

A Tale of Transparency in Scientific Publications-Striking a Dialogue Through ‘Letters to the Editor’

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

- Post-publication peer review (PPPR) or public peer review serves as a medium for transparent scientific discourse.¹
- Letters to Editor (LTE) in journals represent a form of PPPR, facilitating ongoing scholarly dialogue and providing insights or corrections in the peer-review process after the article is published.
- This study assessed LTEs available in scientific journals for their nature or focus, type of articles targeted, the recommendations of LTE comments with response rate, and the impact on an article's reach.

METHODS

Eligibility

- Journals with a dedicated LTE section were selected.
- LTEs giving critical comments on the study design, conduct, results, and implications were selected.
- LTEs with an opinion or general updates were excluded.

Therapy Areas



Oncology
(N=30)



Neurosciences
(N=30)



Infectious Diseases
and Vaccines
(N=30)

Study Analysis

- 90 LTEs (30 LTEs/TA) were included.
- 90 scientific articles associated with the above LTEs were included.
- 90 articles without LTEs published in the same journal issue were included as control.

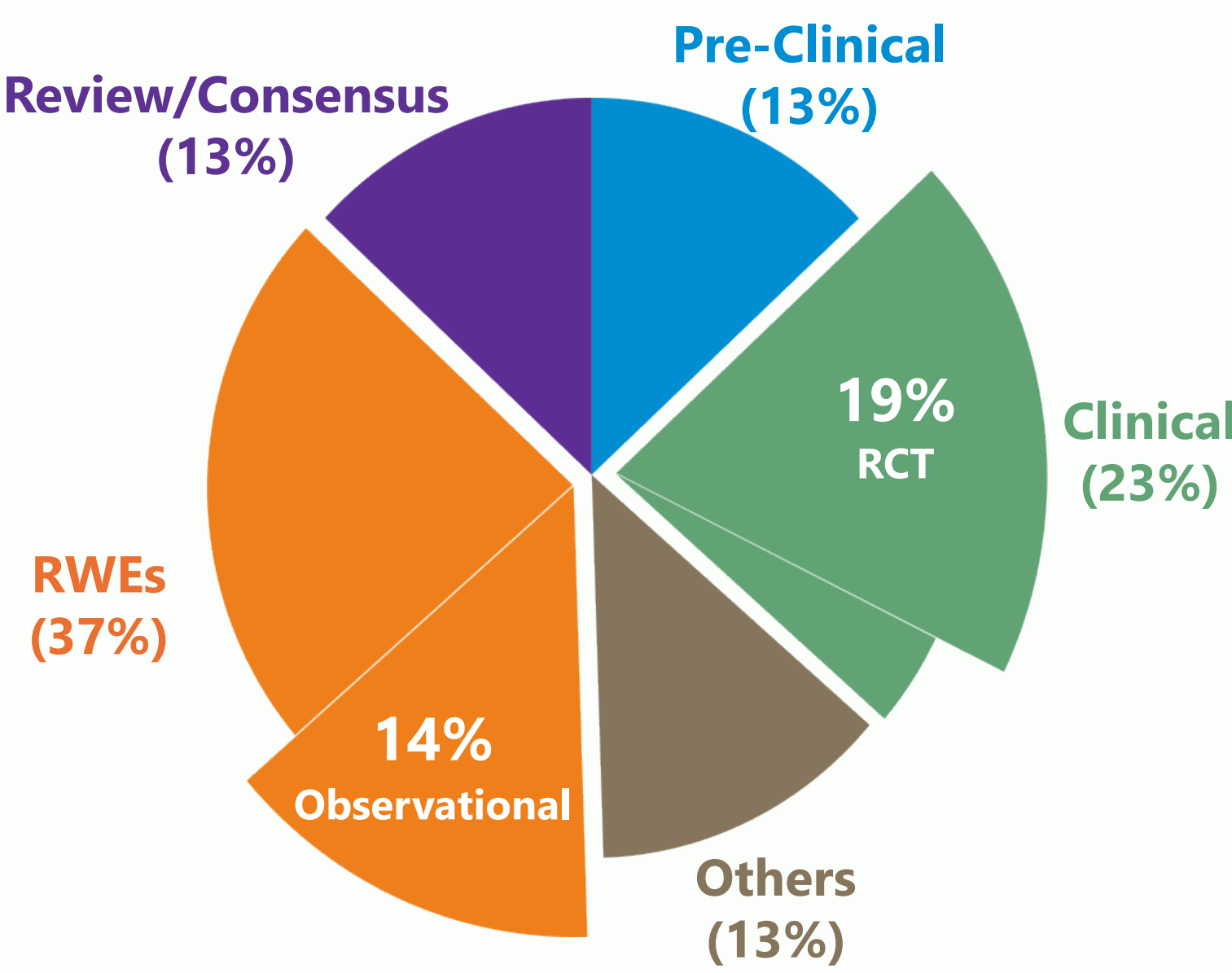
Study Outcomes

- ✓ Type of articles that received LTEs.
- ✓ Section of articles focused for LTEs.
- ✓ Altmetric score and number of citations for articles with LTEs versus those without LTEs.
- ✓ Lead-time to publication of LTEs.
- ✓ Rate of response to LTEs.
- ✓ Recommendations given in LTEs.

