

Opinion on open access and the open science practices at the University of Rijeka, Croatia - a cross sectional study

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Background and aim: Initiative to make scientific content open access was one of the first practices of open science and is its cornerstone (1). Attitudes and practices of open science have been investigated before, but scarcely in Croatia. Since University of Rijeka was the first Croatian university with an open science declaration and policies (2) we aimed to analyse opinion on open access and open science practices before open science policies were administered.

Results: There were 192 participants (response rate=15%), of which 110 (57) were female, average age of 42±11 years, mostly from biomedicine (37%), social sciences (31%), and technical sciences (14%) (Figure 1), 20% research novices or post-doc and 80% assistant professors or with a higher rank. Scientists mostly agree that journals should be in open access (88%), would choose an open access journal if they have to choose between 2 journals with similar impact factors (77%), but they consider the impact factor more important than the open access (45%), they consider the publishing fees too high (83%) and 28% still think that open access journals are of less quality (Figure 2). Most of the participants (74%) have published an article in an open-access journal, 33% without a publishing fee. If the article is not available to read they use different strategies to read it: mostly write to the authors (51%), use Sci hub (56%), ask a colleague to help (40%), and ask a librarian (35%). They archive their articles in the Croatian bibliography (CROSB) (70%), on social networks (43%), and on their web (27%) (Table 1). Participants use social networks for dissemination, mostly Research Gate (69%) and LinkedIn (41%).

Limitations: Low response rate because of the pandemic and one institution studied.

Conclusions: Most of the scientists in our study are in favour of open access but consider publication fees too high. The archiving practices are not satisfactory as they mostly don't use digital repositories and more guidance and cooperation with librarians are needed.

Methods: Scientists from University of Rijeka (N=1256) were invited to fulfil an anonymous online questionnaire on open science (Google forms) in 2020. The whole questionnaire consisted of 73 questions: (1) 45 to measure the attitudes towards open science: open access (8 items), open peer-review (12 items), open data (10 items), preprints (9 items), and open science tools (6 items); (2) 20 questions on open science practices; (3) 8 demographic items. The analysis of open peer-review, open data, and preprints is published on a larger sample (3).

