

ABSTRACT: 2017 ELAM Institutional Action Project Symposium

Project Title: Strategies to Facilitate Research for Clinical Faculty

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Background, Challenge or Opportunity: Research in the Department of Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin spans a broad spectrum that includes basic, translational and clinical research, in addition to clinical trials, chart reviews and projects on education, population, epidemiology, quality improvement, and outcomes. While many clinical faculty, particularly the junior faculty, have an interest in engaging in research, it is becoming apparent that many of them are facing barriers that prevent them from initiating or participating in projects of interest.

Purpose/Objectives: The objectives of this project are two-fold: (i) to develop a series of workshops that will provide clinicians with the tools required to successfully initiate and implement research projects and (ii) to pair each workshop with peer-mentoring sessions. Using this two-pronged approach, small groups of faculty with shared research interests will equip themselves with specialized skills sets and work together to develop a research question and design and carry out successful research projects.

Methods/Approach: To best assess the needs of our faculty, a survey was sent to all 347 faculty in the Department of Medicine and information was gathered about their past and current level of engagement in research activities, the barriers they face in participating in research projects, and resources that would facilitate further participation in research.

Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy: We received 130 responses, but only evaluated 116 responses as research-track faculty were excluded from our analysis. Respondents of all ranks (Instructor, 1.8%; Assistant Professor, 40.4%; Associate Professor, 22.8% and Professor, 35.1%) were represented, and included members from all 10 Divisions within the Department. Nearly 46% of respondents had 0-10% protected time for research or other academic activities. Approximately 92% of faculty have participated in research projects, with the majority serving as primary/co-principal investigators. However, in current times, barriers to research included complicated processes related to institutional online submission mechanisms and obtaining IRB approvals, lack of research funding, lack of biostatistical support and importantly, lack of time to devote to research activities. Based on survey feedback, we plan to offer workshops focused on: (i) preparation of IRB protocols and obtaining ethics approvals; (ii) performing clinical trials (initiation to publication); (iii) data collection, management, analyses and interpretation; and (iv) use of existing databases and registries.

Conclusions/Impact/Potential Impact: Our clinical faculty are motivated and realize the importance of engaging in research, however, a lack of protected time and skills sets prevents faculty from engaging in research. With proper support, tools and infrastructure, nearly 75% of respondents indicated they would increase their participation in research. Therefore, we believe that well-designed workshops will better equip our clinical faculty with specific skill sets, training and tools required to effectively engage in research activities. Success of our programs will be reflected by increased research productivity, publications, and abstract submissions for conferences. In parallel, peer-mentoring among small groups centered around common research interests will reinforce new concepts, promote free discussion, improve faculty engagement, and importantly, build interdisciplinary collaboration.

BACKGROUND

- Research in the Department of Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin spans a broad spectrum that includes basic, translational and clinical research, in addition to clinical trials, chart reviews and projects on education, population, epidemiology, quality improvement, and outcomes.
- While many clinical faculty, particularly the junior faculty, have an interest in engaging in research, it is becoming apparent that many of them are facing barriers that prevent them from initiating or participating in projects of interest.



OBJECTIVE

- To develop a series of workshops that will provide clinicians with the tools required to successfully initiate and implement research projects.
- To pair each workshop with peer-mentoring sessions.

Using this two-pronged approach, small groups of faculty with shared research interests will equip themselves with specialized skills sets and work together to develop a research question and design and carry out successful research projects.

APPROACH

To best assess the needs of our faculty, a survey was sent to all 347 faculty in the Department of Medicine and information was gathered about:

- their past and current level of engagement in research activities;
- the barriers they face in participating in research projects;
- resources that would facilitate further participation in research.

OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS

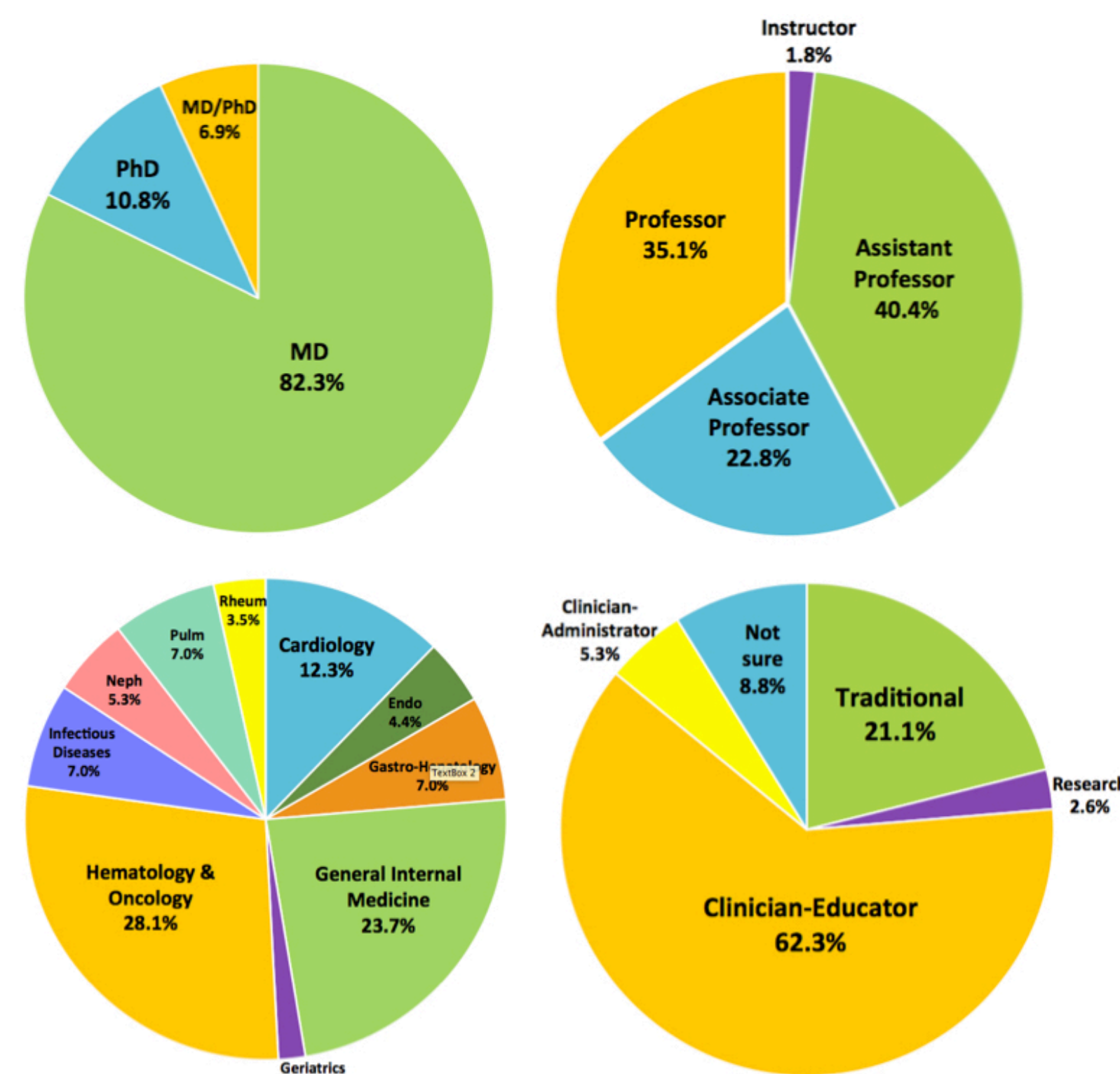


Figure 1. Demographics of survey respondents. We received 130 responses, but only evaluated 116 responses as research-intensive (i.e. PhD) faculty were excluded from our analysis. Pie charts represent respondents by: (top left) training credentials; (top right) faculty rank; (bottom left) Division; and (bottom right) promotion track.

