

# AUTHOR INSIGHTS

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CHINA

# 1

## Overview

The annual Author Insights Survey, run by Nature Publishing Group (NPG) and our sister company Palgrave Macmillan, forms part of a wider research programme which aims to understand general author attitudes and behaviours around publishing, and to track any changes over time. The survey enables us to provide the best service for our authors, and keeps us close to the views of our community.

The survey is conducted for internal purposes each year to provide longitudinal data and to track changes in attitudes and behaviours.

This year's survey included questions on topics as diverse as factors that contribute to a journal's reputation, the value of services offered by publishers and authors' ideal audiences for their research.

The following data compares responses from authors based at institutions in China to Rest of World (ROW) authors. The final slides show changes from the China responses of a similar survey that was conducted in 2014.

## Results

NPG and Palgrave Macmillan are making the survey data publicly available on figshare ([http://figshare.com/articles/Author\\_Insights\\_2015\\_survey/1425362](http://figshare.com/articles/Author_Insights_2015_survey/1425362)), and welcome others to use the data for further analysis and to share their findings in the spirit of an open dialogue on how we might improve the publishing process. Similarly, NPG welcomes any suggestions for improvements from the wider community to ensure the survey is a neutral representation of the author's perspective in future years. Some of the data has been redacted to ensure respondent privacy.

This report is intended to be a brief guide to some of the issues contained within the data. It is important to note that the survey is not designed to be a comprehensive piece of research into every issue, nor to be an academically rigorous study.

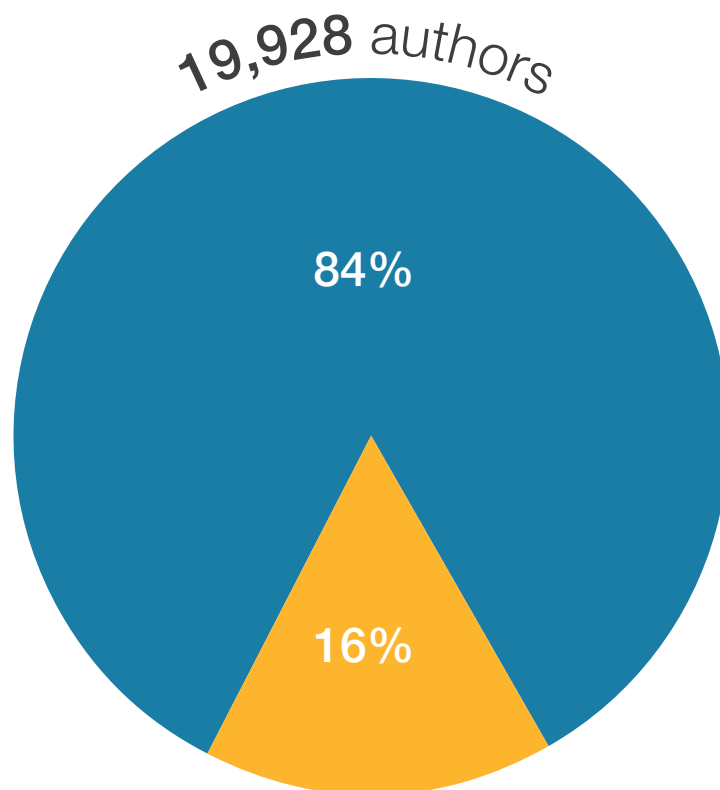
# 2

## Respondent profile

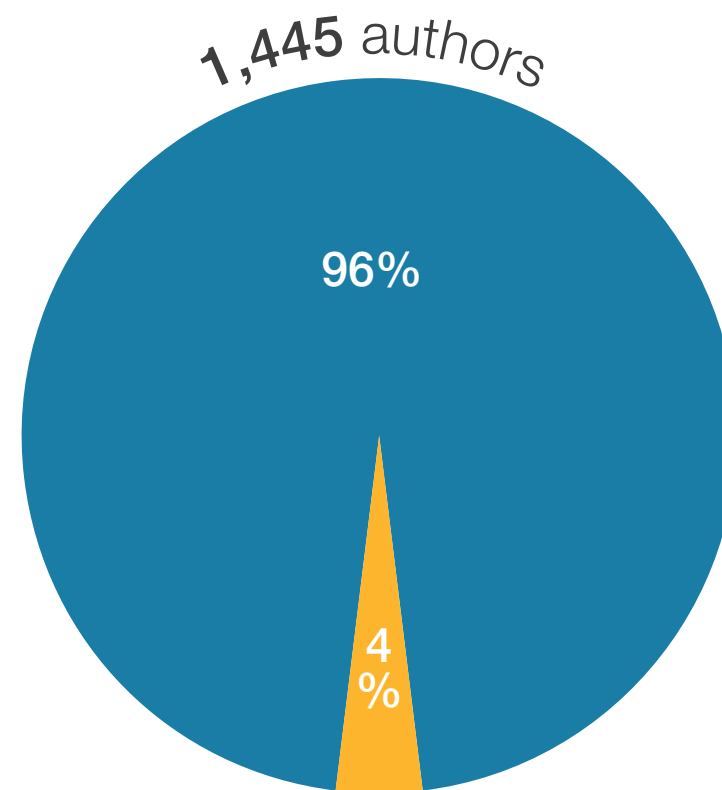
21,377 authors

Rest of world (excl. China)

