



Family Medicine Journals' Adherence to Reporting Guidelines and Trial Registration: A Systematic Review



Wyatt Compton, M.B.A., M.S.¹, Brody Dennis, B.S.¹, Payton Clark, B.A., B.S.¹, Caleb A. Smith, B.S.¹, Danya Nees, B.S.¹, & Matt Vassar, Ph.D.^{1,2}

1. Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences

2. Oklahoma State University Medical Center - Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Background

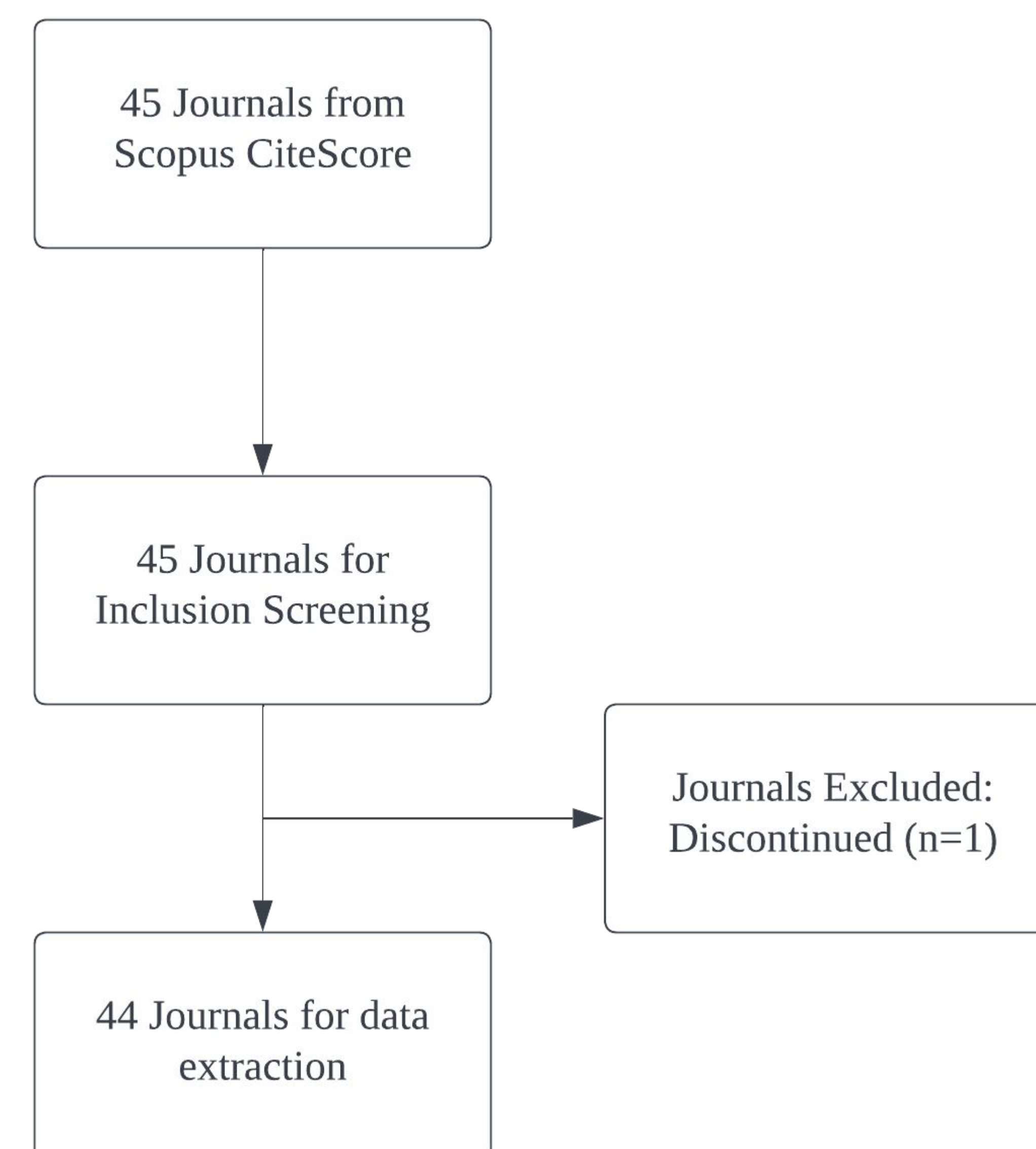
Reporting guidelines (RGs) have been developed as a method of mitigating inadequate reporting quality. RGs such as the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) for randomized control trials have shown to improve the completeness of reporting in CONSORT-endorsing journals. Additionally, requiring the registration of clinical trials and systematic reviews have similarly demonstrated a reduced risk of overall bias in comparison to trials and reviews that were not registered. To our knowledge, the rate of endorsement and requirement of the two aforementioned tools in family medicine journals has not been ascertained. Thus, a systematic review was conducted to determine the frequencies of recommendation or requirement of RGs for common study types within Family Medicine journals. In addition, we sought to assess the rate of recommendation or requirement of clinical trial registration.

