

Yale University Postdoctoral Career Outcomes 2014 - 2016

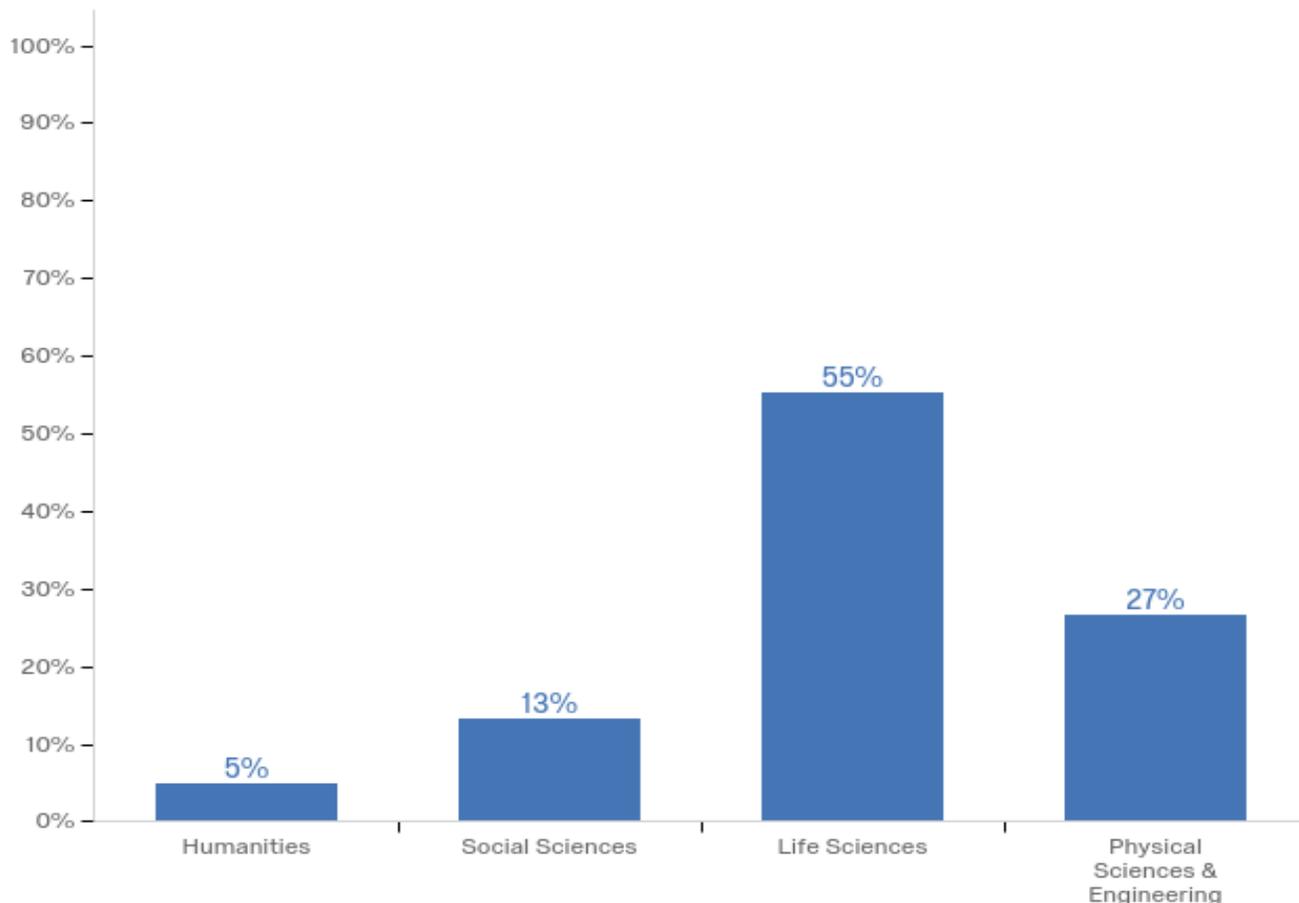


February 15, 2017

Postdocs who complete training at Yale are invited to complete a voluntary exit survey. Below is a summary of career outcomes for those who finished their training between 2014 and 2016. One important caveat in reviewing the data is to recognize that despite a large sample size ($n=400$), we estimate that the number of respondents represents only 24% of the postdocs whose positions ended during this period.

