

# Being seen: using journal-reported metrics to highlight utilisation of supplementary materials in oncology journals



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## > Introduction

- Supplementary materials are intended to provide a reader additional information which complements the data presented within the main text of an article, particularly in journals which have strict limits on the number of display items permitted; their use is nearly ubiquitous in biomedical articles, including those reporting on clinical trial data<sup>1</sup>
- Although utilisation of supplementary materials has been reported as high based on surveys of authors, peer reviewers and readers,<sup>2</sup> there remains concerns regarding their overuse/misuse as a repository for 'data dumping'<sup>3</sup>

## > Objective

- To explore real-world utilisation of supplementary materials using journal-reported metrics

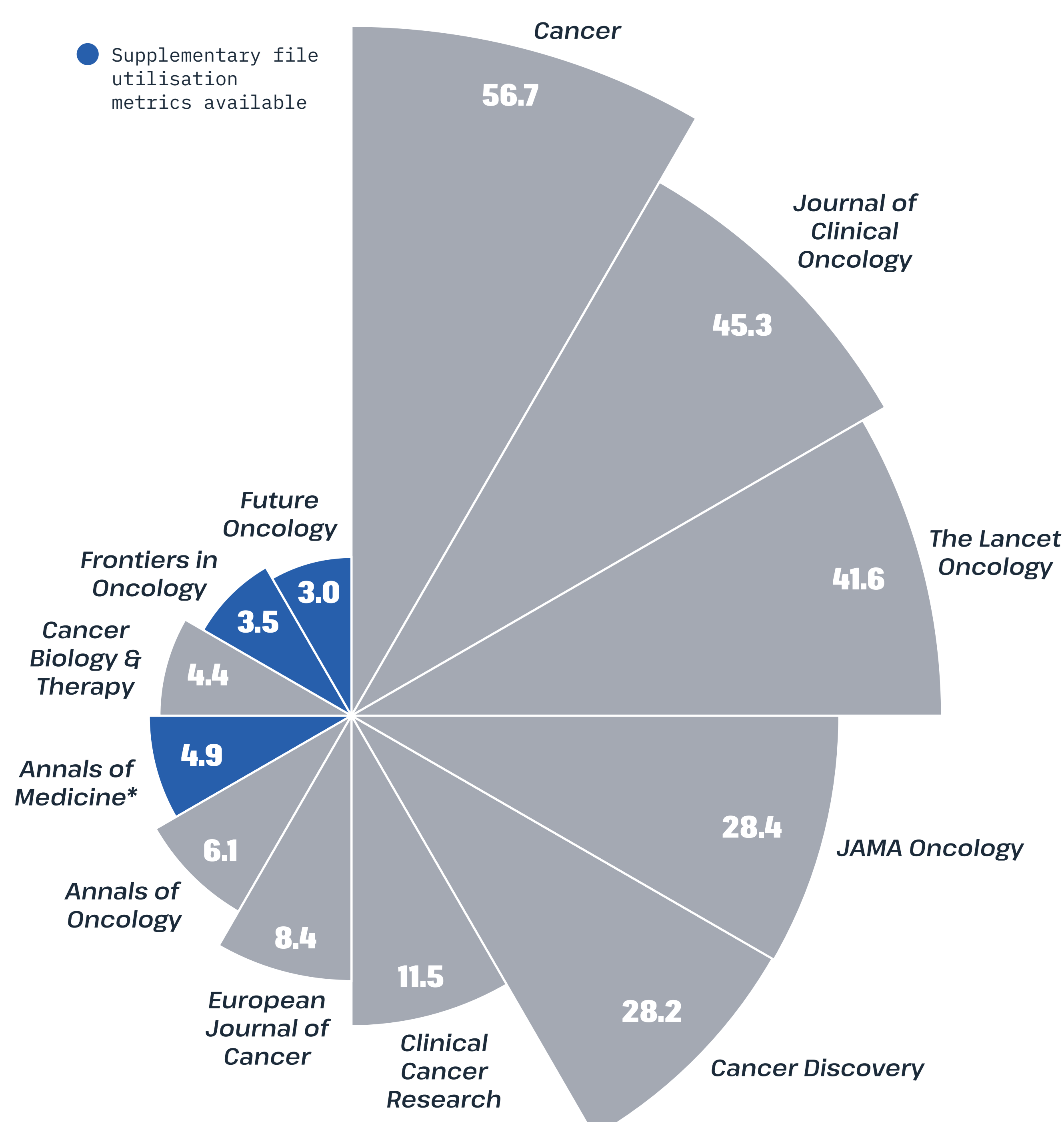