- Scientific, technical and medical
- Humanities and social sciences



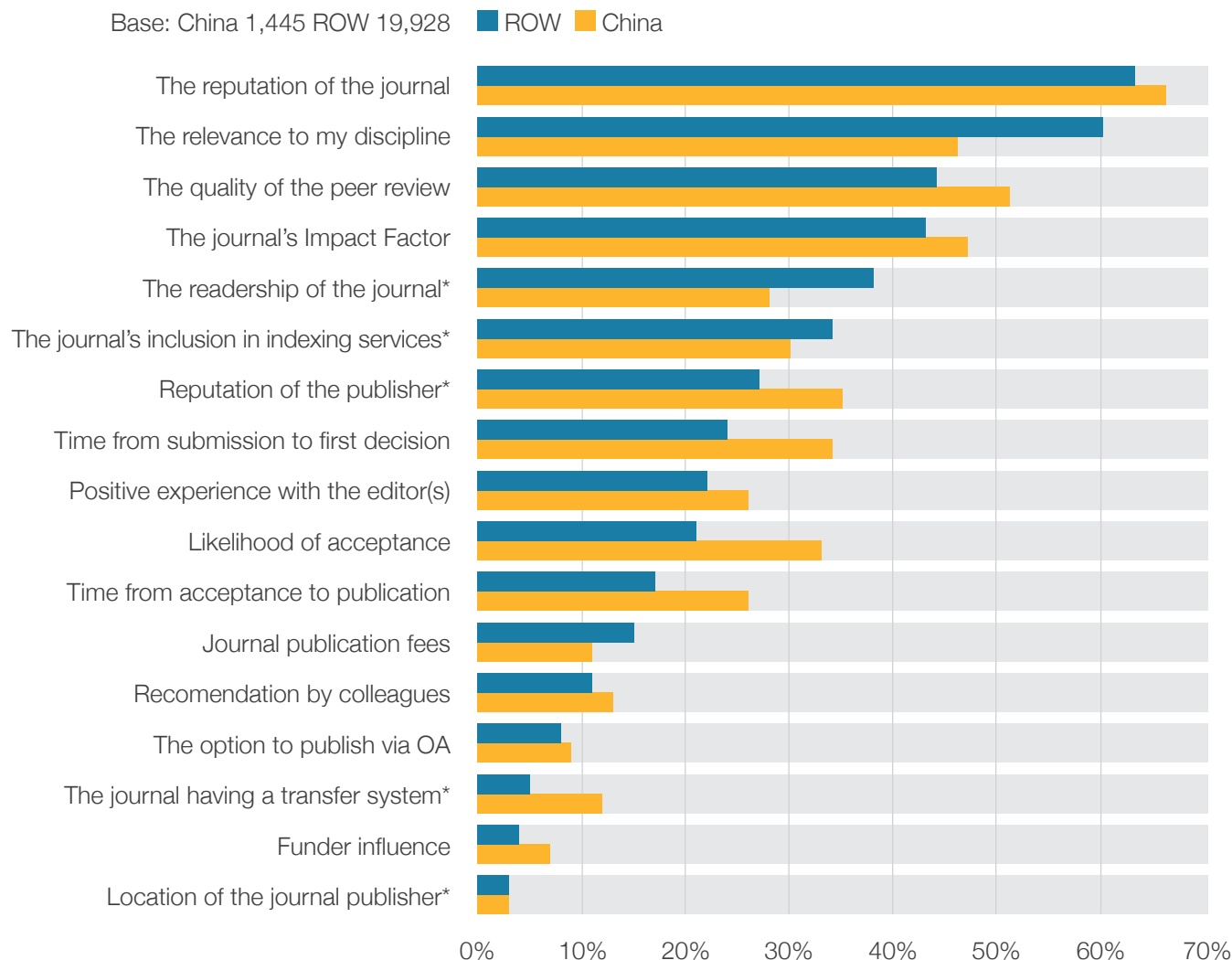
China



# 3

## Factors driving journal choice for publication

Authors based at institutions in China appear to prioritise efficiency



### Significant differences

The likelihood of acceptance, speed and having a system in place to transfer rejected papers are more important to authors based at institutions in **China** compared to their **ROW** counterparts when choosing where to submit their papers.

The relevance of journal content and the readership of the journal are less important for authors based at institutions in **China**. They were also less concerned about journal publication fees.

Graph showing respondents indicating "very important" only. Data labels showing ROW and China difference on five factors with greatest difference.

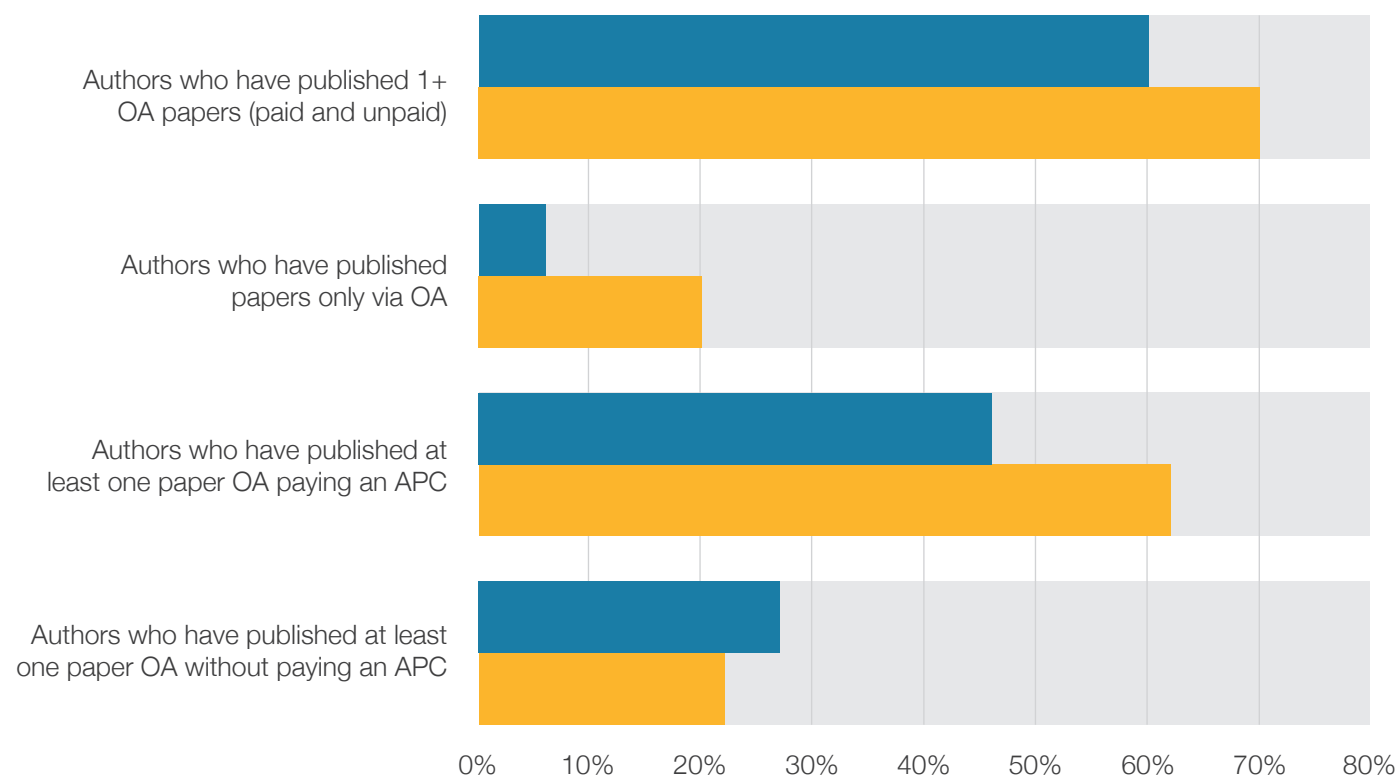
## 4

# Open Access activity

20% of authors based at institutions in China have published OA-only

“Within the past 3 years, how many peer-reviewed articles have you published via each of the following models?” (2014-2015 growth)