Figure 1

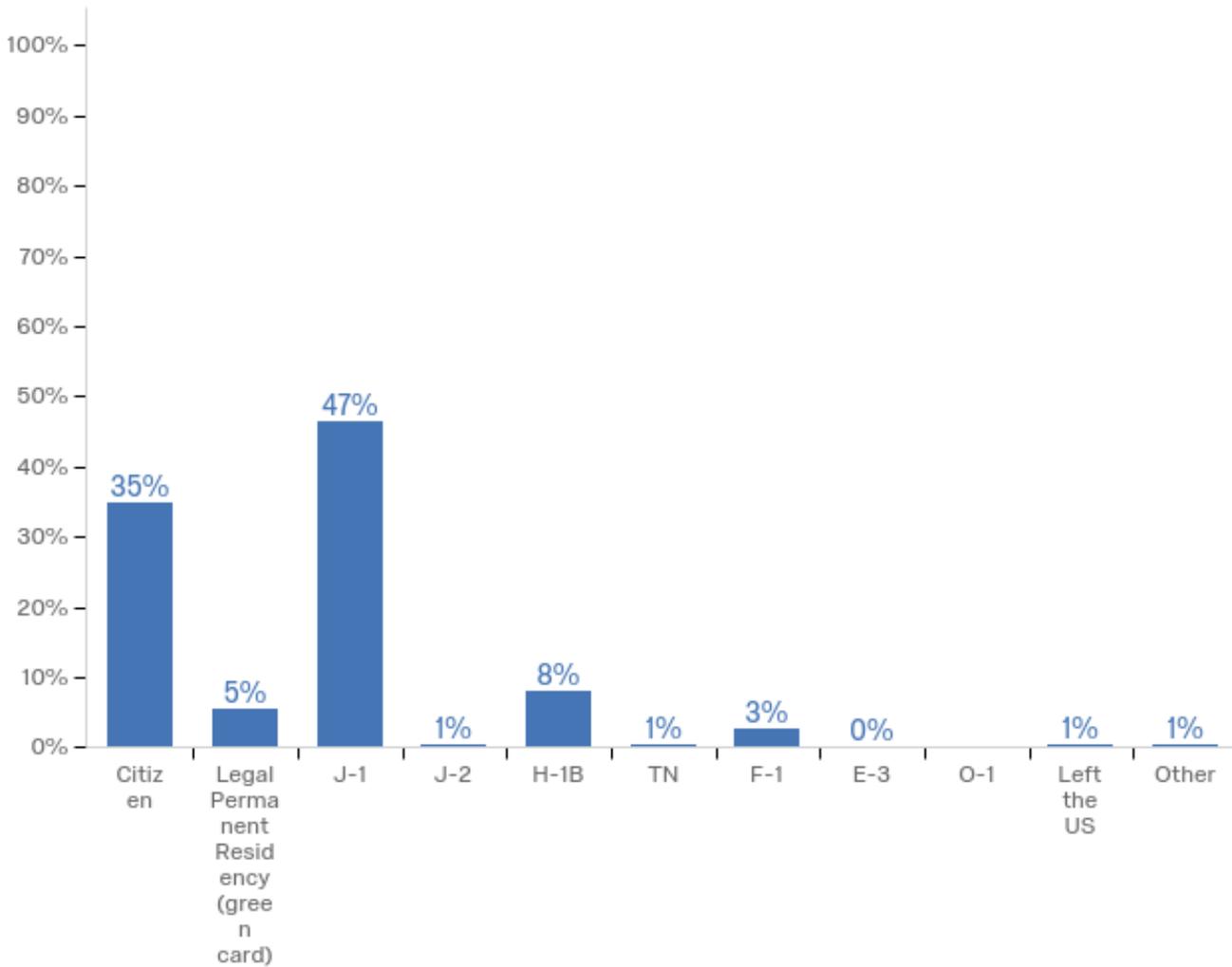
Discipline of Postdocs Who Completed the Survey



The disciplines of survey respondents did not match perfectly the breakdown in the overall postdoc population. Postdocs in the social sciences are over-represented in the survey, as they comprise less than 5% of the postdoc population. Life Sciences postdocs, who comprise 65% or more of the postdoc population, are under-represented in the survey. Reporting from postdocs in the Humanities and Physical Sciences/Engineering is proportionate to their percentage of the overall postdoc population.

Figure 2

Visa Status of Postdocs Completing Exit Survey

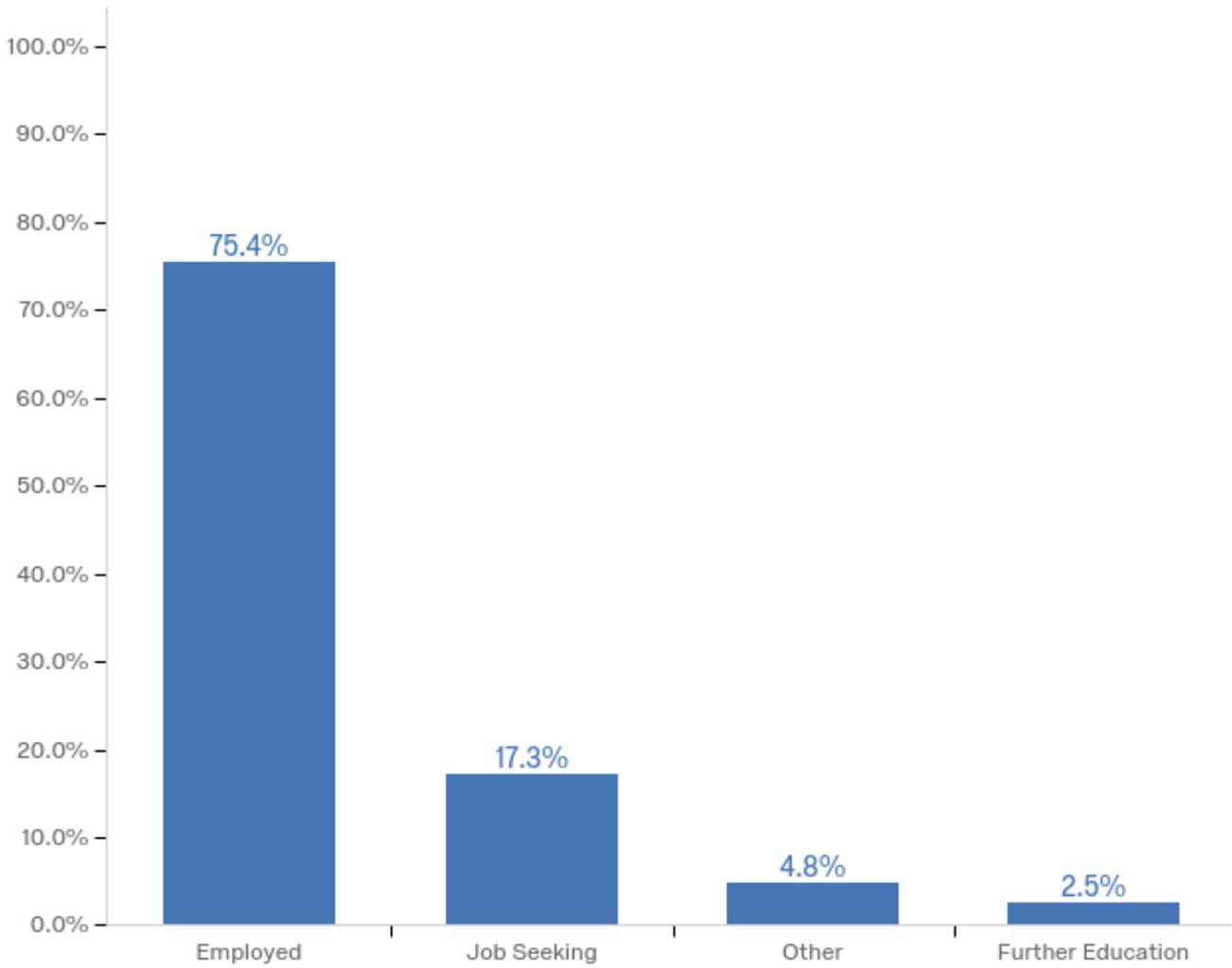


At present we do not have a way to determine the number of U.S. vs. non-U.S. postdocs in the overall Yale postdoctoral population. When data were last available in 2015, however, U.S./Permanent Resident postdocs comprised 35-40% of the population. The exit survey, then, appears to be representative of the overall postdoc population in terms of citizenship.