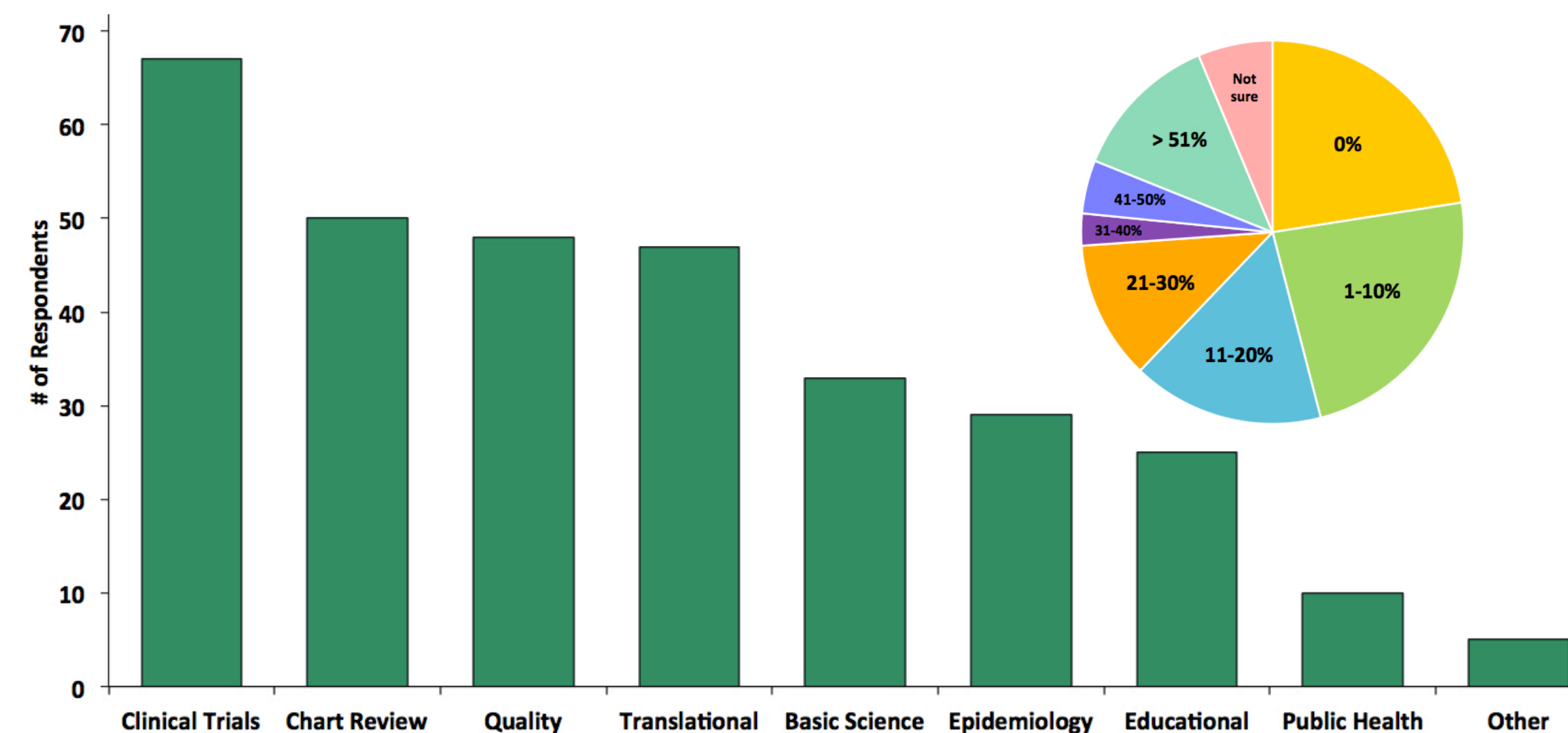


Figure 2. Research in the Department of Medicine is diverse and spans a spectrum of research areas. The majority of respondents (92%) have participated in research projects. **Bar graph:** Faculty indicated their area of research. **Inset:** Protected time (%) for research or other academic activity is indicated.