Base: China 1,445 ROW 19,928 ■ ROW ■ China



Traditional publication	ROW	China
Mean no. of papers	7.8	6.7
Mean no. papers (matching on upper limit, set to 88)*	7.6	6.7
Median no. of papers	4	3

OA with APC	ROW	China
Mean no. of papers	1.5	1.5
Mean no. papers (matching on upper limit, set to 88)*	1.4	1.5
Median no. of papers	0	1

OA with no APC	ROW	China
Mean no. of papers	0.8	0.7
Mean no. papers (matching on upper limit, set to 88)*	0.7	0.7
Median no. of papers	0	0

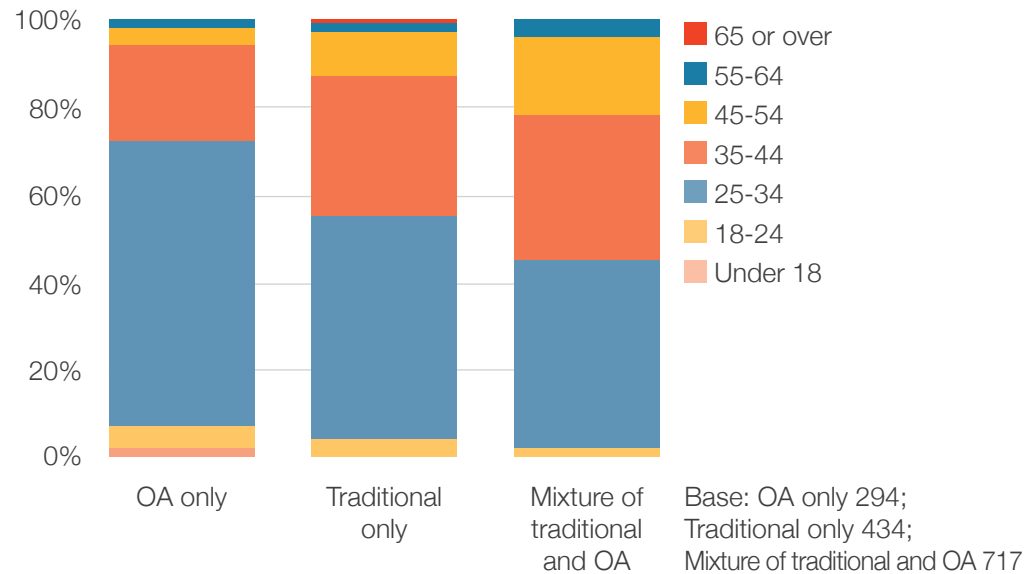
\*Arithmetic mean calculated with upper limit applied to both sets of data in order to prevent skewing of results by large outliers

# 5

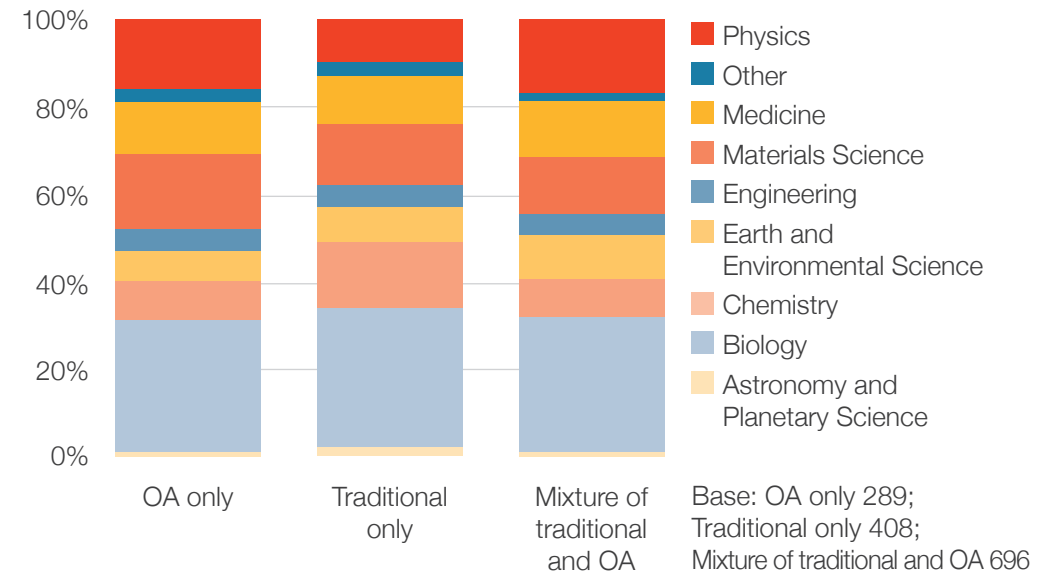
## Demographics by publication type

OA-only authors tend to be younger and working in the physical sciences

Breakdown of age of respondents based at institutions in China by publication type