## > Methods

- Using Sylogent Journal Selector (an Anju Software Company), 12 oncology-focused journals across a range of impact factors were selected
- Metrics regarding main article and supplementary file views were collected from journal websites for 'Primary' or 'Clinical Trial Research' articles published between 1 January 2022 and 8 October 2024
- Articles without supplemental files, or those without supplemental view metrics available, were discarded from the analysis

## > Results

### Availability of supplementary file metrics by journal impact factor

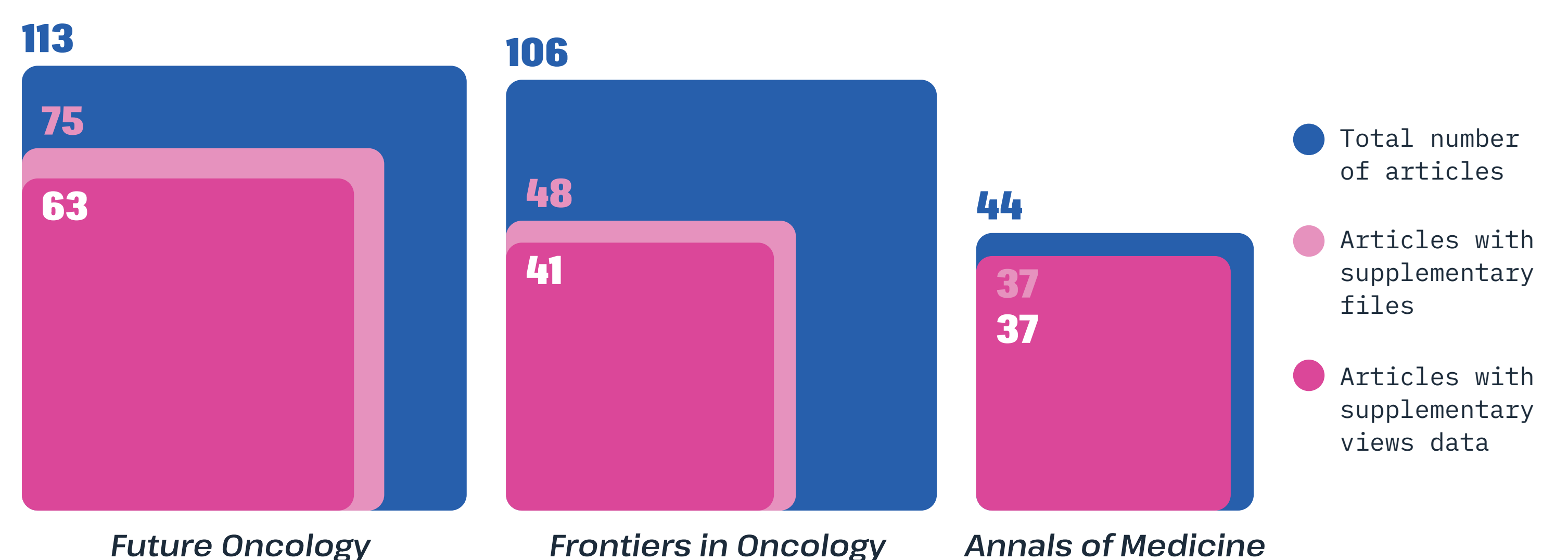
Of the 12 journals selected, 3 (25%) provided supplementary file metrics



\*We originally sought to explore oncology-focused journals, but given the limited availability of metrics, we investigated additional journals from publishers whose journals provided metrics. Hence, *Annals of Medicine* was added to our analysis, even though it is not strictly oncology focused.