Methods

- Our systematic review assessed 45 active peer-reviewed family medicine journals using the 2021 Scopus CiteScore tool
- Email correspondence was sent once a week for three weeks to the Editors-in-Chief to determine if the journal had any unaccepted article types
- Data containing requirements/recommendations of reporting guidelines were extracted in a masked duplicate fashion from each journal's "instructions for authors" webpage
- Statements regarding clinical trial registration were obtained in a similar manner

Results

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of Journal Selection



Clinical Trial Registration

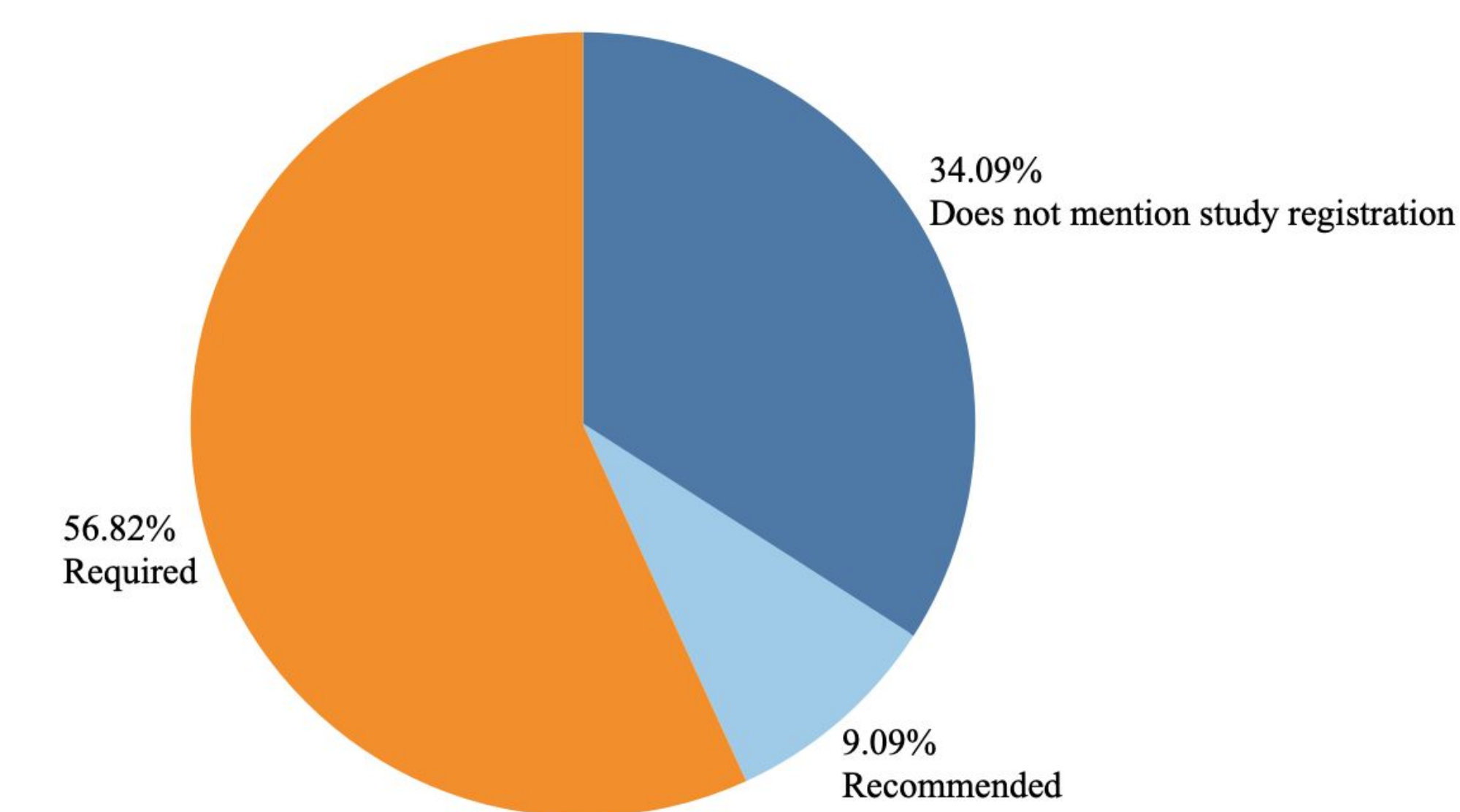


Figure 2. Journals requiring clinical trial registry

ICMJE Statement

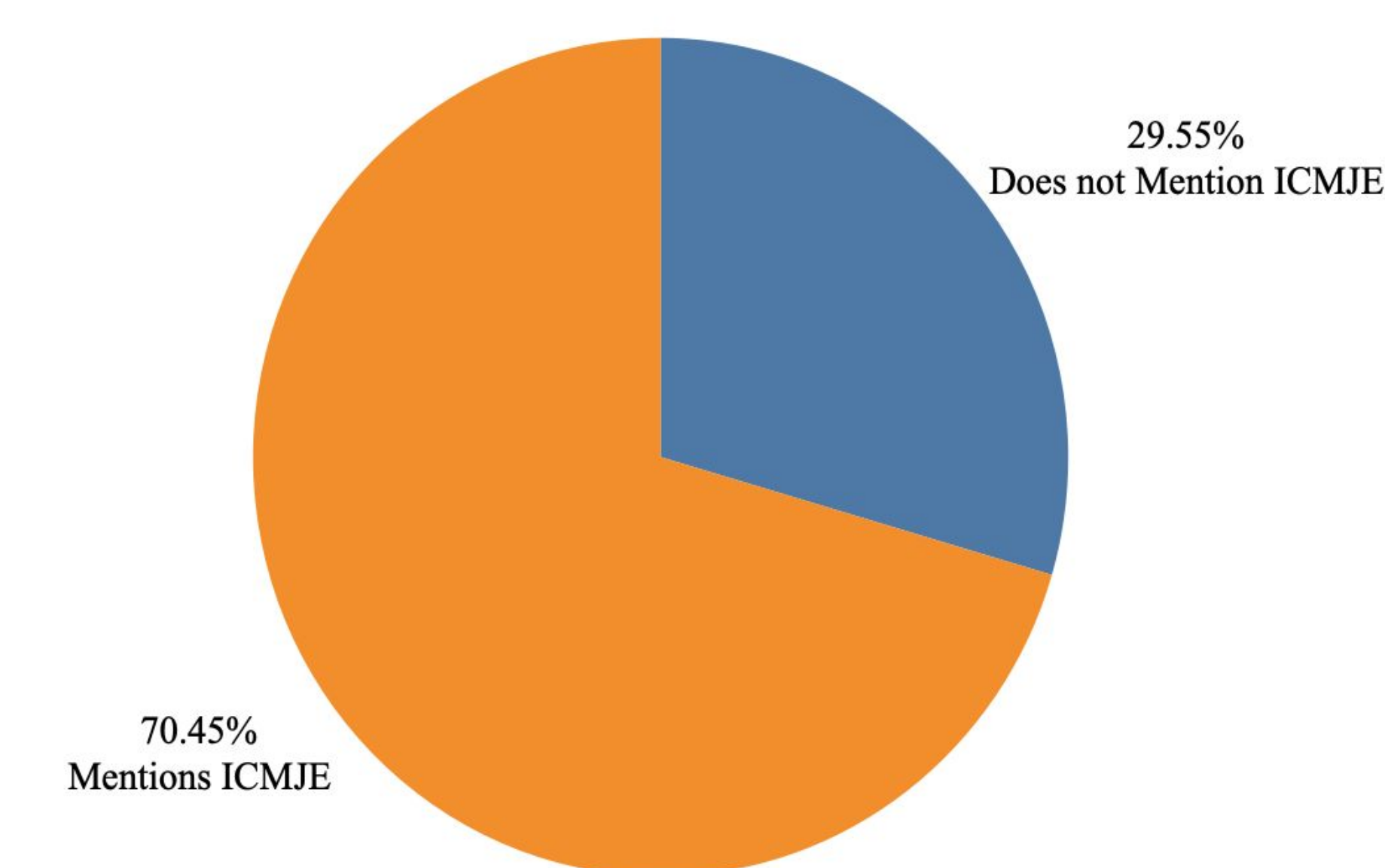


Figure 3. Journals referencing ICMJE

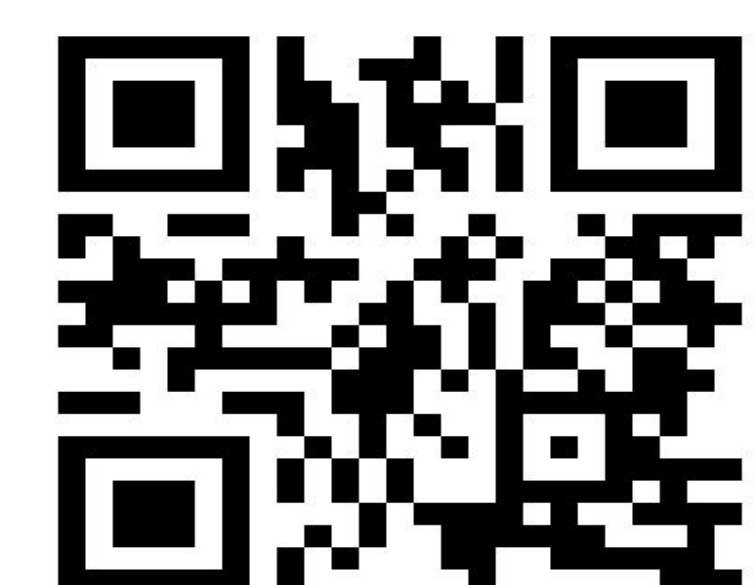
Metric	Reporting Guidelines														
	ARRIVE	CARE	CHEERS	CONSORT	COREQ	MOOSE	PRISMA	PRISMA-P	QUOROM	SPIRIT	SQUIRE	SRQR	STARD	STROBE	TRIPOD
Not Mentioned	31	31	33	17	32	38	10	37	39	34	34	35	17	15	37
Recommended	8	10	3	29	11	5	26	3	2	7	5	4	21	26	3
Required	1		1	6			7			1		1	2	2	
Does not require							1		1						

Table 1. Metrics of various major reporting guidelines

Conclusion

Although CONSORT, PRISMA, and STROBE guidelines were recommended or required by more than half of our included journals, a majority of the journals did not mention many of the other reporting guidelines. In addition, over half of the journals reported clinical trial registration. Explicit endorsement or requirement of study registration, as well as appropriate reporting guidelines, is necessary to improve the quality of research published in family medicine journals. Therefore, we recommend journal editors make an effort to impose tighter instructions to prospective authors by recommending/requiring these tools.

References



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