

# Use of plain language summaries by healthcare professionals: an Open Pharma survey

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## WHY WAS THIS NEEDED?

- Plain language summaries (PLS) are easy-to-read summaries of scientific research articles.<sup>1</sup>
- Few articles are published with easy-to-read PLS.<sup>2</sup> However, healthcare professionals (HCPs) and other audiences value PLS,<sup>3–5</sup> and pharmaceutical companies are increasingly writing PLS to accompany their articles.<sup>6</sup>
- While these studies show that HCPs value PLS, little is known about how HCPs use PLS and which platforms they use to find PLS. We developed a survey to find out.

## WHAT DID WE DO?

### AIMS

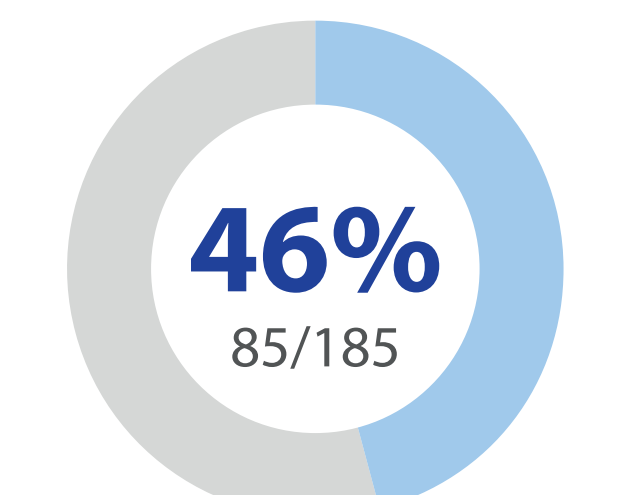
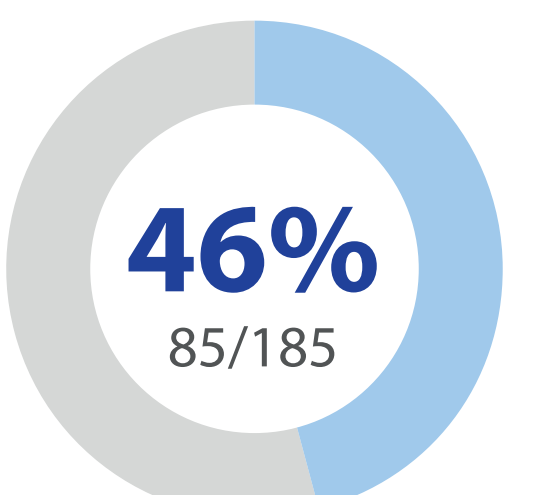
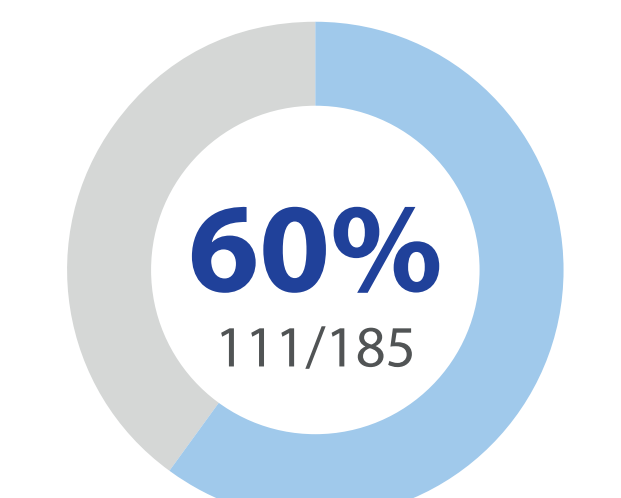
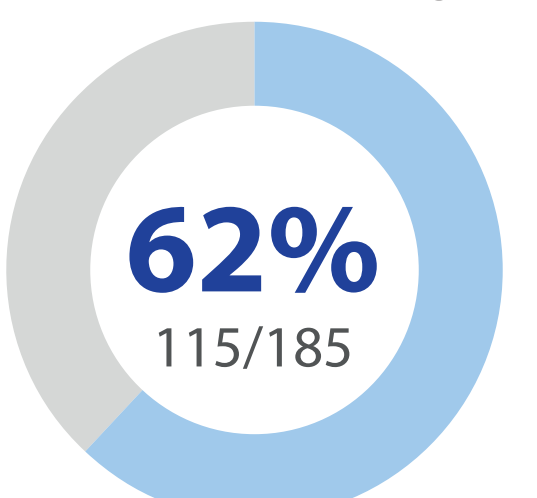
- We wanted to know:
  - how HCPs use text-based PLS, and how often
  - how HCPs find text-based PLS
  - what, if anything, could be done to improve how HCPs use and find PLS.

