents.
^bOf the 2 respondents that indicated "No discrepancies," one was primarily involved with publications through a publisher and the other a pharmaceutical company in the area of general medicine.

Conclusions

- Omitted and conflicting guidance between AG and the JSS occurs often across cardiology, neurology, and oncology journals
- Discrepancies between AG and the JSS require additional effort to complete a mock manuscript submission, and delays in submission timelines
- AG and JSS incongruence may be due to multiple factors:
 - Publisher-level portals and individual journal preferences may differ
 - Updates may be implemented in one location, but not carried through to other locations where the same information is provided



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- All authors are employees of The Lockwood Group (Stamford, CT, USA)