Breakdown of China respondents' discipline by publication type



### Mean number of papers published by OA-only authors by age

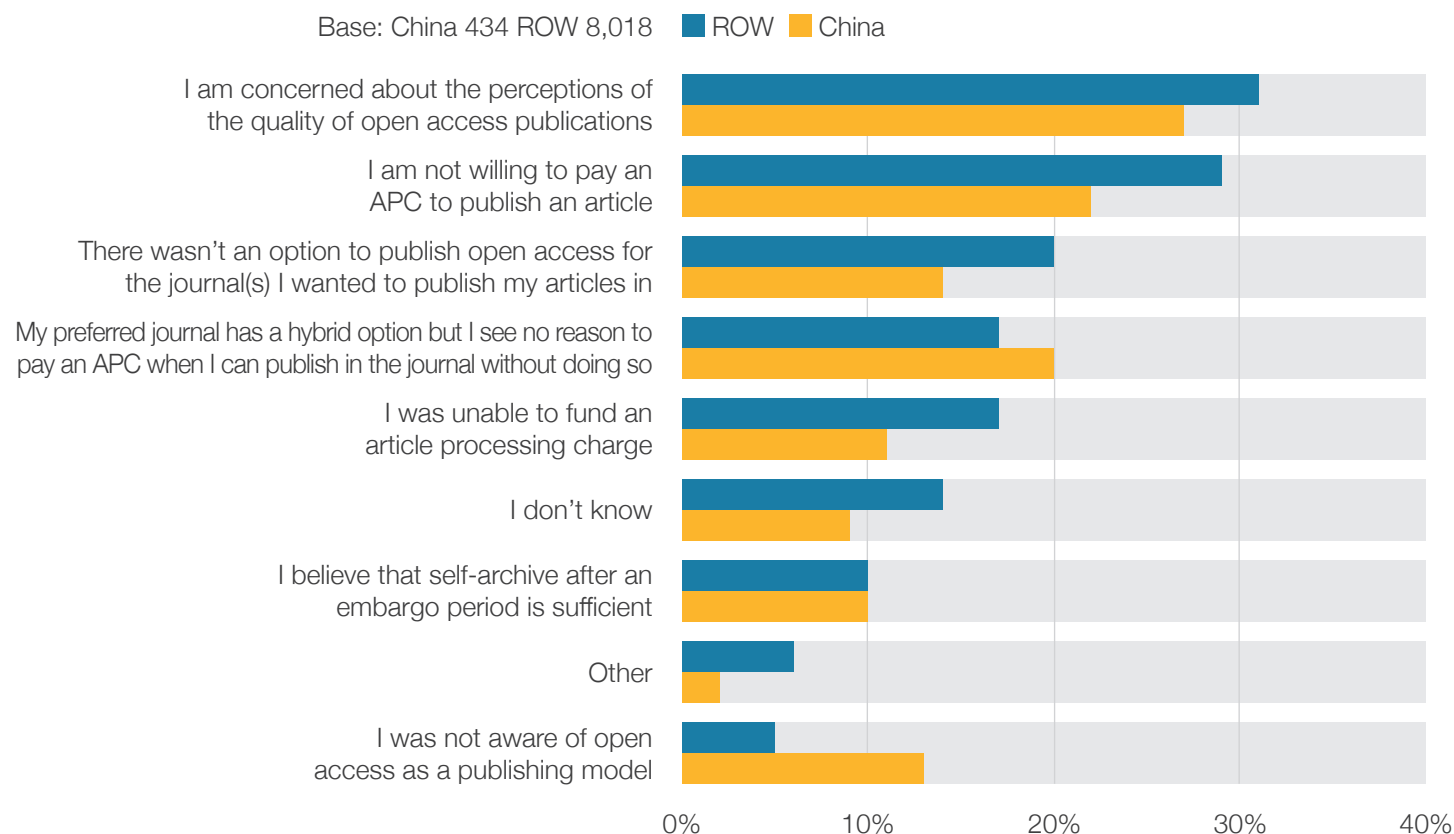
	Overall mean	Under 35s	Over 35s
China	3.0	2.1	5.3
ROW	3.6	2.3	4.9

# 6

## Reasons authors don't publish OA

Quality concerns are the biggest factor preventing authors publishing OA

“Which of the following are reasons why you haven't published any of your articles via an immediate open access model in the past three years?”



### Significant differences

Fewer authors based at institutions in **China** indicated they were “unable to fund an article processing charge” (**11%** compared to **17%** for **ROW**). In 2014 this was ranked as the third most popular reason for not publishing OA in China but in 2015 has fallen to sixth place.

More authors based at institutions in **ROW** said they were unwilling to pay an APC to publish their article compared to their **China** counterparts (**29%** compared to **22%**).

More authors based at institutions in **China** indicated they were not aware of open access as a publishing model (**13%** compared to **5%** for **ROW**).

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## Available funding for open access APCs

OA APC budget available to more authors based at institutions in China compared to ROW

18% of **ROW** respondents indicated they did not know how much budget they had for publication costs, compared to 11% of respondents based at institutions in **China**

Base: China 1,421 ROW 19,672

Proportion who have budget to cover publication costs (of those who do know)\*

**68%** | **92%**

\*Excluding respondents who indicated "I don't know"

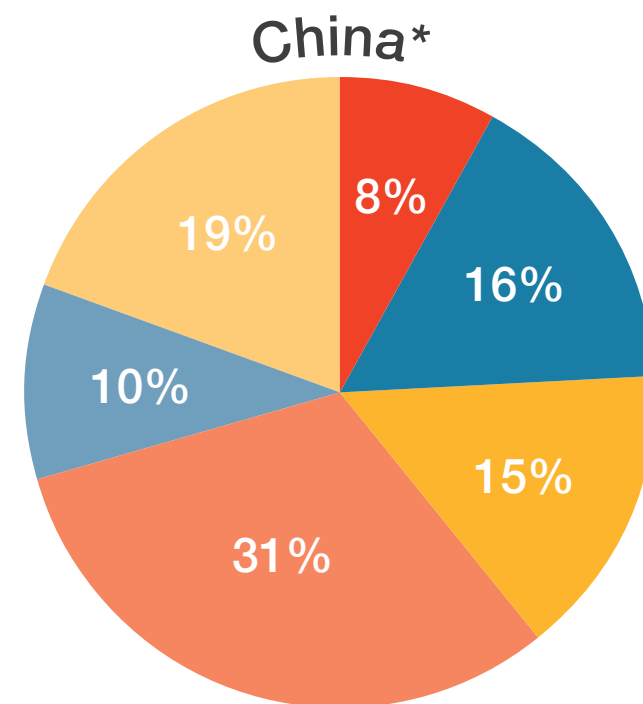
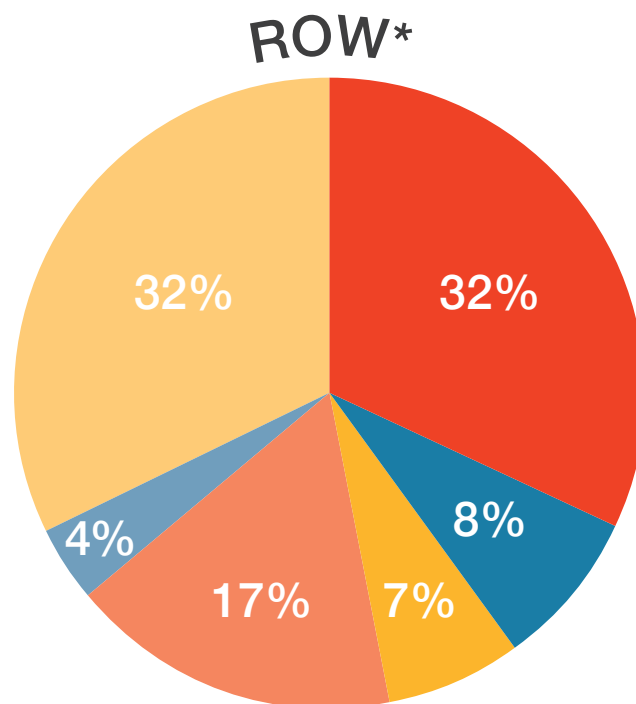
Base excl. "don't know" China 1,269 ROW 16,194

Proportion of authors reporting more than \$1,000 publication budget

**21%** | **41%**

- There is no budget allocated to publication costs
- Less than \$500
- \$500-\$999
- \$1,000-\$4,999
- \$5,000 and above
- Reasonable publication costs are permitted, but no amount is specified

"How much funding (in USD) do you have access to this year to cover publication costs for payments such as article processing charges (open access fees), colour or page charges?"