### METHODS

- The Open Pharma PLS and discoverability working group designed an 18-question global online survey.
  - A copy of the survey can be accessed by scanning the QR code at the bottom of this poster.
- The survey was sent by email to 5141 individuals who had previously contributed to articles sponsored by AstraZeneca, GSK or Ipsen.
  - Any HCP who had previously been involved with the development of a pharma-sponsored publication was eligible to respond.
- Each participating pharmaceutical company distributed the survey to their contacts.
- The survey was open from 24 April to 17 June 2024.

## WHO RESPONDED TO OUR SURVEY?

- A total of 188 people responded to our survey. Three (2%) were excluded because they were not HCPs.
- Of the 185 eligible respondents:



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## REFERENCES

1. Rosenberg A et al. *Curr Med Res Opin* 2021;37:2015–6; 2. Gattrell W et al. *Curr Med Res Opin* 2022;38(Suppl 2):41–2; 3. Lobban D et al. *Curr Med Res Opin* 2022;38(Suppl 1):32–3; 4. Southey L et al. Presented at the 2024 European Meeting of ISMP, London, UK; 5. Pushparajah D et al. *Ther Innov Regul Sci* 2018;52:474–81; 6. Ipsen. Available from: [www.ipsen.com/general/our-pledge-summaries-in-plain-language-for-all-journal-publications/](http://www.ipsen.com/general/our-pledge-summaries-in-plain-language-for-all-journal-publications/) (Accessed 28 August 2024).

## DECLARATION OF FUNDING

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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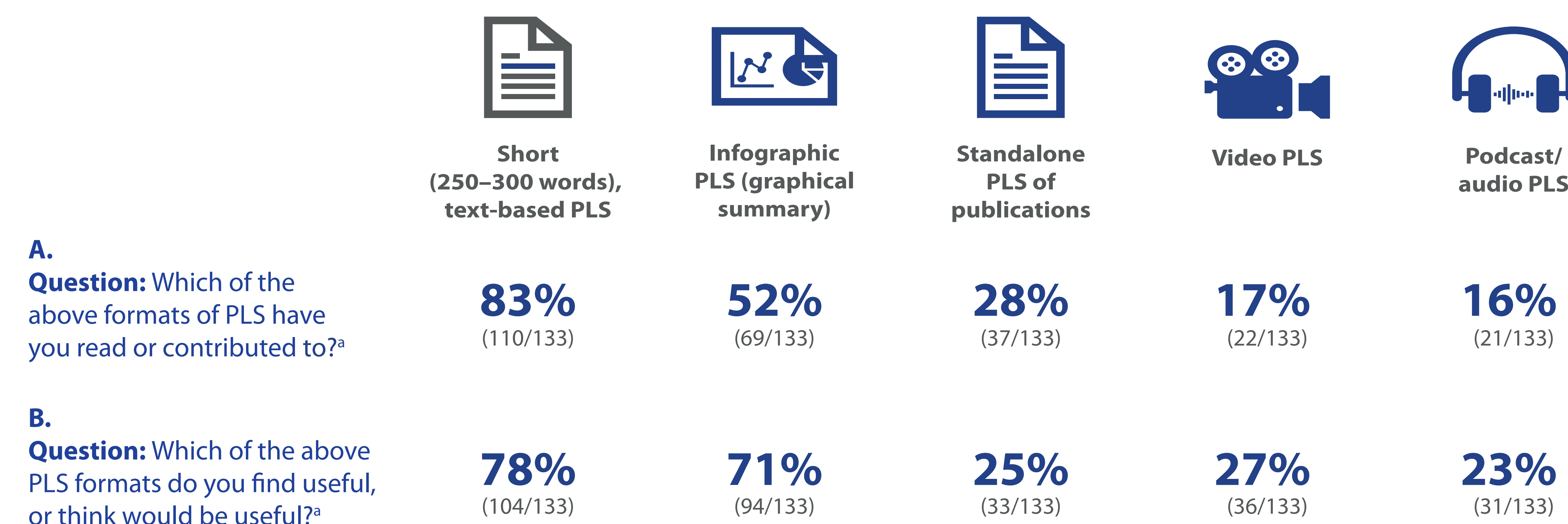
## DISCLOSURES