LTE, letters to editor; IDV, infectious diseases and vaccines; TA, therapeutic area

RESULTS

Scientific Articles with LTEs by Research Type



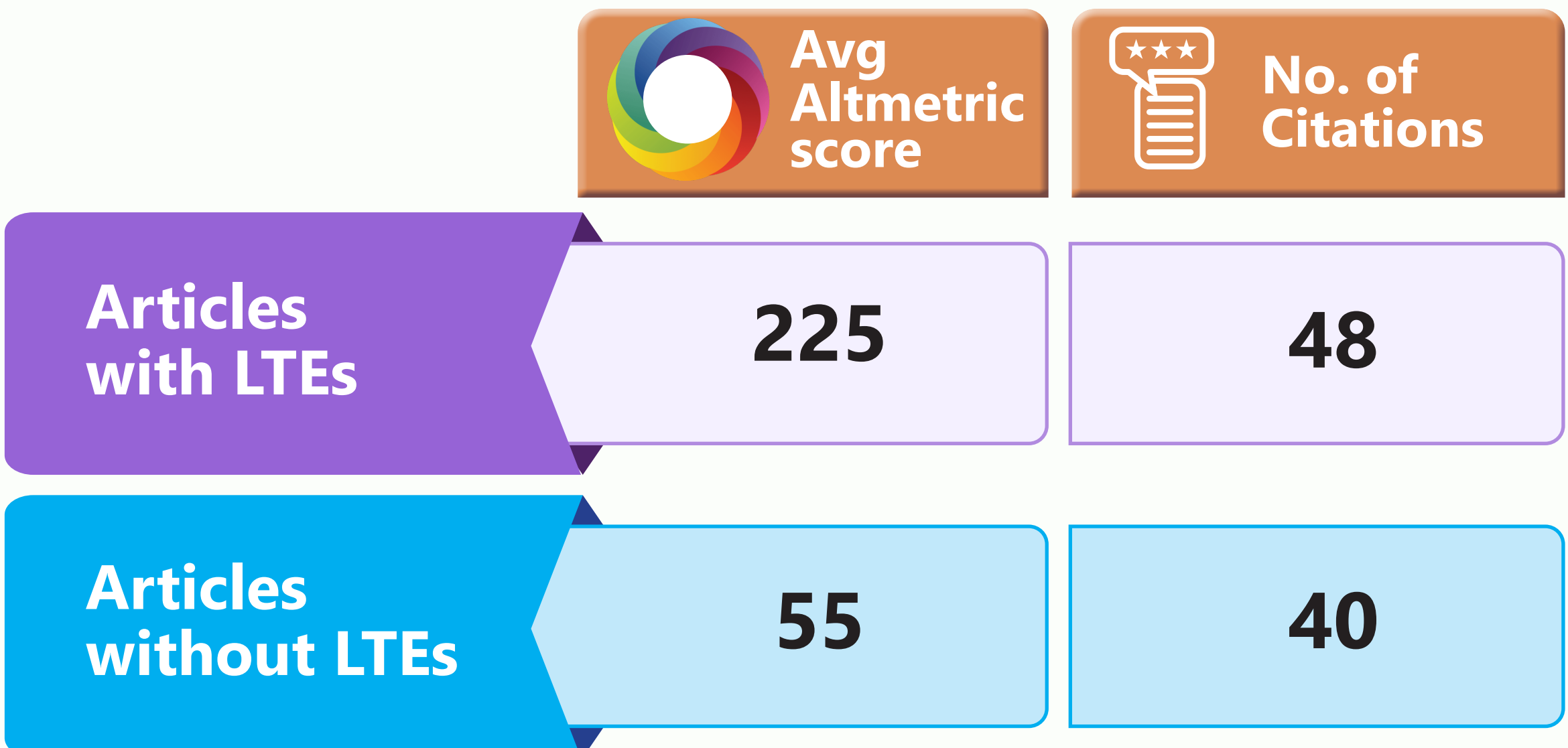
Most of the LTEs (37%) focused on 'Real-world evidence/Observational' studies