J-1 visa holders outnumbered H-1B visa holders by 5.9 to 1 in the survey. It is unknown what the ratio was in the overall population during the survey period (2014 – 2016), but the current ratio is 5.4 to 1, suggesting that the survey results may be representative of the overall population.

Figure 3

Plans upon Completing Postdoctoral Position



These data show that although the overwhelming majority of postdocs had definitive plans upon leaving Yale, roughly 1 in every 6 postdocs were still on the job market when their postdoctoral positions ended. When data were examined by discipline, 83% of social scientists were employed; 79% of physical science and engineering postdocs were employed; 73% of bioscientists were employed, and 64% of humanists were employed.

Figure 5

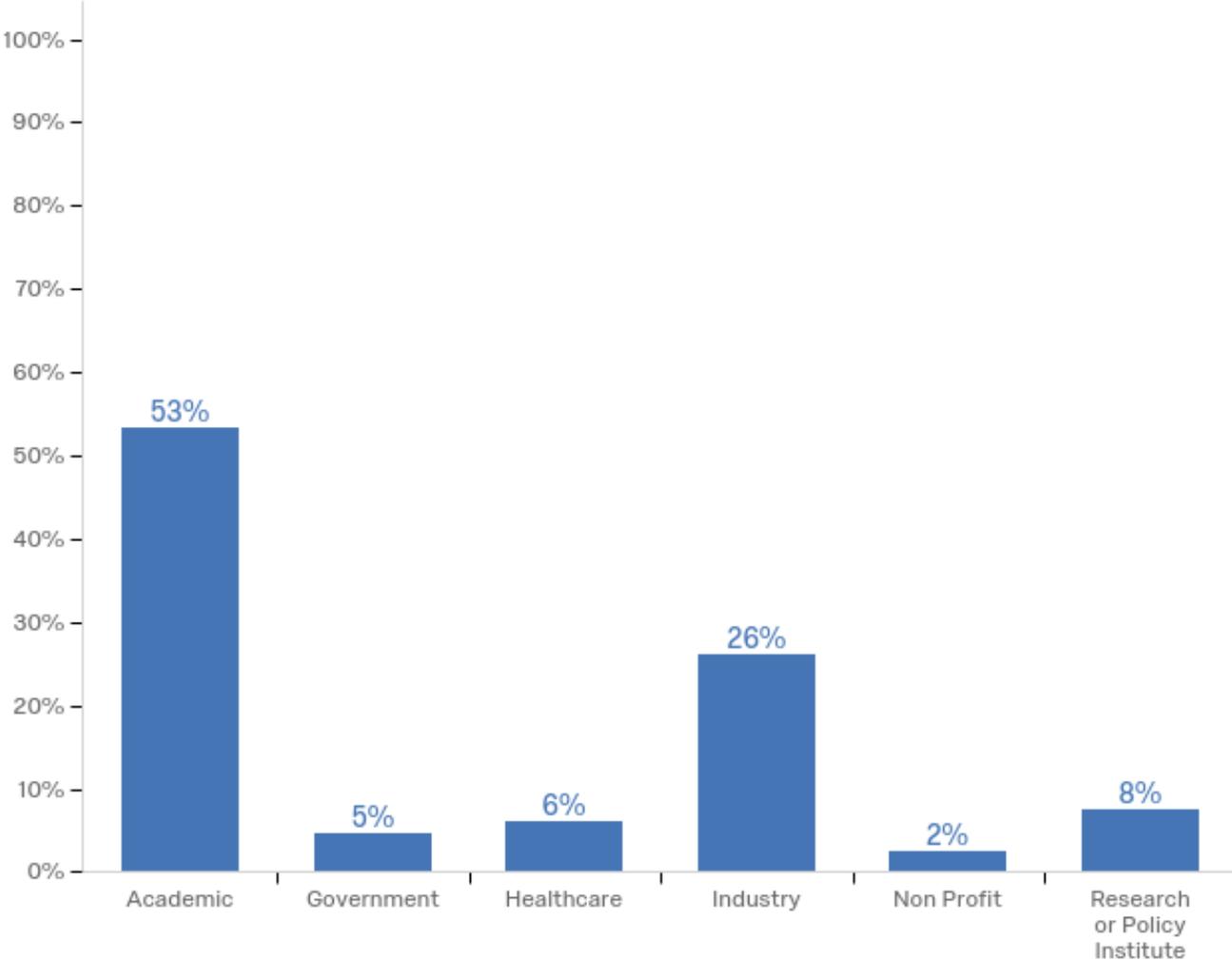
Word Cloud Representation of Targeted Locations for those still on the Job Market



The above image shows that postdocs who are still on the job market when they leave Yale are seeking positions throughout the world. The top 3 locations are the U.S. (44%), China (10%), and the U.K. (7%). Survey results indicate, however, that many postdocs look for positions in multiple countries at the same time. Some indicate that they are seeking jobs “anywhere.”