Base excl. "don't know": China 1,269 ROW 16,194



# Awareness of funder open access mandates

OA funder mandates more prevalent in China

Proportion who don't know what their funder requirements are with respect to open access

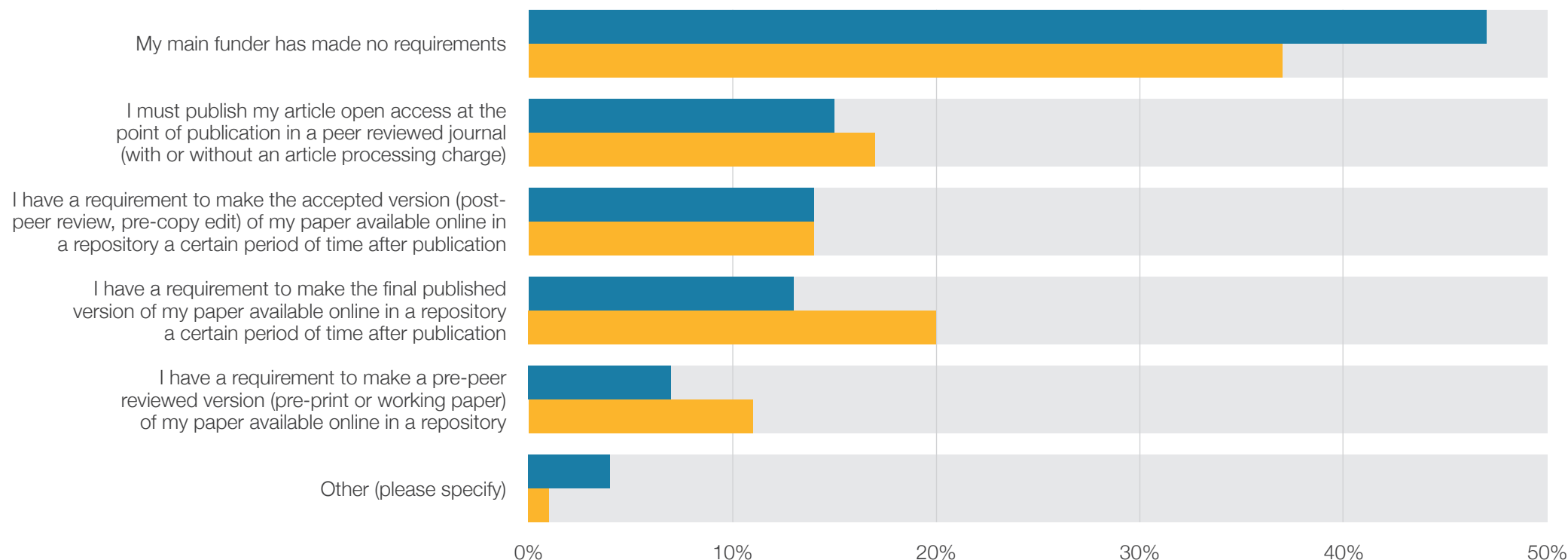
**25%** | **12%**

Base: China 1,445 ROW 19,929

## “What is your understanding of your main funder’s requirements with respect to open access?”

Base excl. “don’t know”: China 1,274 ROW 15,005

■ ROW ■ China

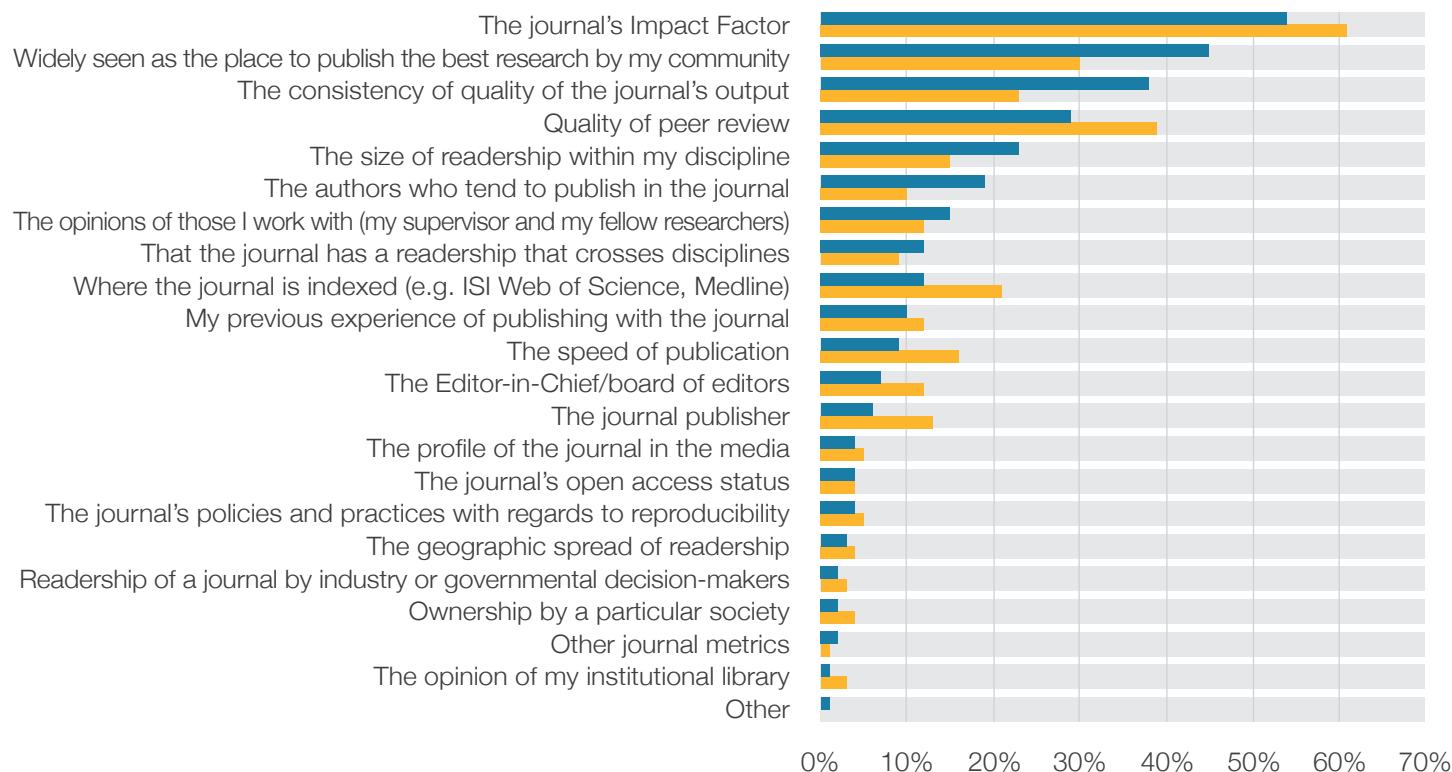


# Measures of journal reputation

Authors based at institutions in China lean towards metrics over journal community as measures of reputation