LTE, letters to editor; RCT, randomized control trial; RWE, real world evidence

Lead-time to LTE Publication

LTEs appeared **~5 months (range: 3-6 months)** post-publication of the scientific article in Journals

Reach of Scientific Articles with LTEs versus without LTEs



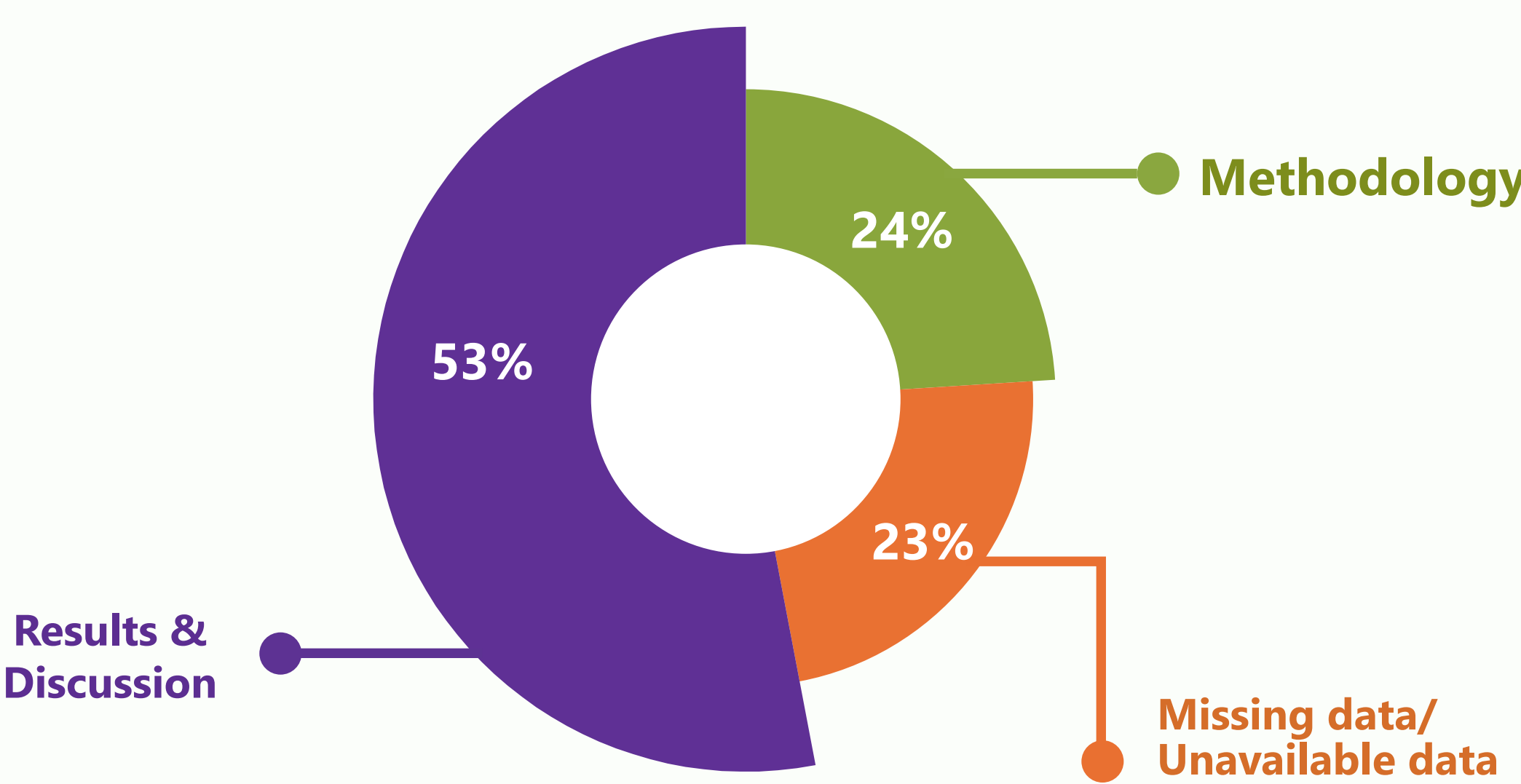
Altmetric score and number of citations were higher for scientific articles that received LTEs versus those without LTEs published in the same journal issue

