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Identifying processes and challenges in medical publication planning and execution for small biopharmaceutical companies

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Small companies rely on publications for business success despite facing resource constraints for timely manuscript submissions

Background

- Peer-reviewed publications are essential for disseminating clinical trial data and supporting regulatory approvals, particularly for investigational products nearing market entry¹
- For small biopharmaceutical companies, effective publication planning and execution are critical—but often constrained by limited resources²
- Unlike larger pharmaceutical organizations with dedicated publication teams, small biopharmaceutical companies often lack internal infrastructure, making it challenging to stay compliant with Good Publication Practice (GPP) guidelines, meet strategic timelines, and maintain scientific visibility

References

1. DeTora, L.M., Toroser, D., Sykes, A., et al., 2022. Good publication practice guideline for company-sponsored biomedical research: GPP 2022. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 175(9), pp.1298–1304. doi:10.7326/M22-1460. 2. Kitchens, B. and Hall, M.P., 2019. Publication planning at smaller companies: top 5 learnings for success. *The MAP Newsletter*, [online] 24 September. Available at: <https://www.ismpp-newsletter.com/2019/09/24/publication-planning-at-smaller-companies-top-5-learnings-for-success/> [Accessed 24 Apr. 2025].

Objective

- To identify processes and challenges faced by small biopharmaceutical companies in publication planning and execution

Methods

- The survey about publication planning and execution in small companies was developed and distributed by scientific and client services personnel from an experienced medical communications agency
- The survey included 23 questions on personnel responsibilities (n = 2), agency use (n = 3), publication planning tactics and tools (n = 9), publication processes (n = 3), and publication goals (n = 1) and challenges (n = 5)
- The survey was emailed to ~700 contacts at ~130 small (<1500 employees) biopharmaceutical companies and posted on LinkedIn
- The survey went live on December 12, 2024, and remained open until April 30, 2025

Results

- As of April 28, 2025, the survey garnered 36 respondents
- The majority of respondents have roles in Medical Affairs (66.7%) and Research & Development (R&D) (19.4%)

Figure 1. *Departments Managing Publication Responsibilities*

- Publication planning and execution functions are mainly managed by Medical Affairs and R&D