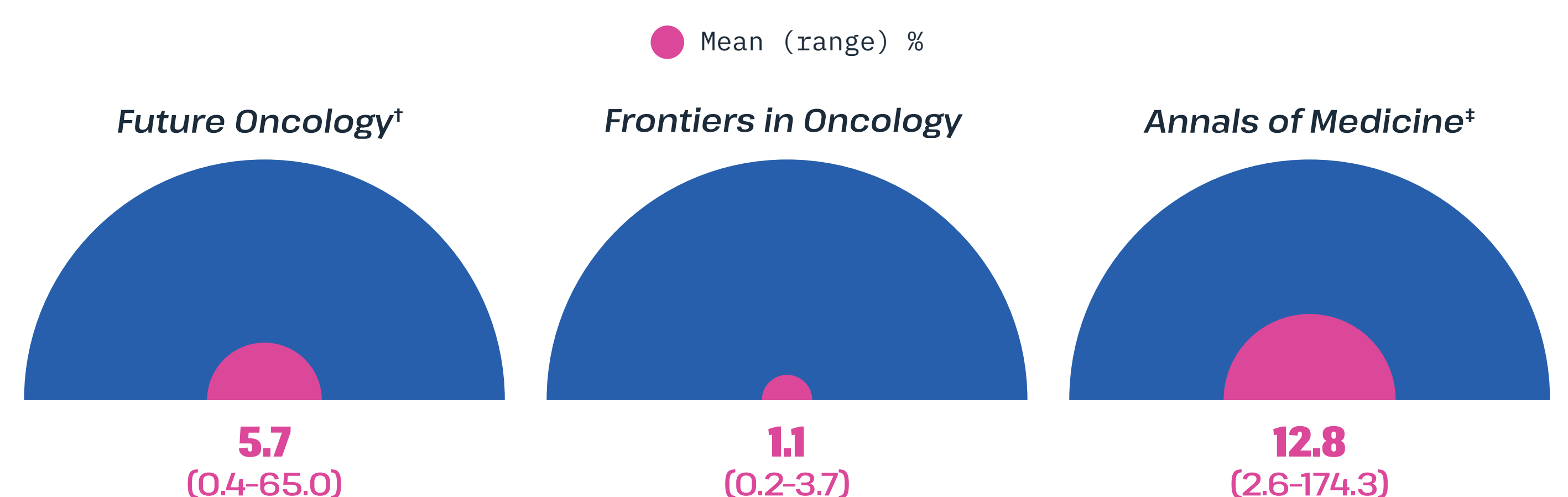
### Number of articles with supplementary files and metrics available

*Annals of Medicine*, *Frontiers in Oncology*, and *Future Oncology* had view/download metrics available for both the main text and supplemental files



### Utilisation of supplementary files relative to main article

Across all 3 journals with metrics, mean supplemental file utilisation was low, with supplementary files receiving between 1.1% and 12.8% of the views relative to the main text.



\*Potential outlier: one article was published on 30 September 2024 and at the time of data collection only had accumulated 20 views; if excluded, mean data for Future Oncology is 4.8% with a range of 0.4-12.4%. As of 9 January 2025, the article had accumulated 465 views with 76 supplementary material views (16.3%).

\*Potential outlier: one article supplementary file was reported as having more views (1863) than the main article (1069); if excluded, mean data for Annals of Medicine is 8.3% with a range of 2.6-191%. As of 9 January 2025, the article had accumulated 1263 views with 1881 supplementary material views (148.9%).

## References

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## Disclosures

E Ogunnowo, K Frankovich, T Mughal and M Hobert are employees of HCG; S Cavana is an employee of Taylor & Francis Group.

## > Conclusion

- Our analysis highlights the low utilisation of supplementary data in select oncology journals where the metrics are available
- Furthermore, our data underscore the need for broader access to journal-reported metrics to better understand the utilisation of publication components, such as supplementary materials, to support strategic publication planning

## > Recommendations

- Publications professionals should encourage stakeholders to consider standalone secondary manuscripts, to avoid important data being overlooked when presented in the supplementary appendix
- Publishers should provide information on where the supplementary files will be hosted, whether other display options are available, and metrics on utilisation to further guide these discussions