Avg, average; LTE, letters to editor

Recommendations Through LTEs



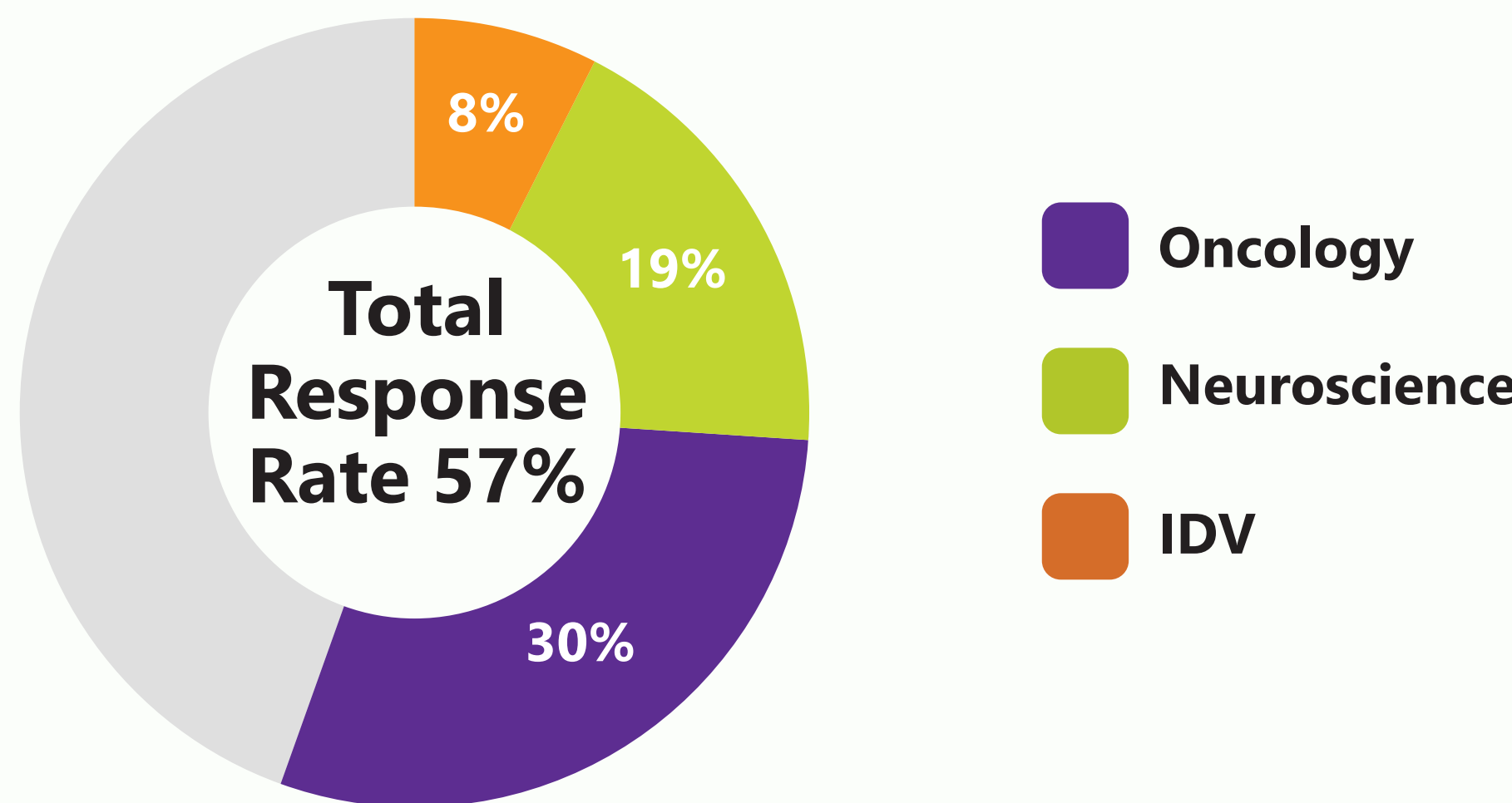
Section of Scientific Articles Focused for LTEs



Most of the LTEs (53%) were focused on 'Results and Discussion' sections

LTE, letters to editor

Published Responses to LTEs



Most responses were published (30%) in oncology TA

IDV, infectious diseases and vaccines; LTEs, letters to editor; TA, therapy area

Conclusions

- ✓ Most LTEs were found for real-world evidence studies with pertinent, valid comments largely focused on result-interpretations.
- ✓ Articles receiving LTEs showed greater attention in terms of number of citations and altmetric scores than those without LTEs published in the same journal issue.
- ✓ The sizable number of responses to LTEs emphasize the positive perception of the scientific fraternity towards PPPR practice.

Reference

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Disclosures

All authors are employees of SIRO Clinpharm Pvt. Ltd.

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