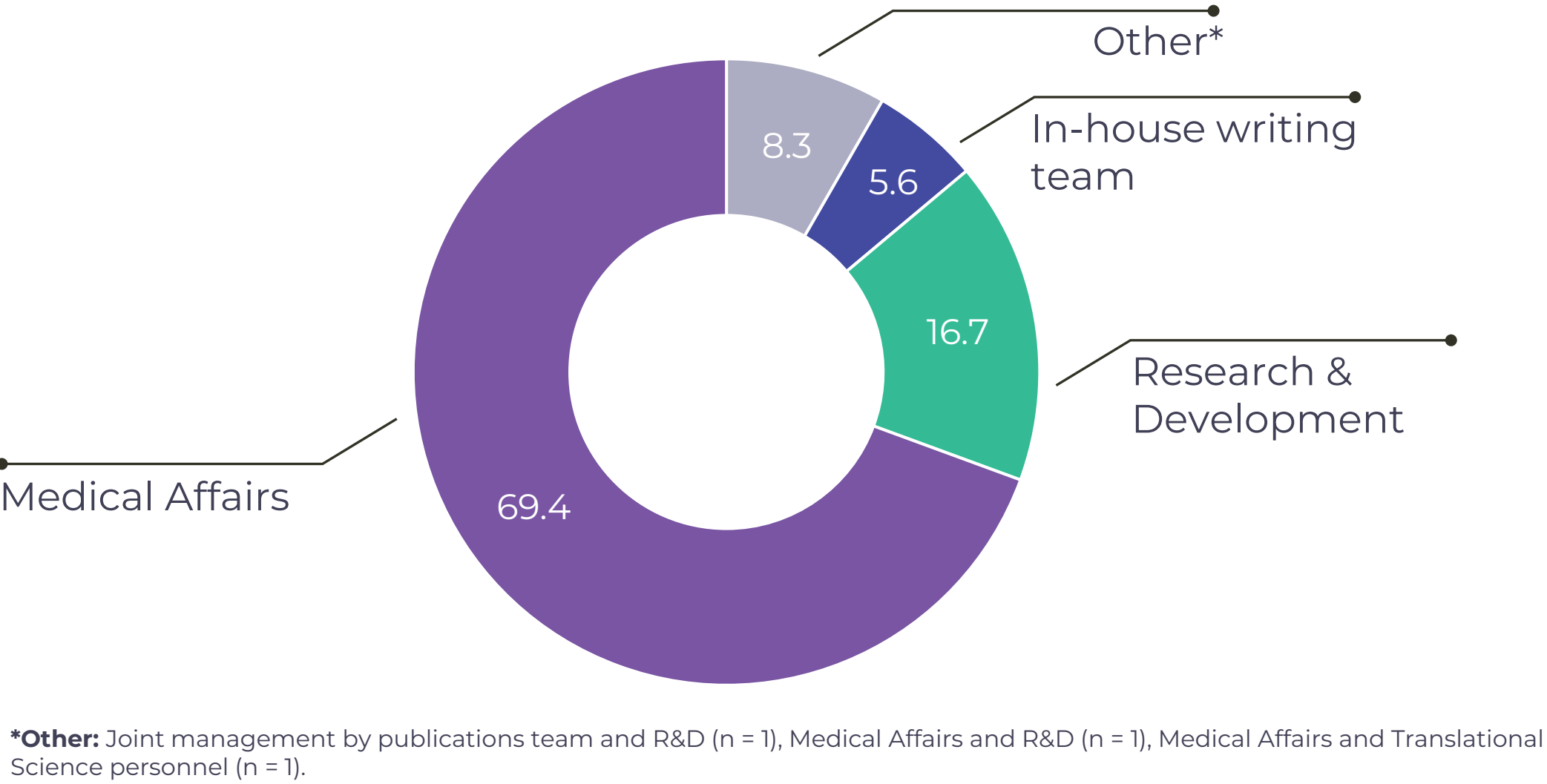


Figure 2. *Most Companies Use Third-Party Agency Support*

- A majority of companies use third-party agencies to assist with all (41.7%) or some (41.7%) of their publications