PH is an employee and shareholder of AstraZeneca. ST is an employee and shareholder of Ipsen. GD (ID: 0000-0002-3508-9127) is an employee and shareholder of the GSK group of companies. SN (ID: 0009-0000-7816-0862), JG (ID: 0000-0002-1461-5714), TK (ID: 0000-0001-6152-7365) and VS (ID: 0009-0007-0946-6316) are employees of Oxford PharmaGenesis, where TK is also a shareholder. SB (ID: 0000-0001-8072-5690) is an employee of Alfasigma S.p.A.

## HOW DO HCPs USE PLS?

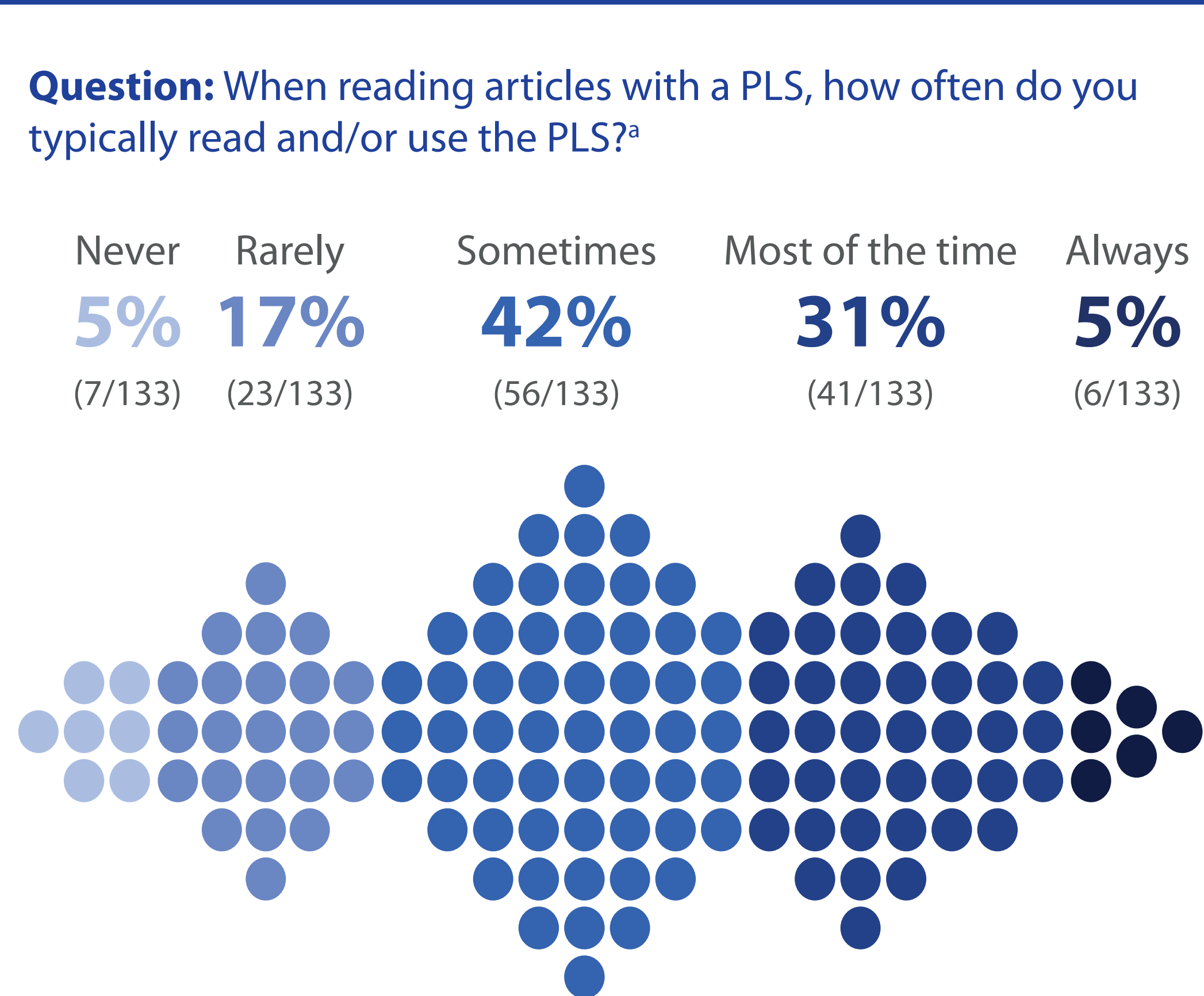
- Most respondents (72%, 133/185) had read or contributed to at least one PLS; 28% (52/185) had not.
- Of the 126 HCPs who did read or contribute to PLS (**Figure 2**), 34% (43/126) were unsure of their institutional positions on sharing PLS with patients, 59% (74/126) were allowed to share PLS with patients and 7% (9/126) were not (data not shown).

