

A Cross-Sectional Study of the Information-Seeking Behaviors of an Independent Academic Medical Center Staff

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Background

- Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) is the practice of choosing the best quality of evidence for management of each patient
- Over the last 20 years, the amount of medical knowledge has increased tremendously
- Professionally, physicians have an obligation to continually appraise this new information, but the volume can be a barrier
- There have been few studies looking at how providers handle this barrier and search for questions asked by their patients

Problem Statement

- This study aims to explore the information-seeking behaviors (ISB) of medical providers at an independent academic medical center as well as their perceptions of the reliability of resources used.

Methods

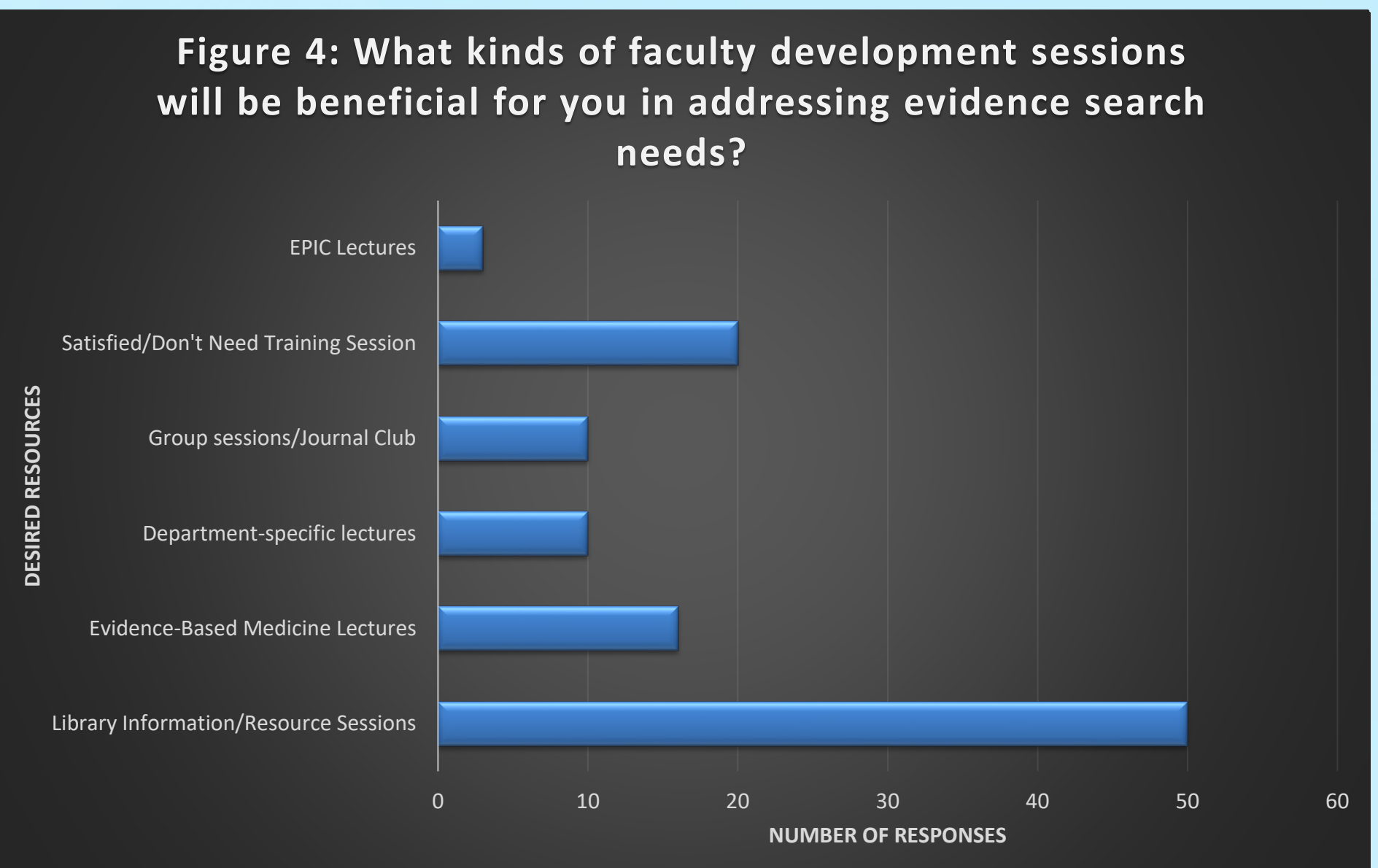
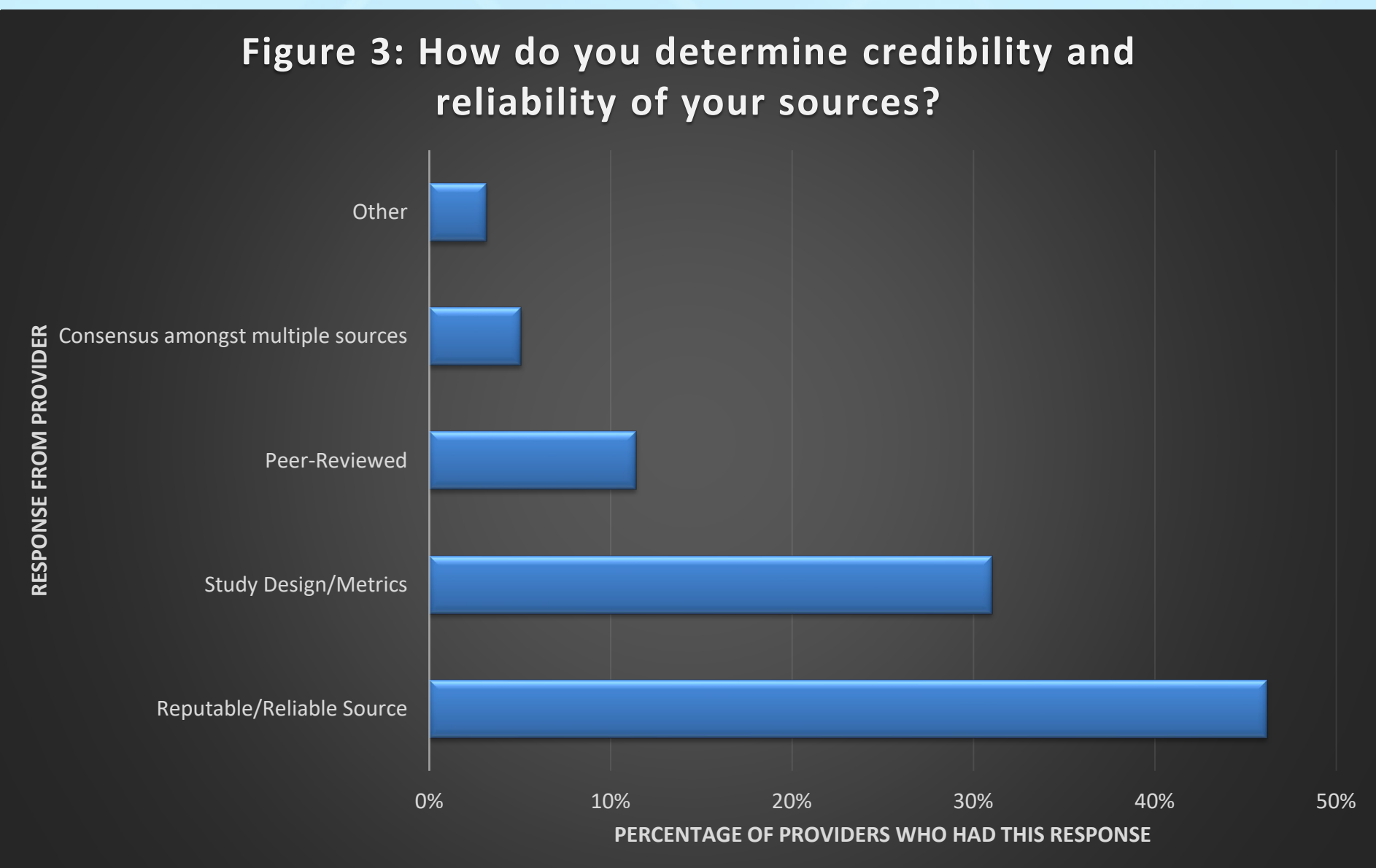