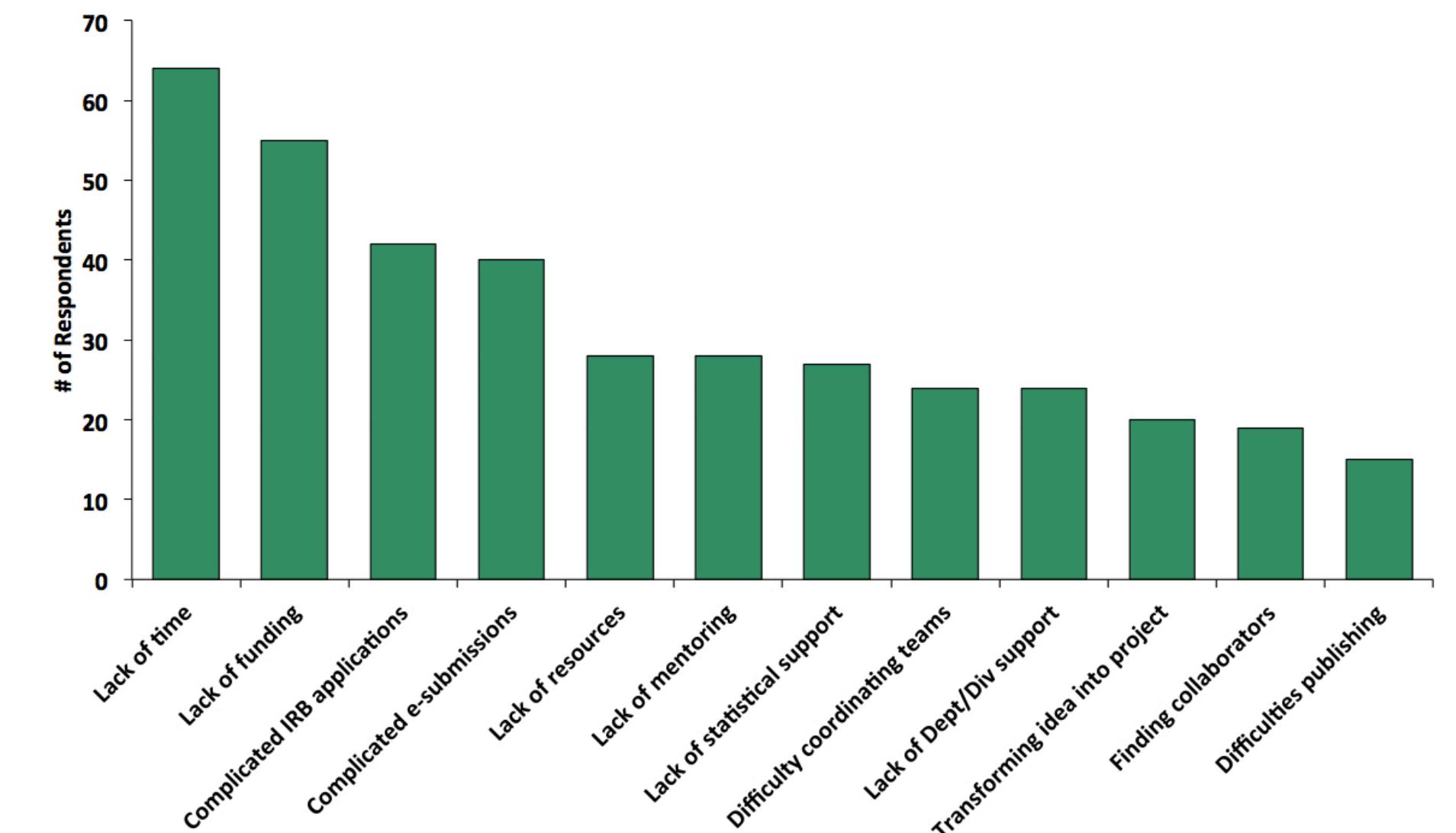


Figure 3. Barriers to research. Faculty were asked to identify barriers they encountered that prevented them from pursuing or further engaging in research projects.