**Figure 1.** HCPs had mostly read or contributed to short, text-based PLS (A), but they considered both short, text-based and infographic PLS to be the most useful PLS formats (B).



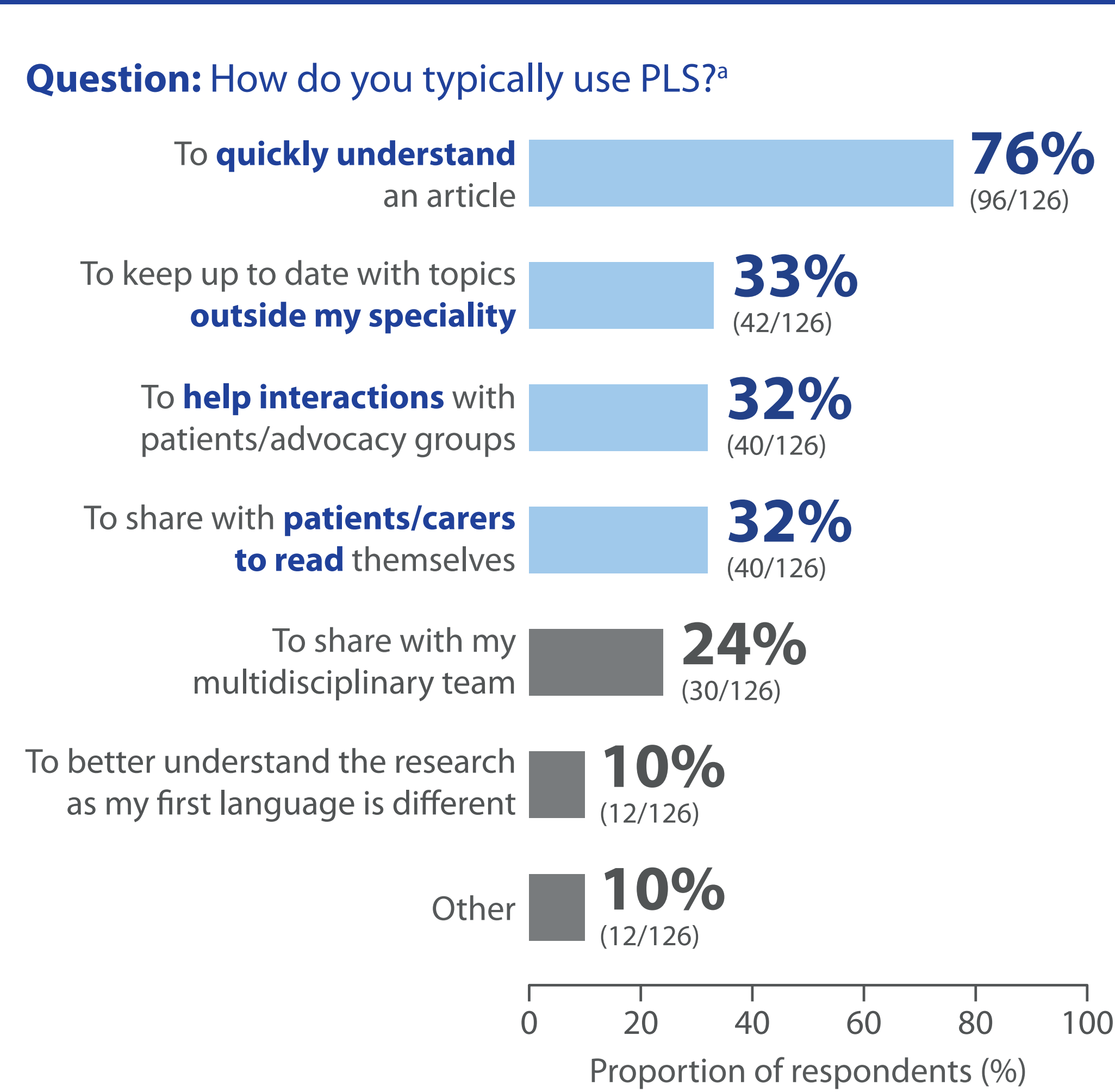
<sup>a</sup>Respondents could select one or more options from a predefined, multiple-choice list. The 133 respondents who had read or contributed to at least one PLS answered this question. HCP, healthcare professional; PLS, plain language summary(ies).

**Figure 2.** Just 5% of HCPs had never read or used a PLS when an article included one.



Each circle represents one respondent.  
<sup>a</sup>The 133 respondents who had read or contributed to at least one PLS answered this question. HCP, healthcare professional; PLS, plain language summary(ies).