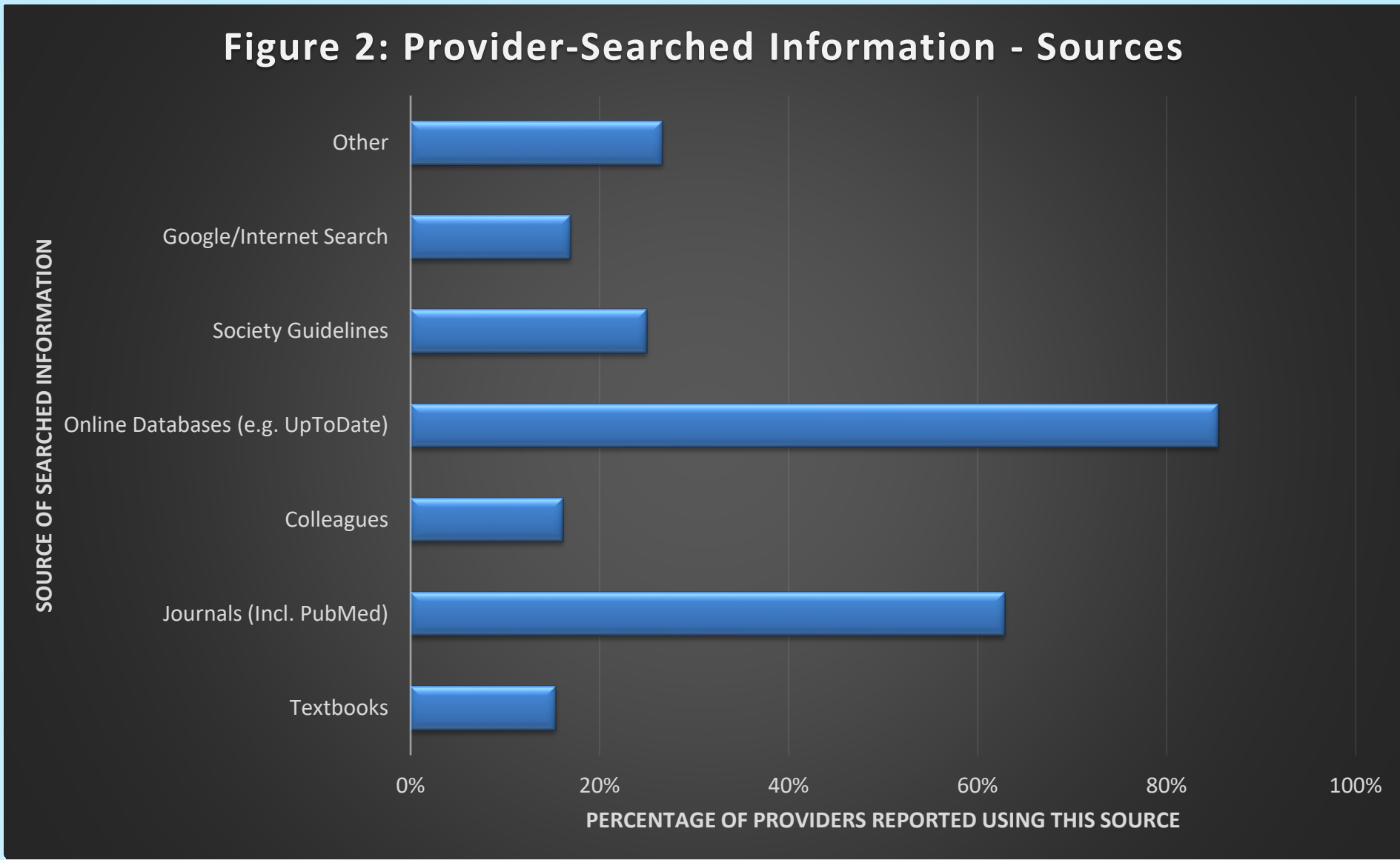
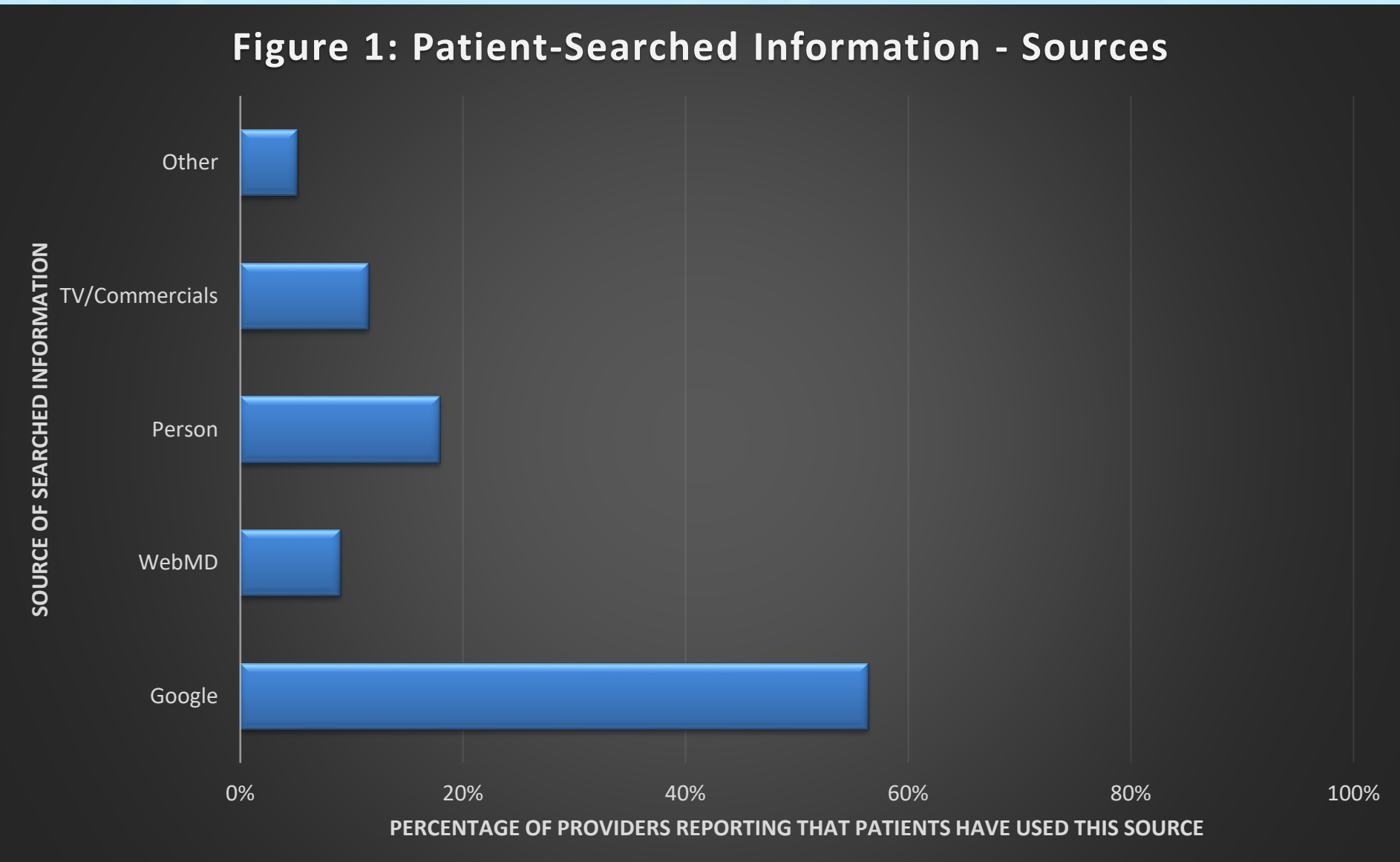
- IRB approved, this unrestricted educational grant funded study was conducted at an independent academic medical center
- Stratified and random purposive sampling to ensure equal representation from each of the eight departments (see Table 1)
- Standardized, 1-on-1, 30-minute interviews with physicians and advanced practice clinicians (APCs)
- Interviews were recorded and transcribed
- Single-coded, quantitative data analysis