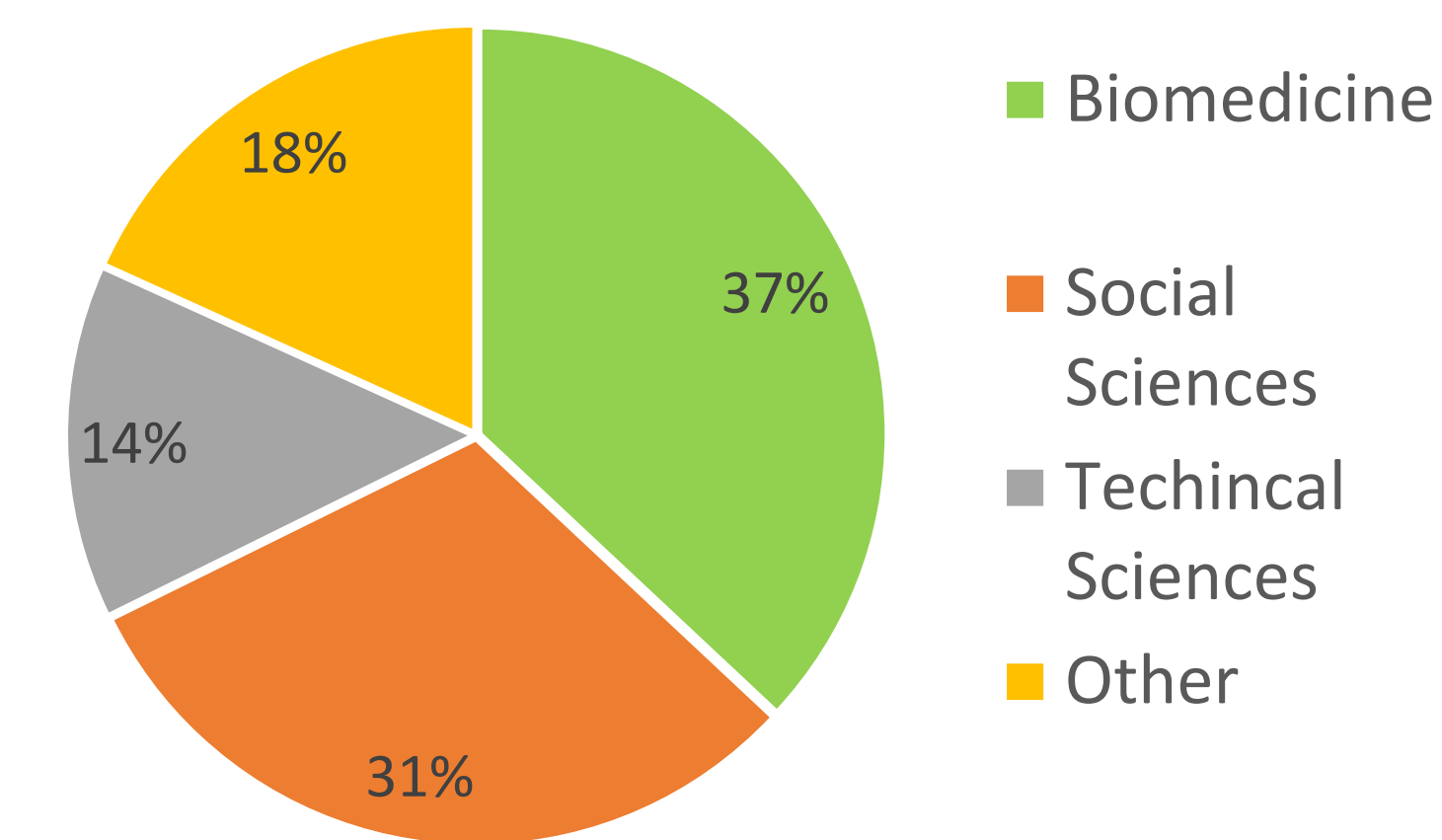


Figure 1. Participants' field

Table 1. Archiving of manuscripts and scientific papers

Question	N (%)
What version of the manuscript / paper are you archiving?*	
• manuscript before sending for publication	38 (19,8)
• manuscript accepted for publication	42 (21,9)
• published work at the time of publication	62 (32,2)
• published work after publication and according to the terms of the journal	36 (18,7)
• all versions	59 (30,7)
• I don't archive	3 (1,6)
I archive my published papers in: *	
• institutional digital repository	21 (10,9)
• subject digital repository	7 (3,6)
• own website	51 (26,6)
• on social media	83 (43,2)
• in Croatian Scientific Bibliography (CROSB)	134 (69,8)
• in my computer	11 (5,7)
Who is archiving?	
• I, myself	181 (94,3)
• on my own behalf I allowed it to other people: librarians, assistants, administrative staff	35 (18,2)

*participant could choose multiple answers

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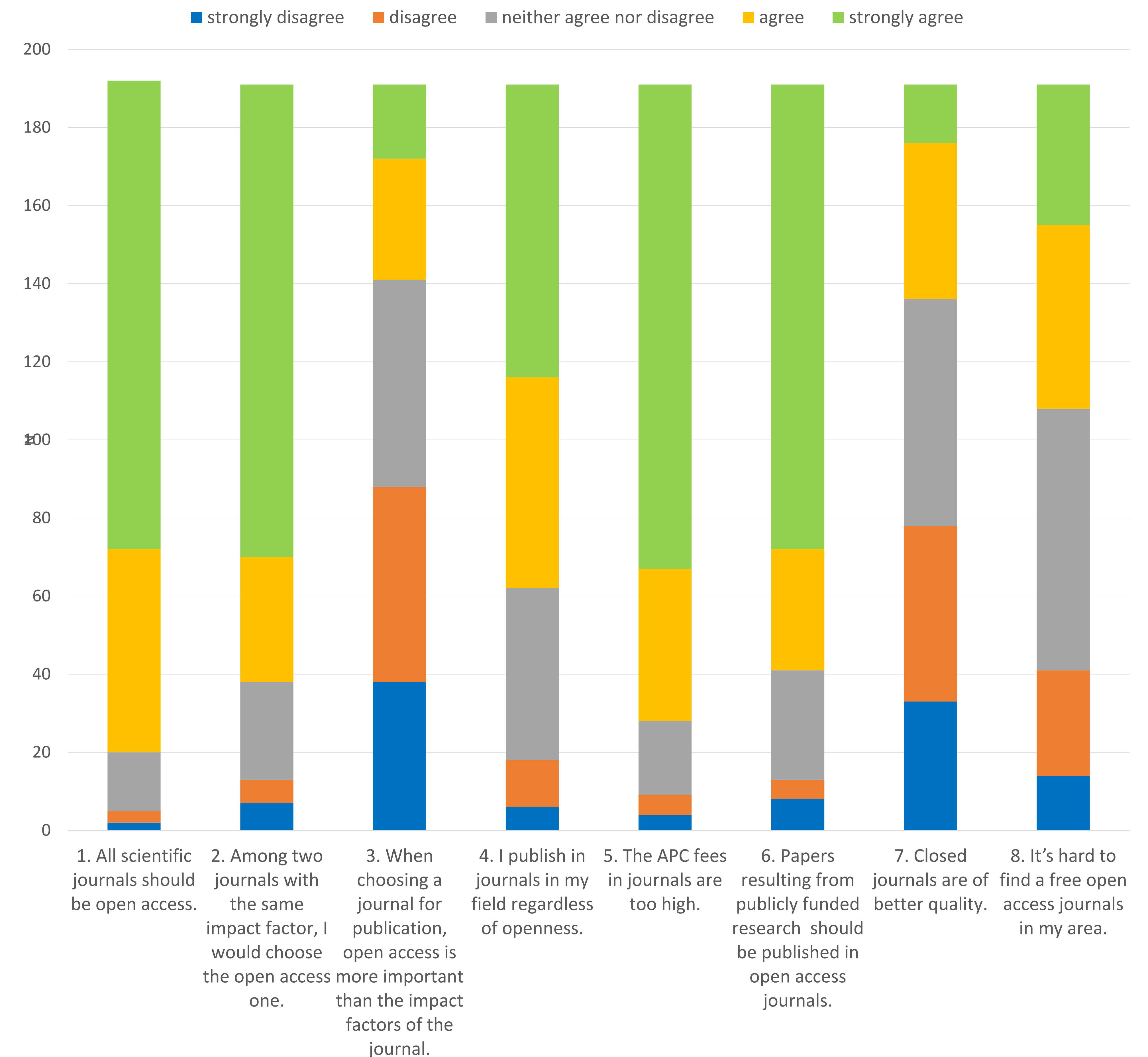


Figure 2. Opinion on open access practices at the University of Rijeka, Croatia (n=192)

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Competing interests:

Ksenija Bazdaric is the Editor in Chief of European Science Editing, the official journal of EASE.

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