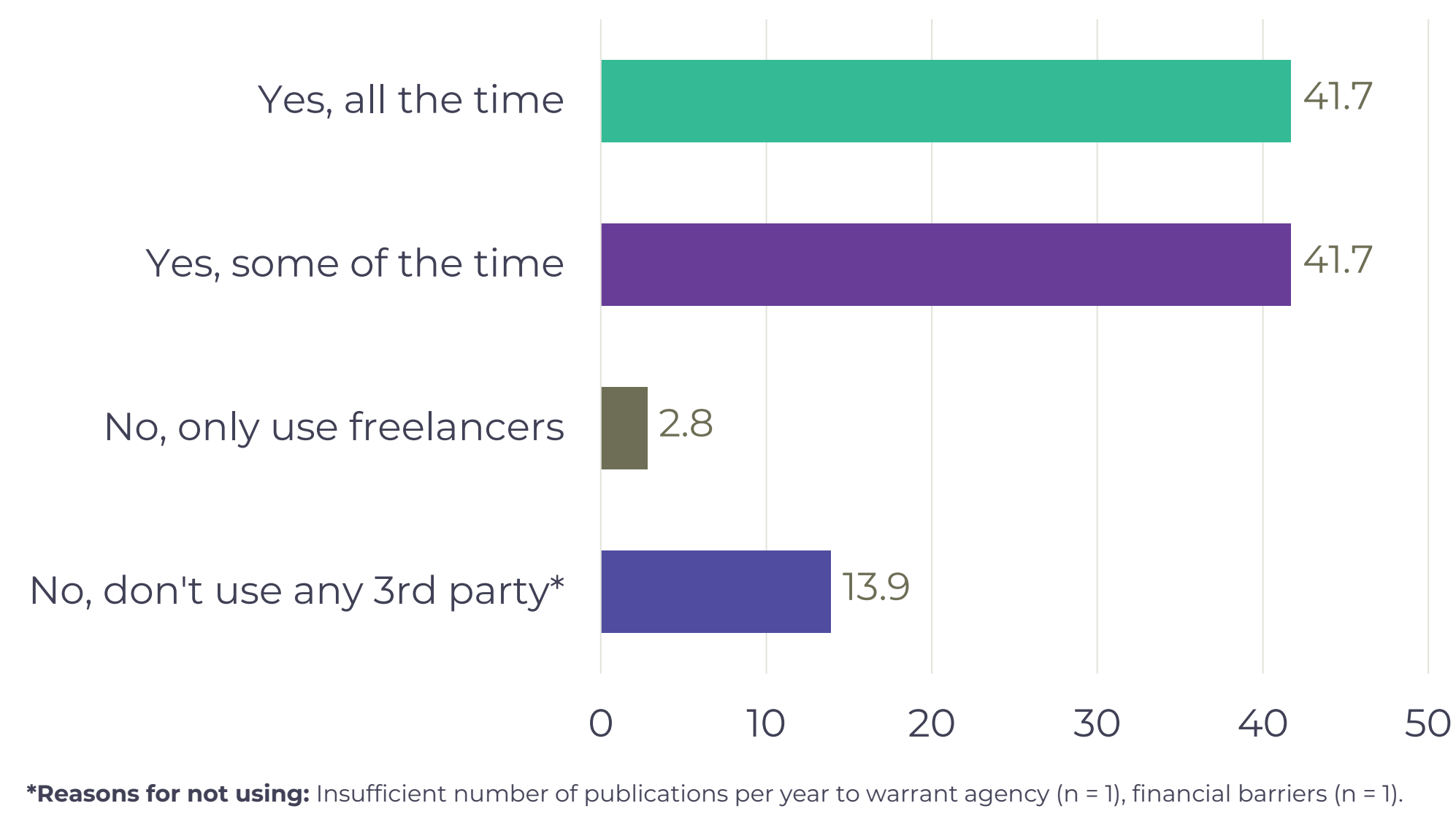