“We’d now like you to think about a journal in your field which you consider to have a good reputation. What is it about this journal that gives it a high reputation?”\*

Base: China 1,393 ROW 19,255 ■ ROW ■ China



## Significant differences

Where the journal is indexed is more important to authors based at institutions in **China** compared to their **ROW** counterparts, with **21%** selecting it in their top three factors compared to **12%** in **ROW**.

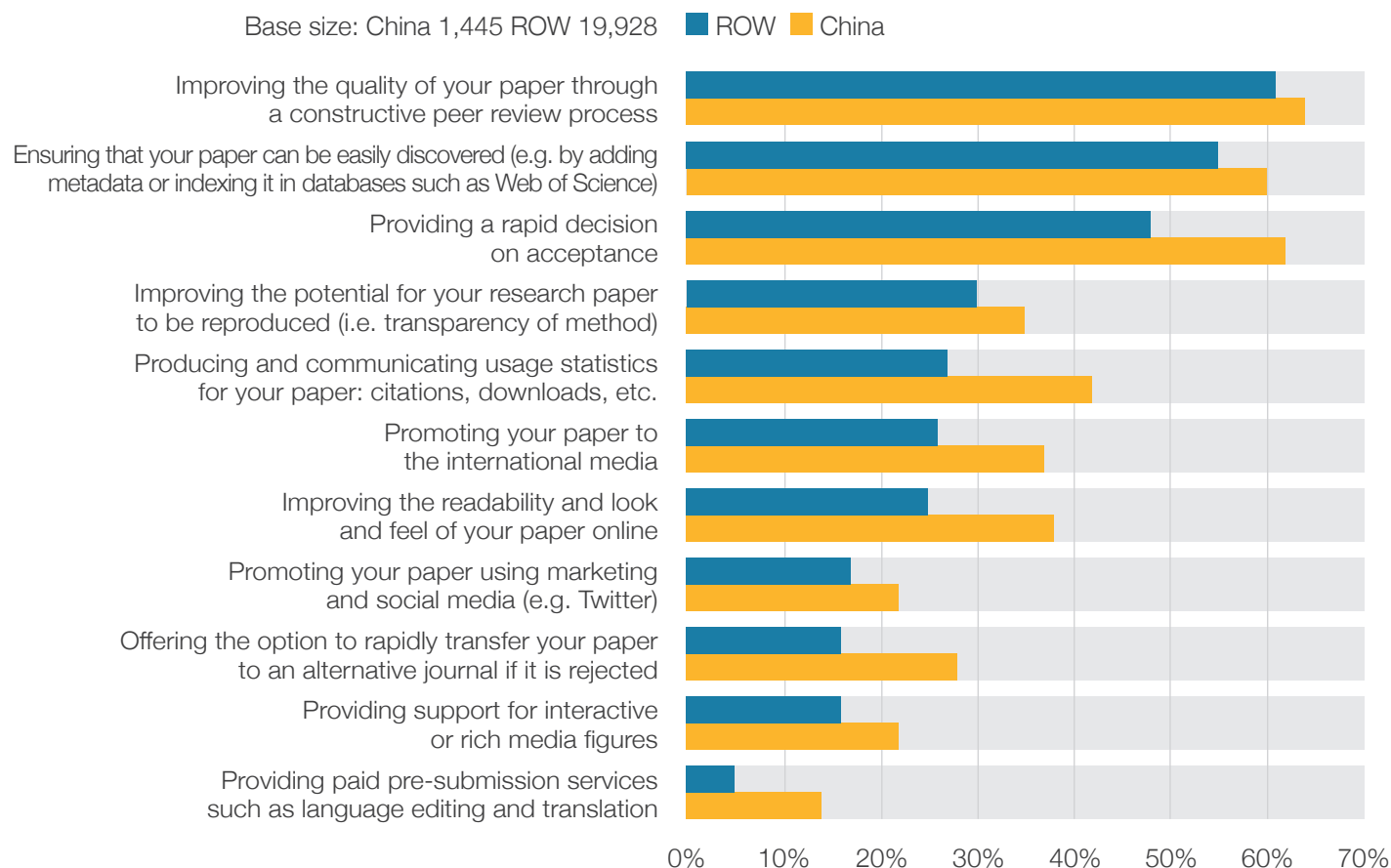
Being seen as the best place to publish by the community is less important to authors based at institutions in **China**, with **45% ROW** respondents selecting it in their top three reasons compared to **30%** for China.

\*“Select the 8 most significant factors from the list below, in terms of how you judge the reputation of this journal. Rank of 1 = Most significant factor in judging the reputation of the journal.”

Graph shows proportion of respondents indicating factor in top three of the eight factors selected

Authors based at institutions in China find all publisher services more valuable compared to ROW counterparts