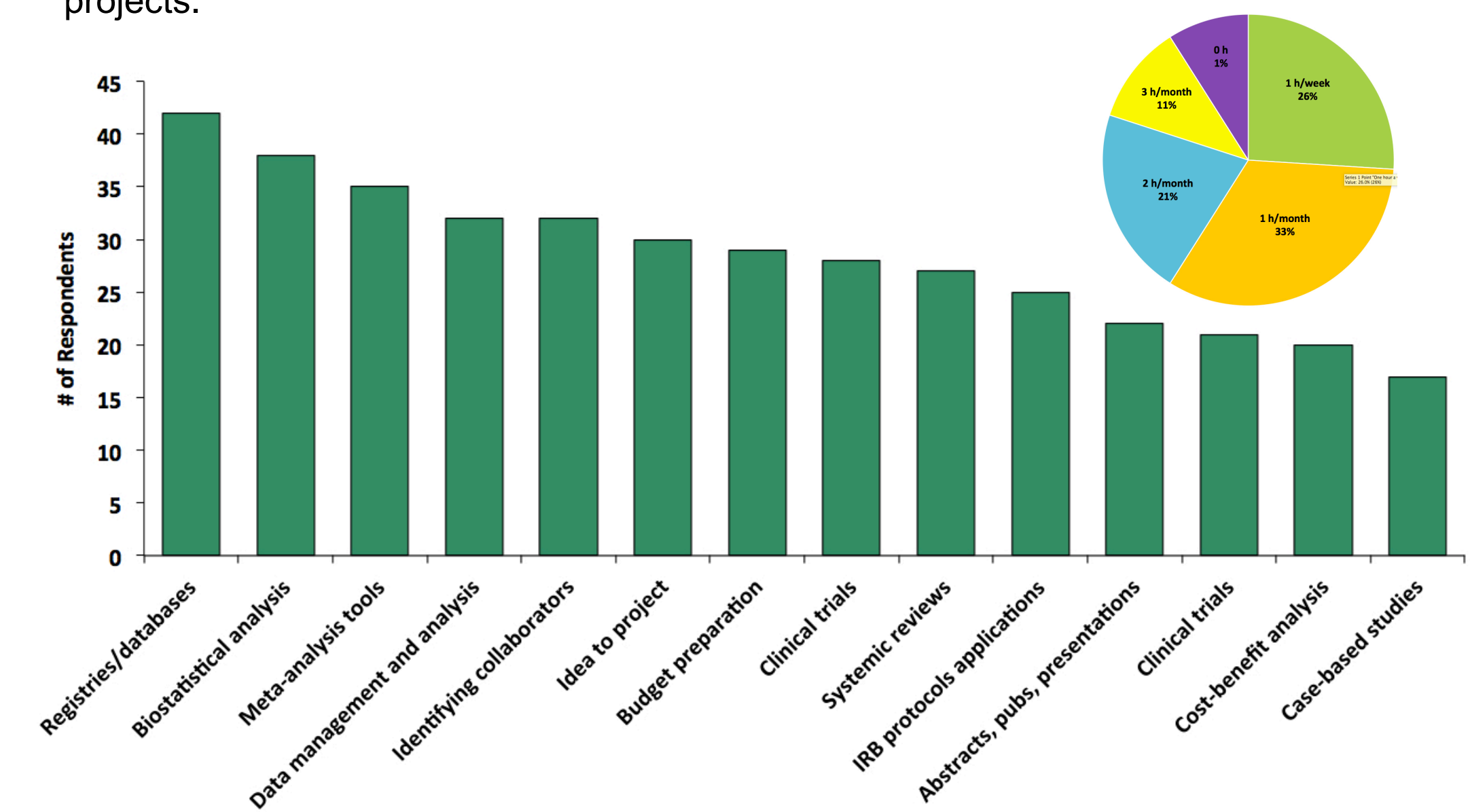


Figure 4. Research education workshop topics. **Bar graph:** Faculty were asked to identify research education workshops that they would be interested in attending to enhance their research skills. **Inset:** The number of hours faculty would be willing to spend in research education workshops. With proper support, training, tools and infrastructure, ~75% of respondents indicated they would increase their participation in research activities.

IMPACT & METRICS

- Our clinical faculty are motivated and realize the importance of engaging in research, however, a lack of protected time and skills sets prevents further engagement in research activities.
- Well-designed workshops will better equip our clinical faculty with specific skill sets, training and tools required to effectively engage in research activities.
- Success of our programs will be reflected by increased research productivity, publications, and abstract submissions for conferences.
- In parallel, peer-mentoring among small groups centered around common research interests will reinforce new concepts, promote free discussion, improve faculty engagement, and importantly, build interdisciplinary collaboration.