Figure 6

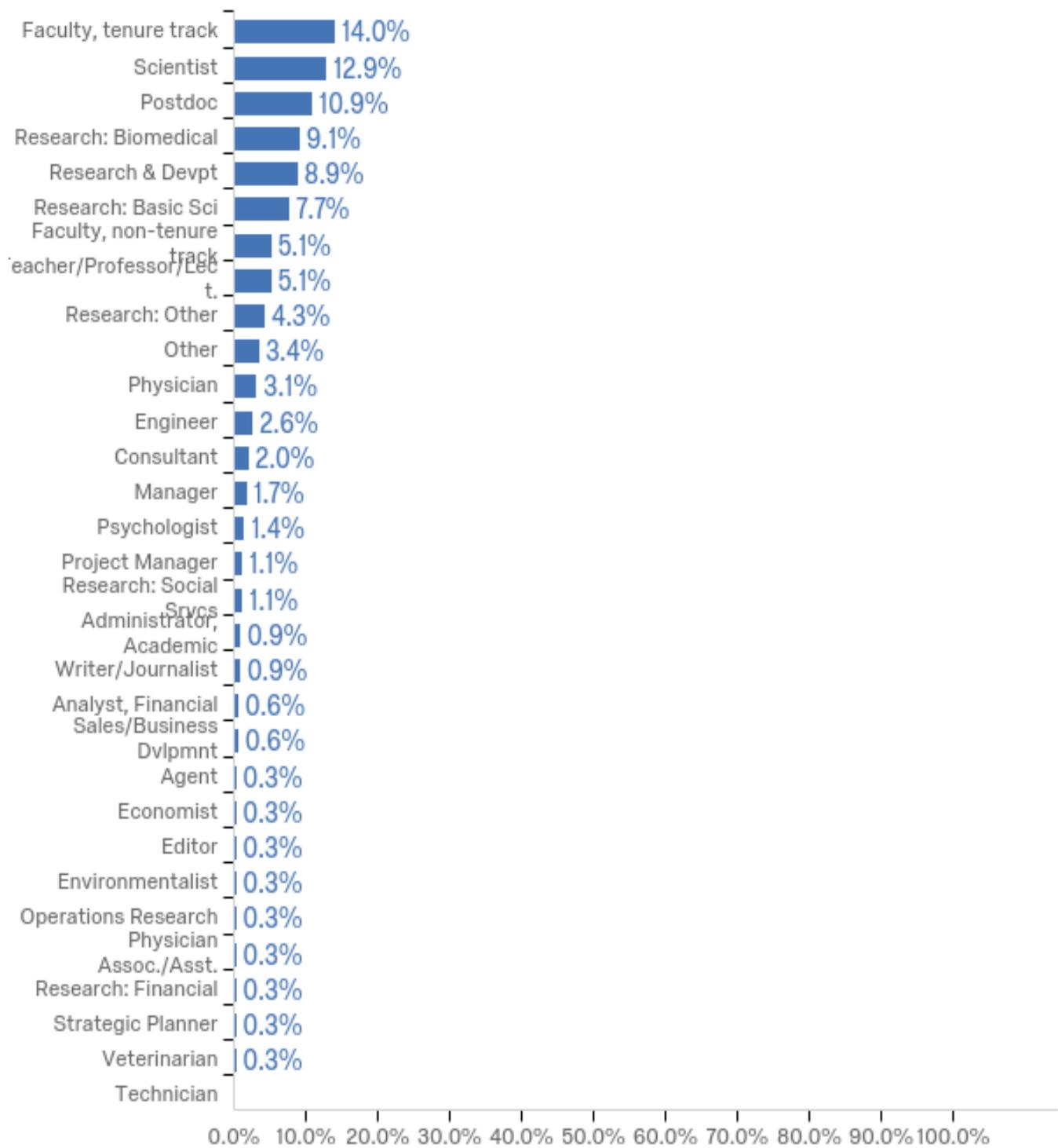
Employment Sector Entered upon Leaving Postdoctoral Position



Contrary to the perception that the majority of PhD holders are not winding up in academia, over ½ of Yale postdocs do secure academic positions. As shown in the next figure, however, only a small number enter tenure track positions immediately upon exiting their postdoc positions.

Figure 7

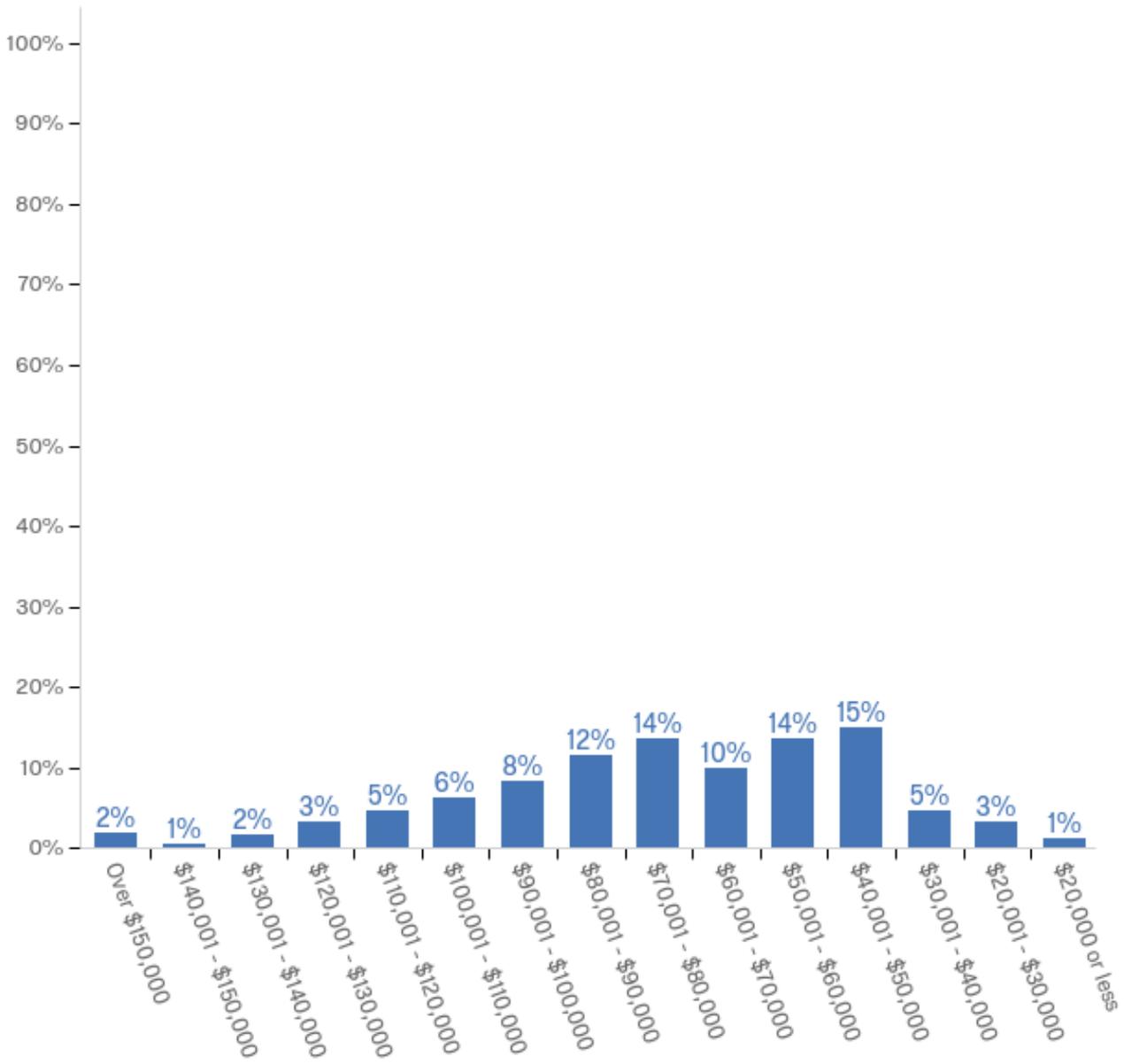
Job Position upon Leaving Postdoc Position