“How valuable are each of these services to you, as an author?”\*



## Least valuable services

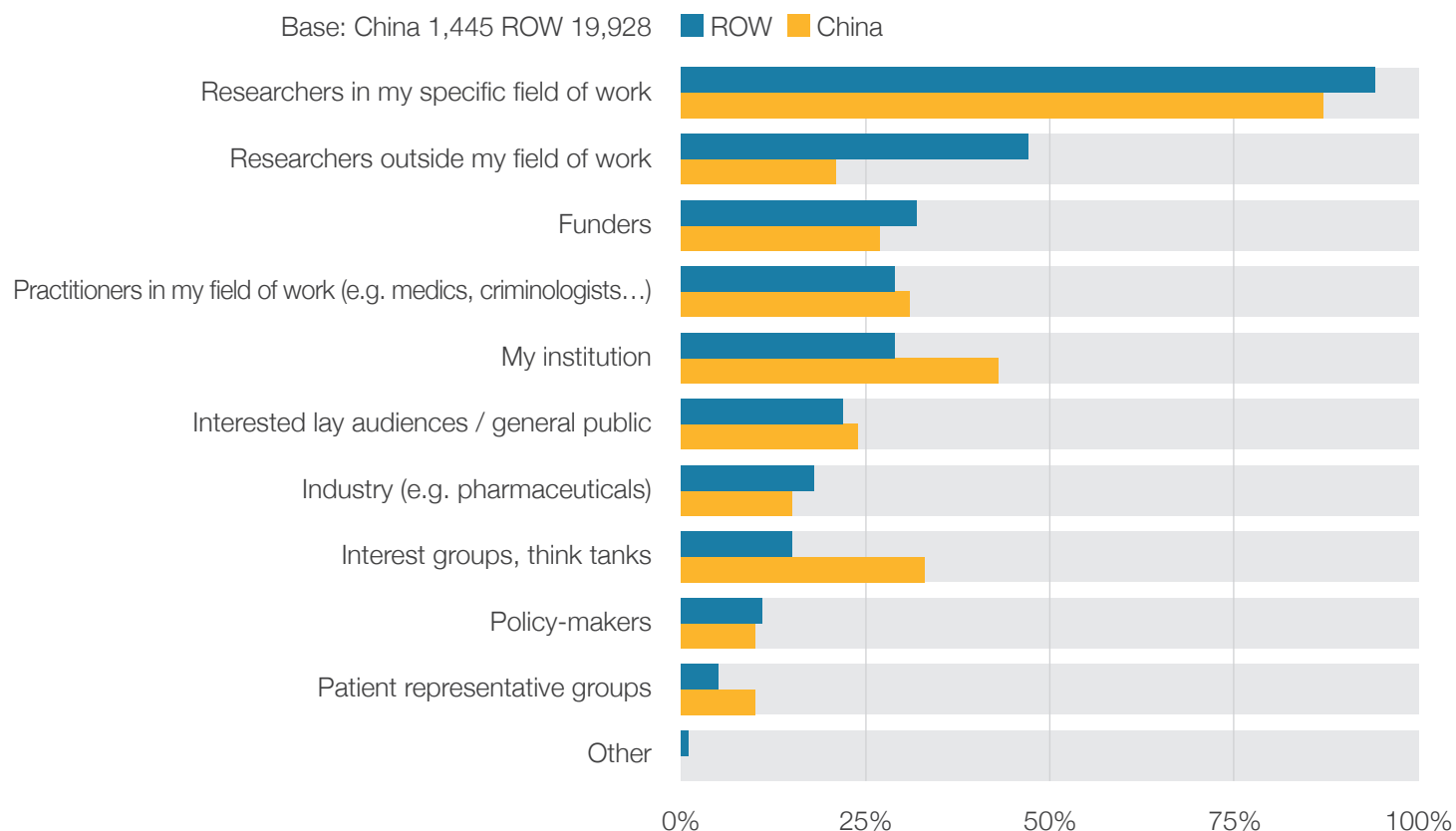
Proportion of respondents scoring 1 and 2	ROW	China
Providing paid pre-submissionservices such as language editing & translation	43%	20%
Offering the option to rapidly transfer your paper to an alternative journal if it is rejected	16%	9%
Promoting your paper using marketing and social media (eg Twitter)	15%	6%

\*Proportion of respondents assigning a 9 or 10 to the indicated service

# Authors' ideal audience

Author's own institution more important for authors based at institutions in China

“Thinking about your most recent paper, who would you most want to be made aware of your published research? Please rank the top 5 groups of people in order of their importance to you.”



## Significant differences

Making the author's own institution aware of their published work is more important to authors based at institutions in **China** (43% compared to 29% ROW).

Reaching interest groups and think tanks is more important to authors based at institutions in **China** (33% compared to 15% ROW).

Making researchers outside their field of work aware of their published research is less important to authors based at institutions in **China** (21% compared to 47% ROW).

Graph showing proportion of respondents who indicated audience group in the top three groups they selected

The following slides show select data from the 2014 Author Insights survey with a China / ROW comparison.

Between the 2014 and 2015 versions of the survey, we added an additional five factors to the question on factors influencing journal submission (the readership of the journal, the journal's inclusion in indexing services, reputation of the publisher, the journal having a system in place to transfer rejected papers, and location of journal publisher) and removed one factor (the association of the journal with an established society).

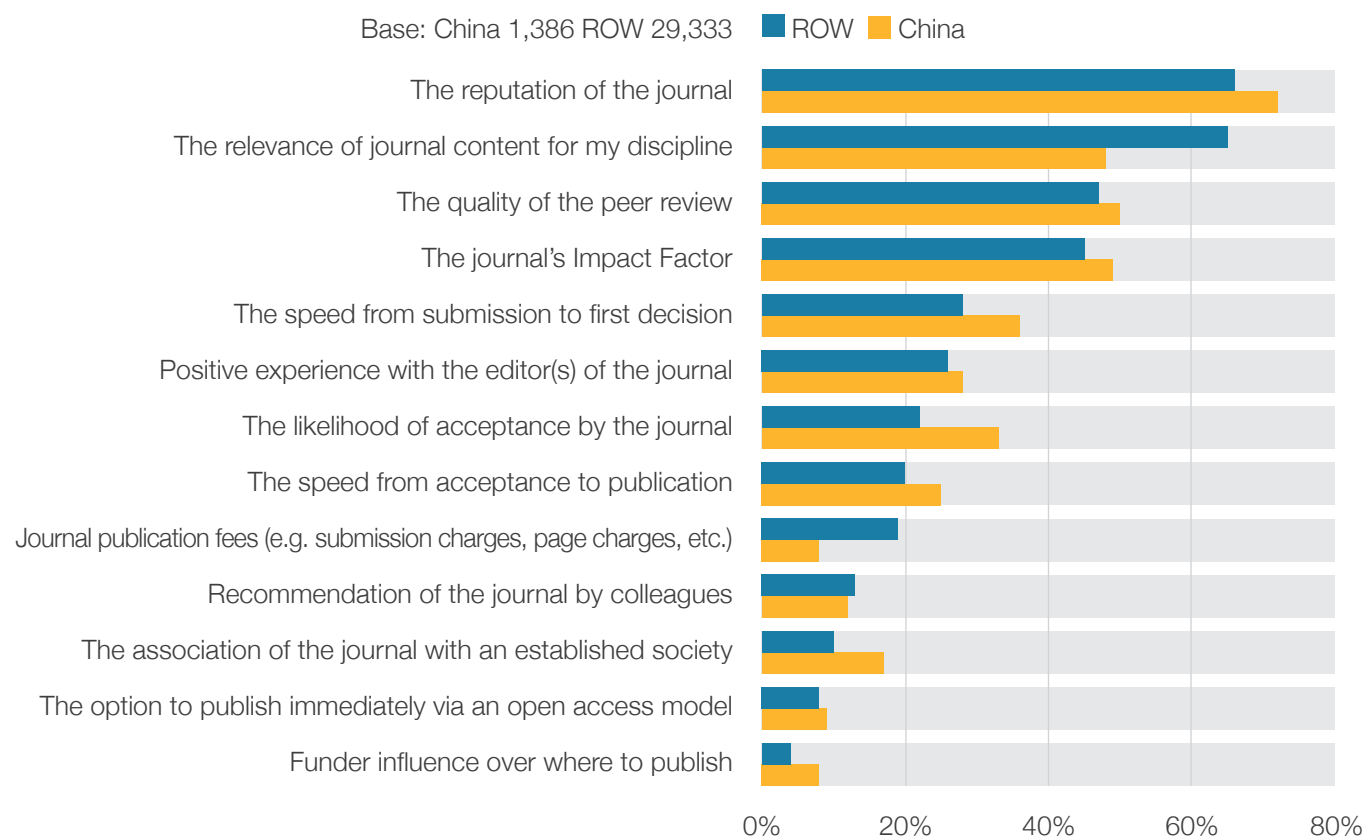
The proportion of respondents indicating the factor "journal publication fees (e.g. submission charges, page charges, etc.)" as "very important" in influencing journal choice for submission, has increased by 3% for those respondents based at an institution in China, whilst it has decreased for ROW respondents from 19% to 15%. This may be related to the fact that a greater proportion of China respondents in 2015 have open access funder mandates.