**Figure 3.** Most of the 126 HCPs who did read or use PLS used them to gain a quick understanding of publications.

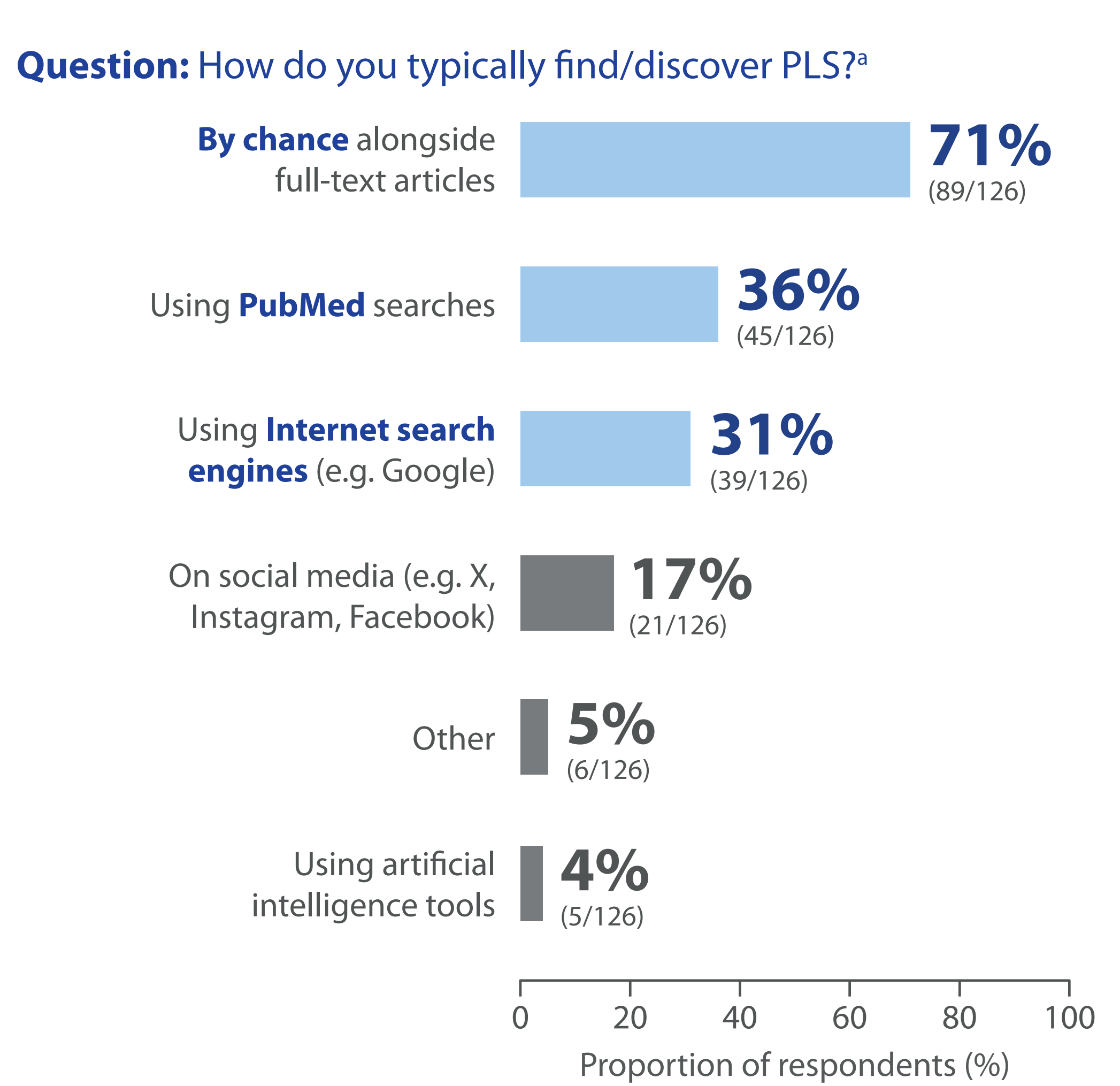


<sup>a</sup>Respondents could select one or more options from a predefined, multiple-choice list. Respondents who had 'never' read a PLS (5%, 7/133; Figure 2) did not answer this question. HCP, healthcare professional; PLS, plain language summary(ies).