Postdocs enter a very wide array of positions, with 14% in tenure track positions and another 10% in non-tenure and teacher/lecturer positions. Over 75% wind up in non-faculty jobs, both within and outside of academia. Of note is that 11% enter another postdoctoral position.

Figure 8

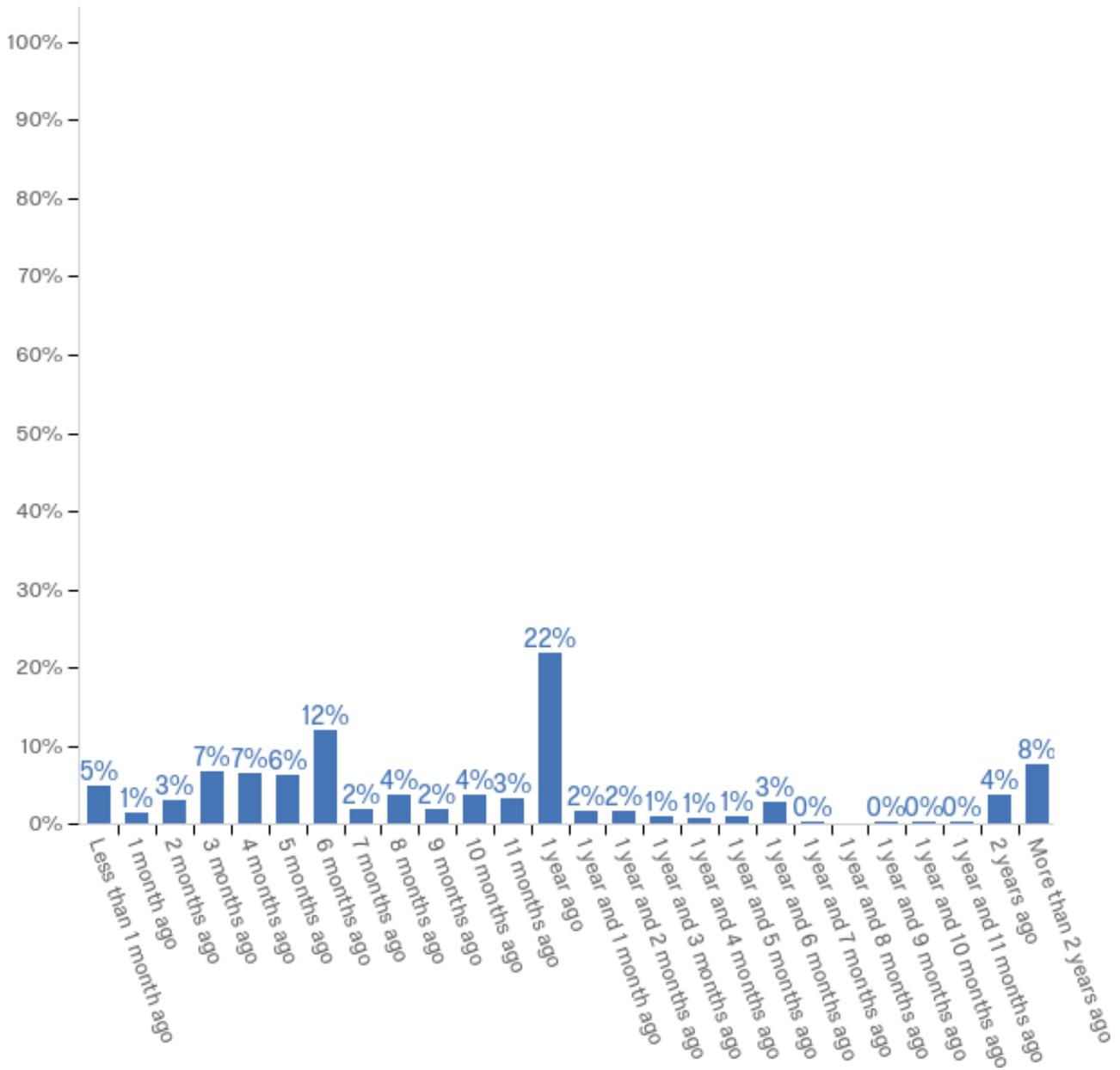
Starting Salary with new Employer



The median salary range is \$70,000 - \$80,000. Approximately 2/3 of the positions that pay \$40,000 or less are in non-U.S. locations.