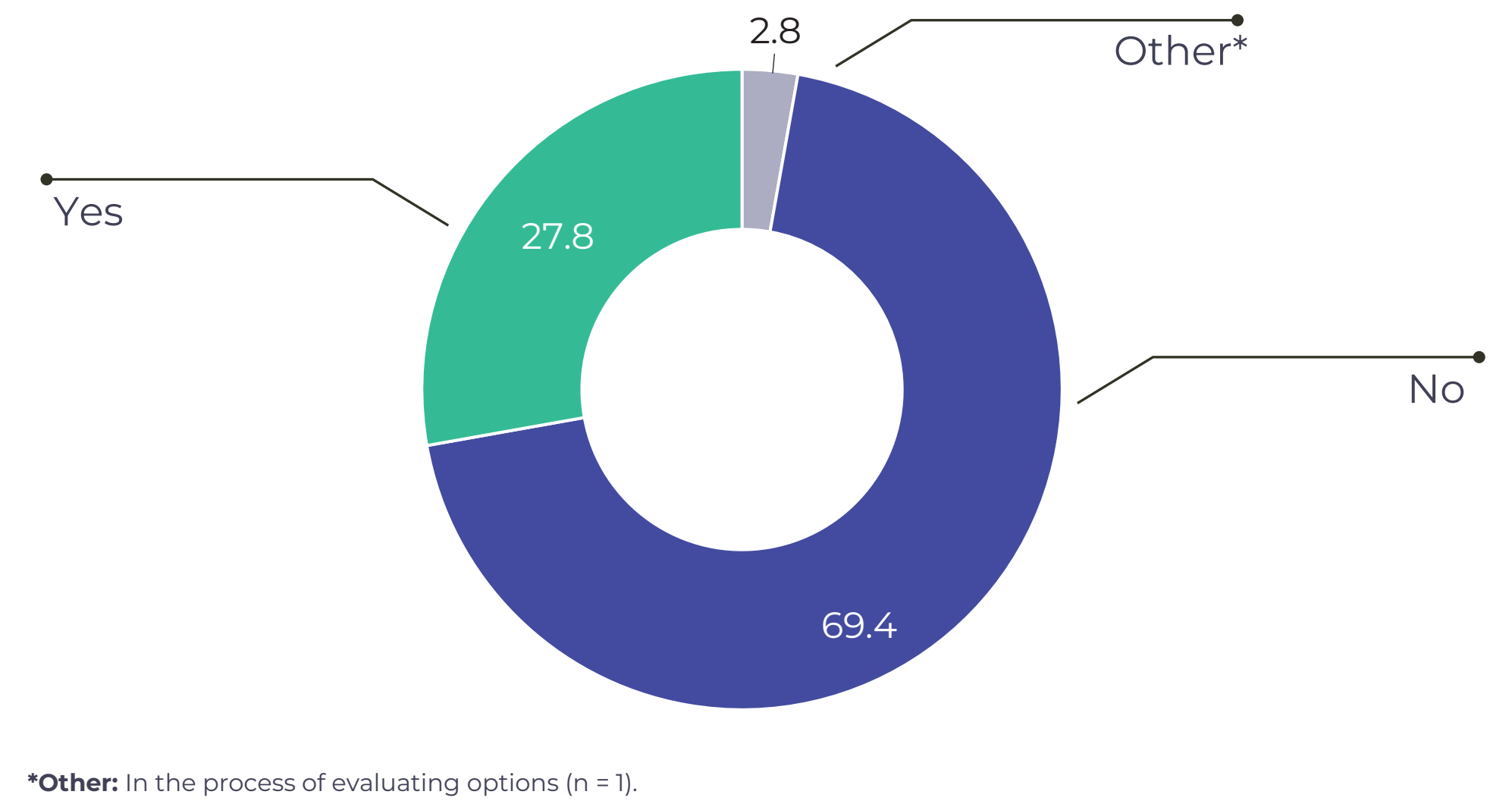