The proportion of ROW authors who indicated they don't know how much budget they have for publication costs has grown from 14% to 18% in 2014-2015 (compared to respondents based at institutions in China where the proportion indicating "I don't know" grew from only 10% to 11%).

In both groups, the proportion who say they have available budget for publication costs has increased from 2014 to 2015 - however, this is much higher for respondents based at institutions in China. For this group, the proportion indicating "reasonable publication costs" has gone down, and there is a growing proportion of specified publication costs.

# Factors driving journal choice for publication

2014 data: “Please use the scale below to indicate the importance of the following factors when deciding which journal to submit your research to.”



## Significant differences between 2014 and 2015 responses:

Proportion of respondents based at institutions in **China** indicating “the reputation of the journal” as a “very important” factor in deciding where to submit, has fallen from 72% in 2014 to 66% in 2015.

Proportion of **ROW** respondents indicating “the relevance of content for my discipline” as a “very important” factor in deciding where to submit, has fallen from 65% in 2014 to 60% in 2015.

Graph showing proportion of authors indicating factor as “very important”.

Five additional factors listed in 2015 version of the survey compared to 2014 version

# Available funding for Open Access APCs

Proportion who don't know how much budget they have	ROW	China
2014	14%	10%
2015	18%	11%

Base: China 1,386 ROW 29,333

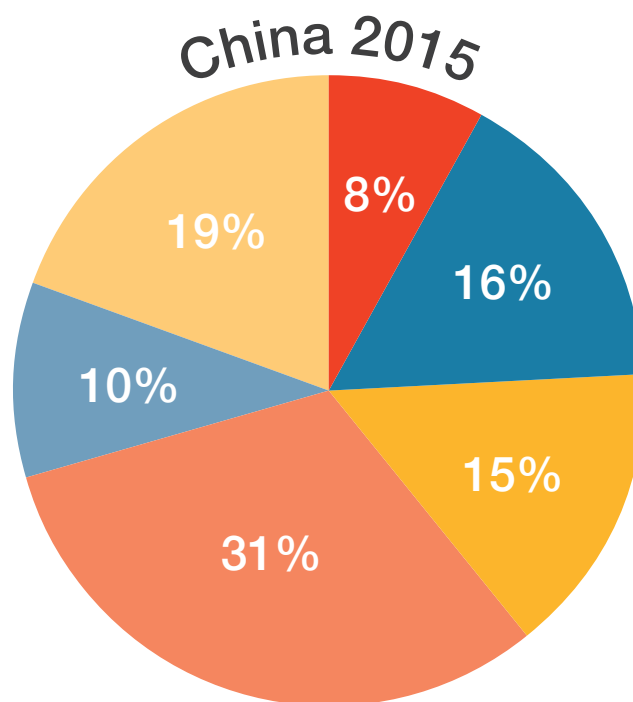
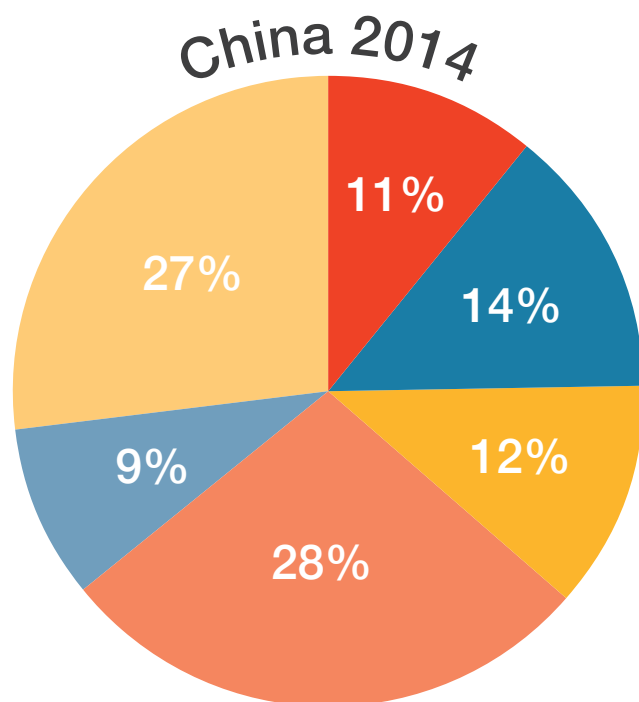
Proportion who have budget to cover publication costs	ROW	China
2014	66%	89%
2015	68%	92%

Base excl. 'don't know' China 1,246 ROW 25,193

## Significant differences between 2014 and 2015 responses:

The proportion of **ROW** respondents indicating “I don’t know” in response to the question of available funding has grown from 14% in 2014 to 18% in 2015, whilst this has only increased slightly for **China**.

The proportion of respondents based at institutions in **China** who have funding has increased from 89% in 2014 to 92% in 2015



- There is no budget allocated to publication costs
- Less than \$500
- \$500-\$999
- \$1,000-\$4,999
- \$5,000 and above
- Reasonable publication costs are permitted, but no amount is specified

2014 Base excl. “don’t know”: China 1,269 ROW 16,194  
 2015 Base excl. “don’t know”: China 1,445 ROW 19,929