Figure 9

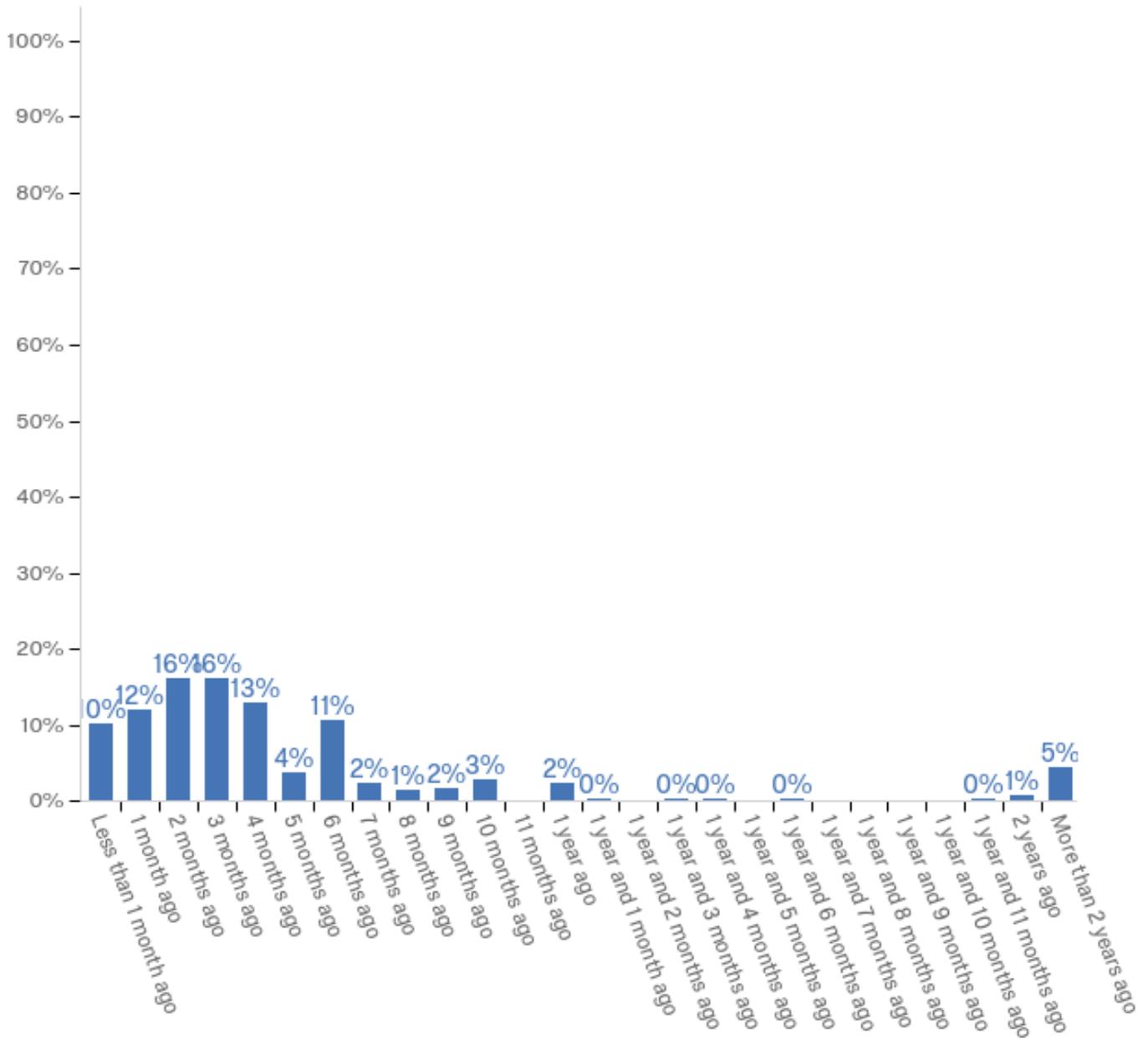
When did a Postdoc's Job Search Begin?



The above graph shows that 44% of postdocs begin their job search 1 or more year in advance of exiting their postdoc positions. A surprising 12% begin their search at least 2 years in advance.

Figure 10

When Was the Job Obtained?