Figure 3. *Limited Use of Specialized Publication Software*

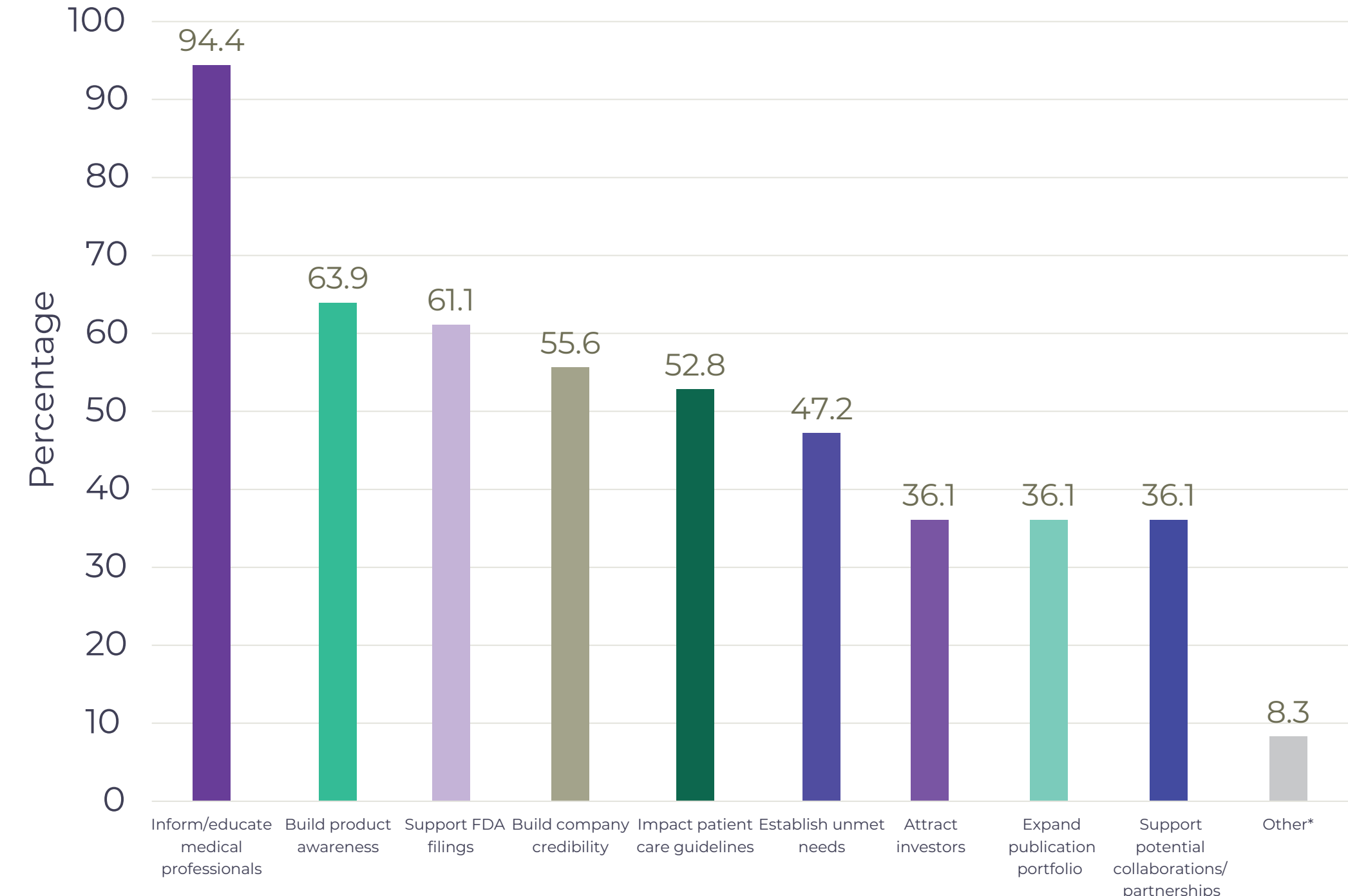
- Use of specialized publication software was reported by only 27.8% of companies; Microsoft applications were commonly reported alternatives



- 77.8% of companies have publication standard operating procedures in place, and 63.9% develop a scientific communication platform in advance of publication planning
- Most companies include internal owner review at every manuscript stage (83.3%) with medical/legal/regulatory review (66.7%) and/or publication steering committee review (50.0%) at only the final draft