## HOW DO HCPs FIND PLS?

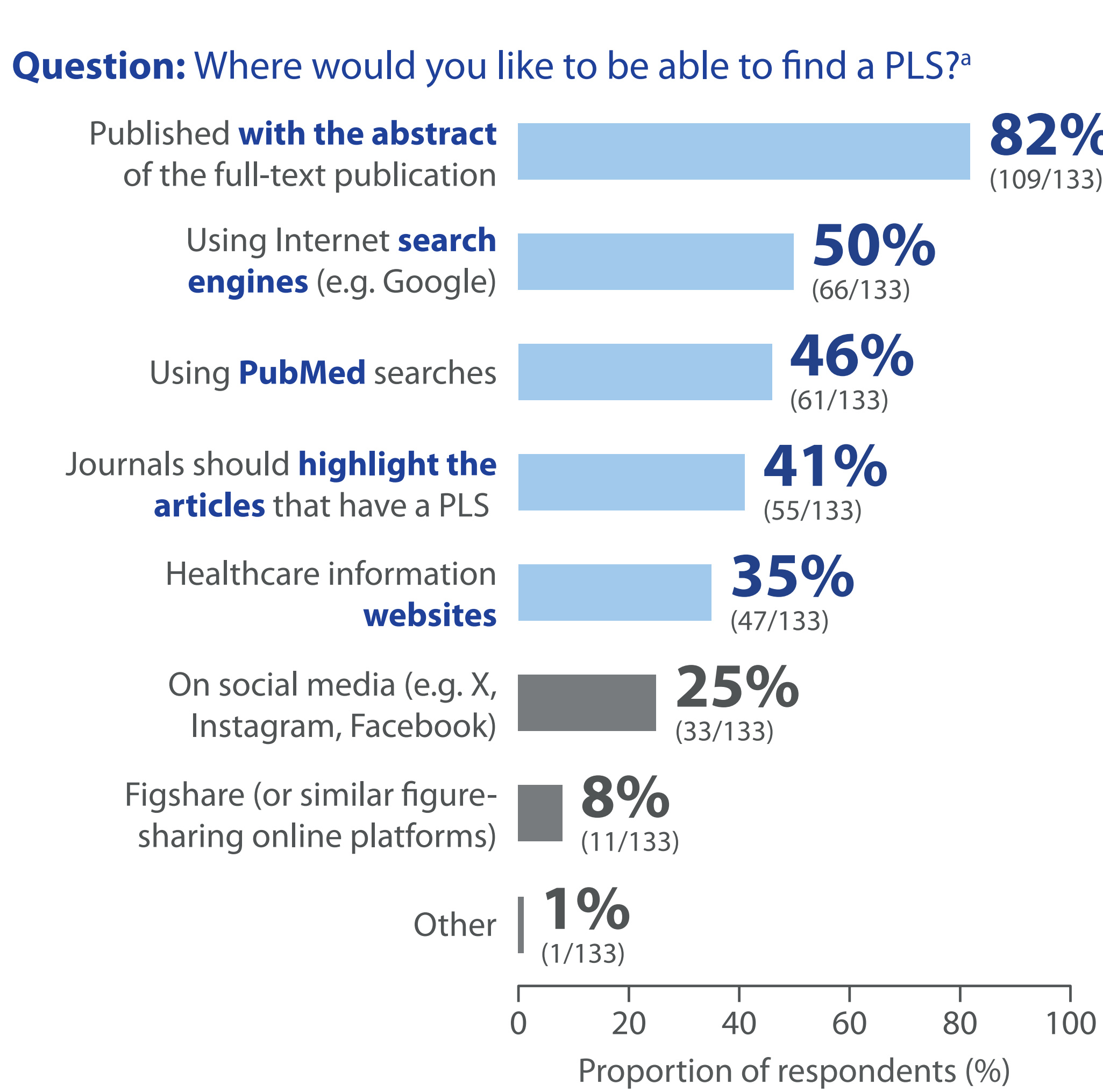
- Most HCPs would like all phase 3 (73%, 97/133) and real-world evidence (54%, 72/133) articles to include a PLS (data not shown).

**Figure 4.** Most HCPs found PLS by chance alongside full-text articles, while one-third used PubMed or Internet searches.



<sup>a</sup>Respondents could select one or more options from a predefined, multiple-choice list. Respondents who had 'never' read a PLS (5%, 7/133; Figure 2) did not answer this question. HCP, healthcare professional; PLS, plain language summary(ies).

**Figure 5.** Most HCPs would like a PLS to be published alongside the abstract of a full-text article.



<sup>a</sup>Respondents could select one or more options from a predefined, multiple-choice list. The 133 respondents who had read or contributed to at least one PLS answered this question. HCP, healthcare professional; PLS, plain language summary(ies).

## WHAT DOES THIS TELL US?

- PLS are a helpful method of communicating scientific research to time-poor HCPs.
- Most HCPs find PLS by chance alongside full-text articles.
- HCPs would like to see more biomedical research publications include a short, text-based PLS, and they would like PLS to be published alongside the abstract in the full-text article.
- Publishing more PLS and improving how they are found will help broaden the impact of scientific research.