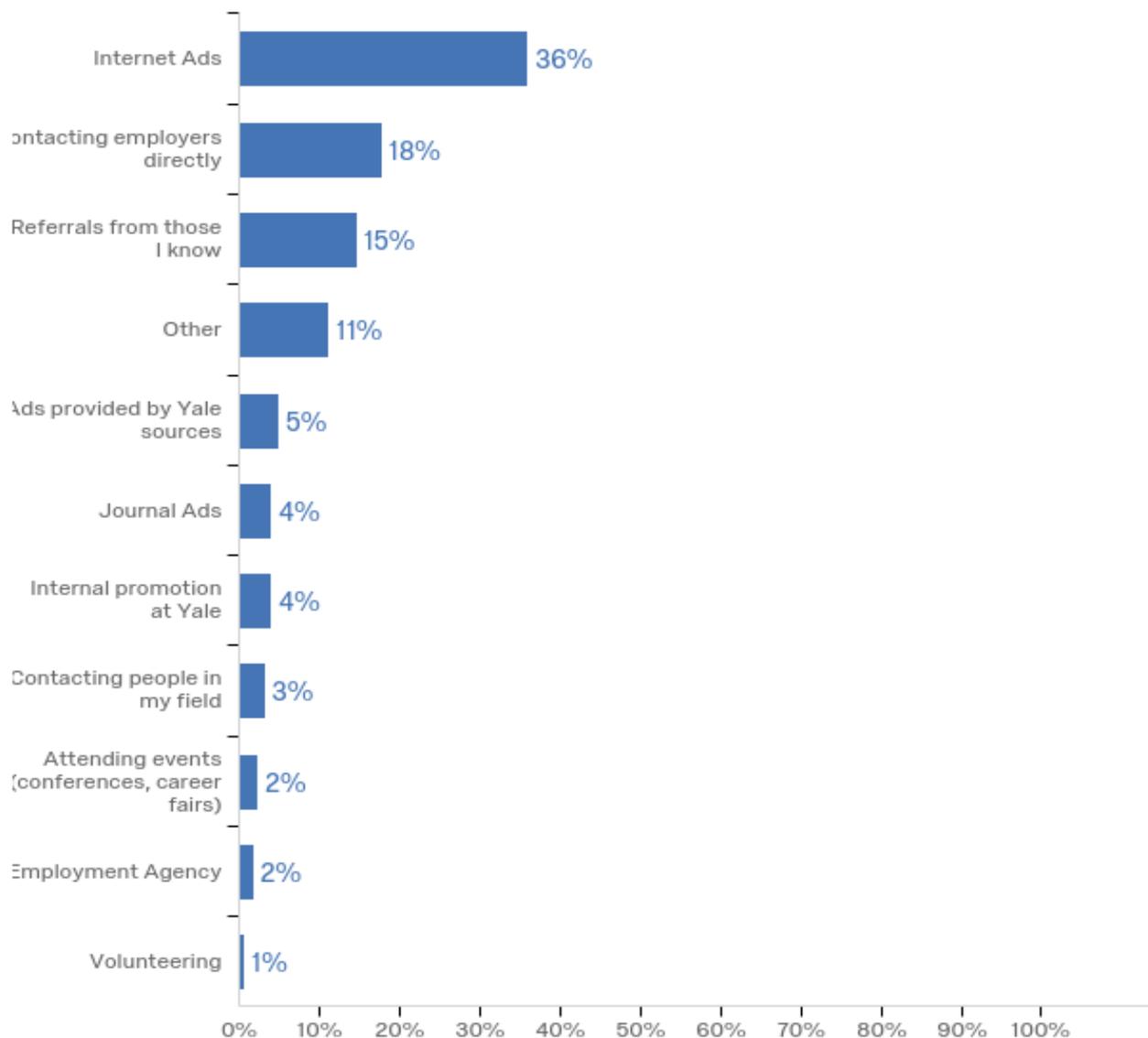


The above graph indicates that the majority of postdocs who accepted job offers left Yale within 3 months. Only 11% decided to, or were able to, delay starting their positions for more than 6 months.

Data on when job offers were obtained were compared to when the same individuals began their job search. On average it took 6 months for postdocs to find positions. Ten percent were able to find jobs within a month of beginning the job search, and 14% took one year or longer to secure a position.

Figure 11

Main Method to Search for Job Openings



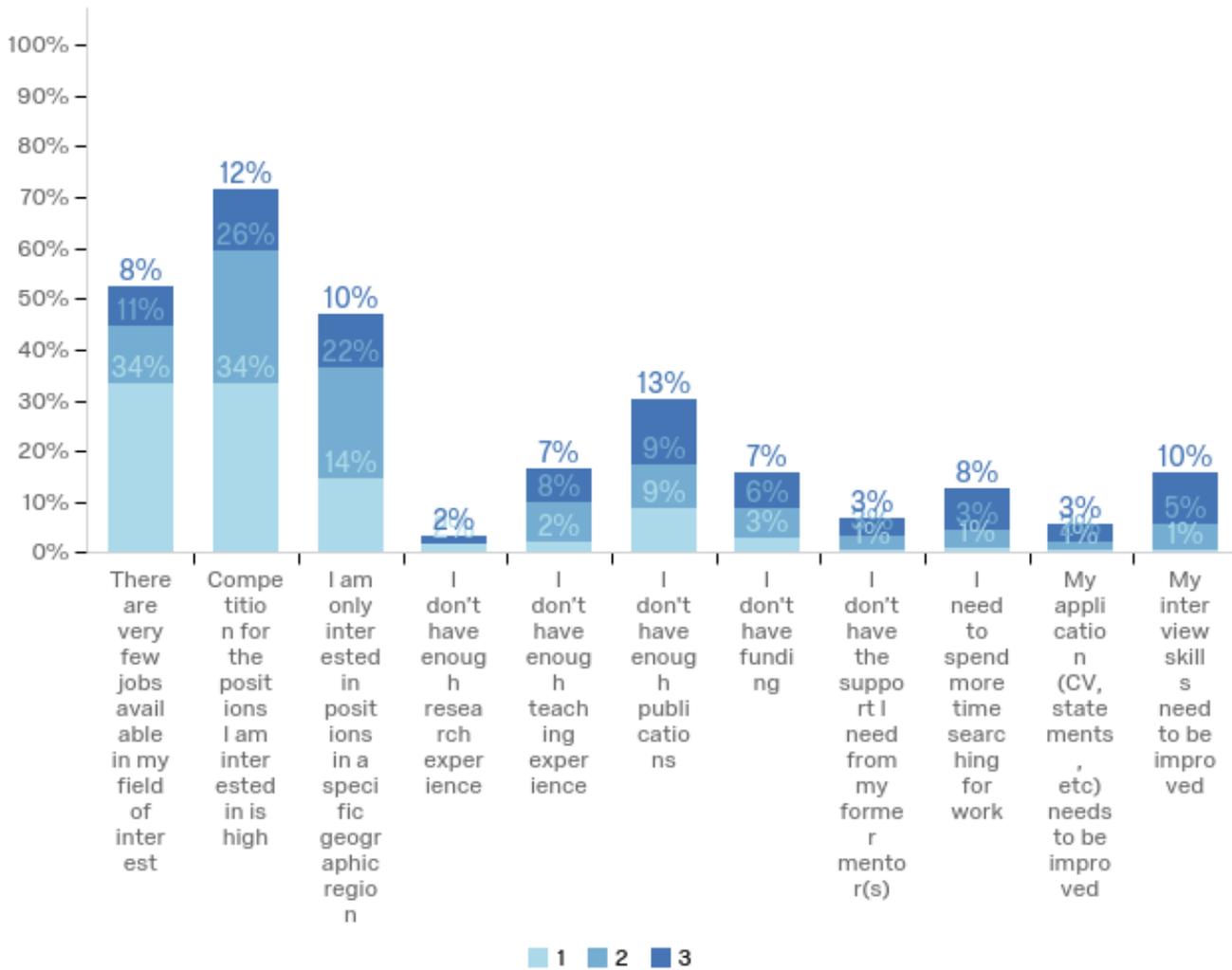
The above graph represents the primary method used by postdocs during their job search. Results are for both those who found positions and those still seeking jobs upon leaving Yale. When data for only those who found positions were examined, the percentages were virtually the same as shown above. When data for those who were still on the job market were examined, slightly more relied on internet ads, and slightly fewer relied on referrals.

