Assessment of the number of authors on publications from industry-sponsored Phase 3 oncology trials

Poster 10

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Why did we perform this research?

- Author selection for publications of clinical trials should be based on ICMJE recommendations
- There is a presumption that publications of industry-sponsored clinical trials include more external than internal (industry-employed) authors; however, the number and relative percentage of internal authors has not been quantified
- Recent changes to author number guidance in GPP 2022 may have influenced authorship on publications[1]

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the number and percentage of industry-employed authors on congress abstracts reporting on industry-sponsored oncology Phase 3 trials

Secondary objectives included analyzing the number and percentage of industry-employed authors on journal publications of industry-sponsored oncology Phase 3 trials and investigating differences in authorship by publication type and before/after GPP 2022

How did we perform this research?

ASCO and ESMO congresses between 2021 and 2024 were searched to identify abstracts reporting industry-sponsored Phase 3 clinical trials in lung, breast, colorectal, and prostate cancers

Abstracts were manually filtered for relevance by two independent assessors and were excluded if they did not contain an NCT number or were not industry sponsored based on ClinicalTrials.gov. NCT numbers reported in abstracts were used to identify associated manuscripts. Data were reported using descriptive statistics

What did we find?

Identified publications

258 In total, 268 abstracts from ASCO and 177 abstracts from ESMO were identified; **258 abstracts** were included in the analysis (ASCO: 152; ESMO: 106)

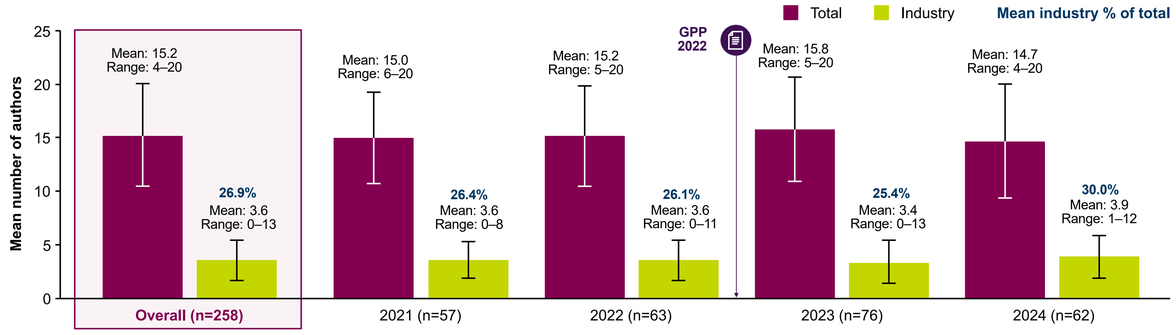
140 255 manuscripts were identified in the search, and **140 manuscripts** were included in the analysis

Table 1. Characteristics of included publications

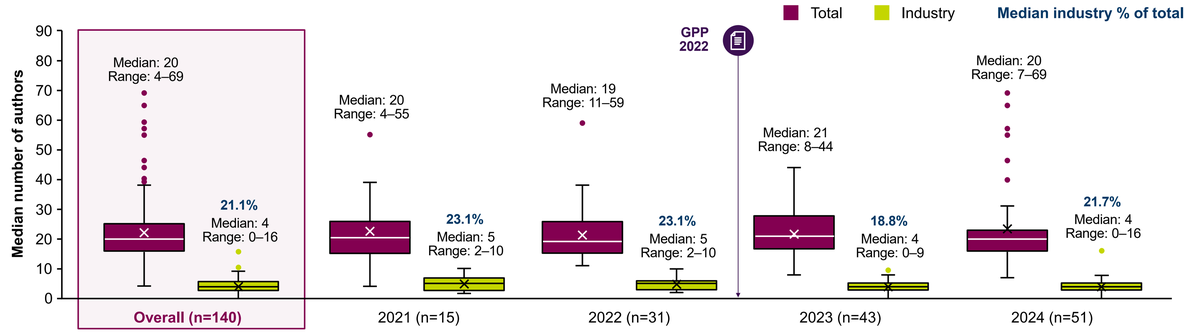
Abstracts, n	Overall	2021	2022	2023	2024
Any abstract	258	57	63	76	62
Tumor type					
Breast	98	25	22	27	24
Lung	78	15	22	24	17
Colon	26	5	7	11	3
Prostate	56	12	12	14	18
Publication type					
Primary data	62	13	17	23	9
Non-primary data	104	24	24	28	28
Study design	92	20	22	25	25

Manuscripts, n	Overall	2021	2022	2023	2024
Any manuscript	140	15	31	43	51
Tumor type					
Breast	43	5	9	13	16
Lung	48	4	13	13	18
Colon	11	1	1	6	3
Prostate	38	5	8	11	14
Publication type					
Primary data	67	9	16	21	21
Non-primary data	54	3	9	19	23
Study design	19	3	6	3	7