Figure 4. *Small Companies Have Diverse Publication Goals*

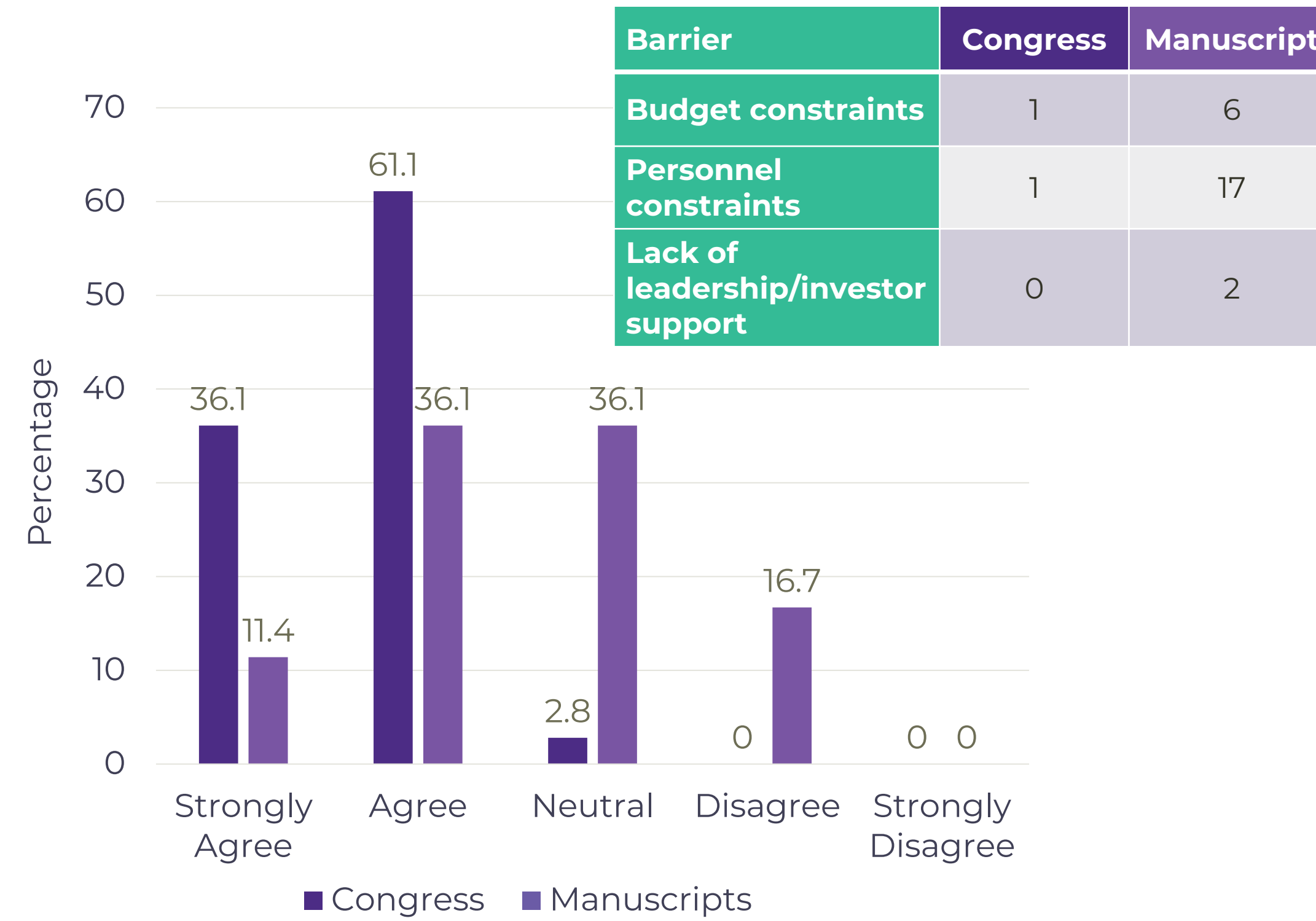
- Small companies leverage publications for a wide range of goals, predominantly to inform/educate medical professionals, build product awareness, and support US Food and Drug Administration filings



FDA, US Food and Drug Administration.
*Other: Engage key opinion leaders as authors in high impact factor journals (n = 1), raise awareness for rare diseases (n = 1), and disseminate clinical trial data (n = 1).

Figure 5. *Small Companies Reported Being More Confident in Timely Submission of Congress Abstracts Compared With Manuscripts*

- Budget and personnel constraints were commonly reported barriers to timely submission of abstracts and manuscripts, though these barriers were more frequent with manuscript submissions



Conclusions

- Publications in small companies are executed by Medical Affairs and R&D teams, often with the support of third-party agencies
- Small companies need to maximize the impact of publications to support a wide variety of publication goals
- Timely publication of manuscripts was identified as a potential unmet need for small companies
- Further research is warranted to explore the unique challenges faced by small companies

Disclosure statement

All authors are employees of ApotheCom.

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