Because most job searches rely on multiple methods to find job openings, it is difficult to conclude whether one method is better than another. Of note, however, is that 90% of those who relied primarily upon contacting employers directly were employed upon leaving Yale. This compares to the overall 75% employment rate among all postdocs who completed the survey.

Note: Most of those who selected “Other” indicated that they relied on personal and professional contacts to seek job openings, which is the same as “Referrals from those I know.”

Figure 12

Top Three Challenges in an Academic Job Search

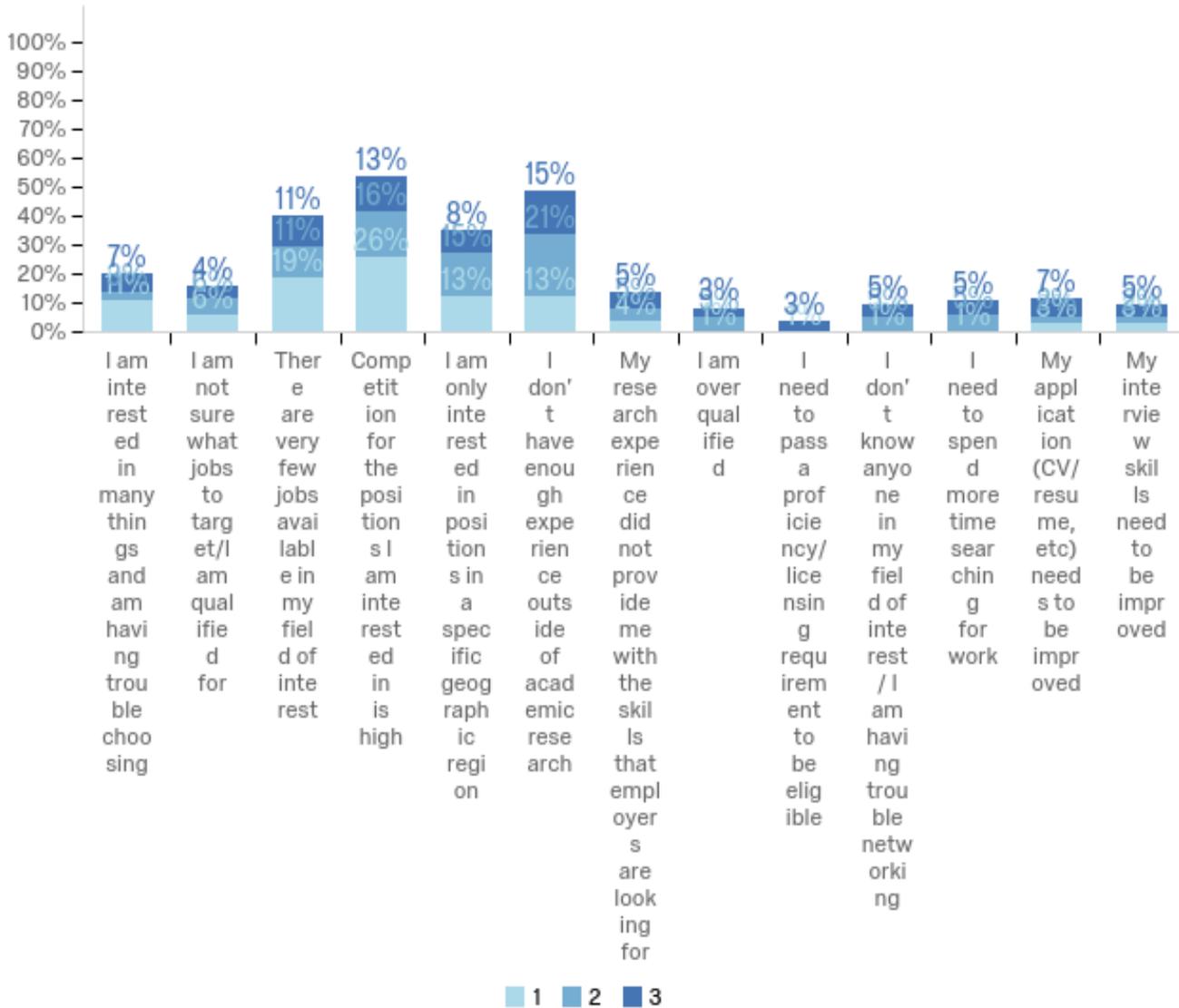


When asked to identify the top 3 challenges to finding an academic position, competition for positions was cited more often than any other obstacle. Limited job opportunities were also cited as a very significant challenge. A perhaps surprising finding was the prominent role that geographic location plays in seeking academic positions.

Few postdocs determined that their own academic credentials were the main challenges in seeking academic positions. When academic credentials were identified as a factor, the main concern was an insufficient number of publications to be competitive for a position.

Figure 13

Top Three Challenges in a Non-Academic Job Search



Similar to the academic job search, the number one challenge in the non-academic search is competition for positions. In the academic job search process, one's qualifications were not identified as a main challenge to getting a job. The results for the non-academic search were different: having sufficient experience to be competitive was the second highest challenge. Geographic location was identified as an important challenge, though to a lesser extent than for those seeking academic positions.