Figure 1. Number of authors overall and by year



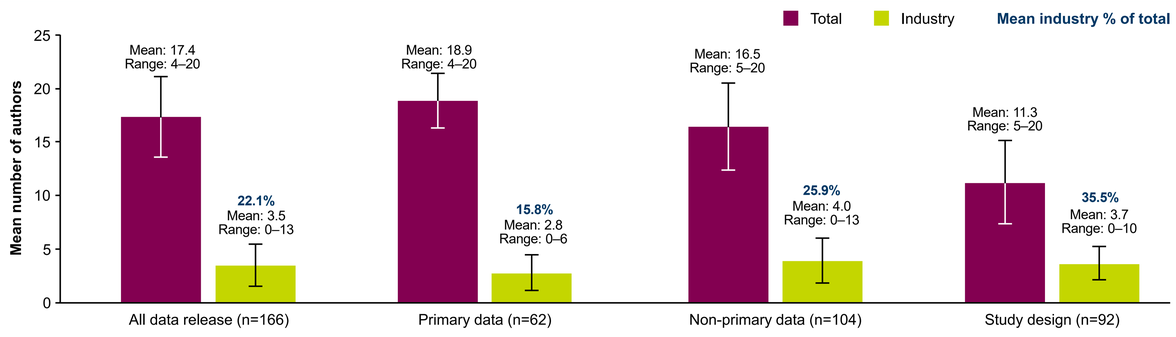
Overall, a mean of 15.2 authors were included on abstracts, of whom a mean of 3.6 (27%) were industry employed

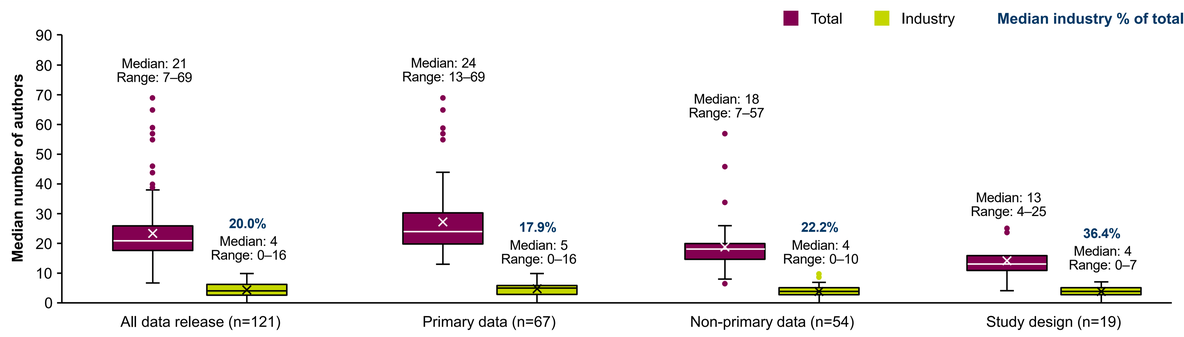


In total, a median of 20 authors were included on manuscripts, of whom a median of 4 authors (21%) were industry employed

Between 2021 and 2024, numbers of authors on publications appeared to be consistent, with the GPP 2022 guidelines having no clear effect

Figure 2. Number of authors on data-release publications compared with study design publications





Across abstracts and manuscripts, data-release (data containing) publications included more authors than study design publications; the average number of industry-employed authors remained consistent (3–5), resulting in a lower percentage of industry-employed authors in data-release publications vs study design publications. This finding was more pronounced in primary vs non-primary data-release publications

Differences in authorship by tumor type

For abstracts and manuscripts, there were no substantial differences in the total number of authors or industry-employed authors by tumor type

Limitations

This study offers a broad snapshot of Phase 3 trials presented at ESMO and ASCO over 4 years; limitations include a lack of representation of tumor types other than breast, lung, colon, and prostate, and the sample being restricted to abstracts submitted between 2021 and 2024

What do these results mean?

- Across a large sample of abstracts and manuscripts reporting industry-sponsored Phase 3 oncology clinical trials, the proportion of industry-employed authors remained static across the 4-year period analyzed, suggesting that GPP 2022 has had no clear impact on authorship numbers
- Approximately a quarter of authors were industry employed; this decreased in data-release publications, particularly when reporting primary data
- These data may help inform guidance on authorship for future publications

Reference

1. DeTora LM, et al. *Ann Intern Med*. 2022;175:1298–1304

Abbreviations

ASCO, American Society of Clinical Oncology; ESMO, European Society for Medical Oncology; GPP, Good Publication Practice; ICMJE, International Committee of Medical Journal Editors; NCT, national clinical trial

Disclosures

TH, **PS**, **KK**, and **PH** are employees of AstraZeneca with stock options in the company. **EB** and **JW** are employees of Helios Medical Communications, and **KW** was an employee at the time of study.

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