Results

Over 10% of the providers at this medical center were interviewed and included in this data analysis, providing us with a cohort that is representative of the entire medical staff. Their patients are bringing in searched information regarding their diagnoses and treatments, mainly using a generic Google search to find it. Most providers reported using online databases (e.g. UpToDate, DynaMed) and journals to search for information. Reliability was primarily determined by the journal from which the information was sourced and the methodology of the study. Physicians/APCs have expressed a desire for formal training on how to access and maximize the medical library resources that are available.

Table 1: Medical Staff Stratification and Study Enrollment

Department	Total Number of Physicians	Sampled Participants
Dental Medicine	69	5
Emergency and Hospital Medicine	128	14
Family Medicine	165	16
Medicine	381	42
Obstetrics and Gynecology	63	6
Pediatrics	123	11
Psychiatry	26	3
Surgery	196	21
TOTAL	1,151	119



Conclusions & Future Implications

- ISB vary widely, but largely consist of **online databases** (UpToDate, DynaMed, etc.) with less of an emphasis on primary literature.
- Providers primarily determine reliability of their sources by **reputation** and **study design**
- Most provider-patient interactions are **positive** when searched information is brought in by patients, lead to better relationships
- Future implications of this study include **faculty development sessions** focused on teaching providers how to use the library resources to better search for information. Additionally, this study could impact the institutional **online database subscription**.

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