
2022 BWH POSTDOC SURVEY REPORT

POSTDOC TOWN HALL

06/30/2023

PLC ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Agenda

- Results of the 2022 Annual Postdoc Survey – Major concerns
 - Salary: postdocs reported being paid below BWH minimum and matching postdoc salary to or above HMS scale
 - Lack of completion of annual performance review
 - Prevalence of incidences of unprofessional work environment
 - Other concern
- Current and planned actions from BWH
- Your feedback on how we can do better

BWH Postdoctoral Association

BWH Postdoctoral Association
(BWH PDA)

Postdoctoral Leadership Council
(PLC)

ADVOCACY

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNICATIONS

NETWORKING

MENTORING
CIRCLES PROGRAM

PLC Advocacy Committee's Mission

Improve living and working experience of BWH postdocs



INFORMATION

Collect information and report on the needs of the community

PAY EQUITY

Seek fair & equitable compensation commensurate with experience and COL

COMMUNICATION

Communicate BWH and HMS policies and resources to the community

LIAISON

Represent and communicate postdocs' needs to the BRI/ ROC

COLLABORATION

Collaborate with BWH PLC & other PDAs in Boston to drive national changes

Acknowledgements

Advocacy Committee



Lien Nguyen
Neurology



Robert
Nshimiyimana
Anesthesia



Kanupriya
Kusumakar
Pathology



Aaron
Warren
Neurosurgery



Kisha
Sivanathan
Neurology



Hadas
Tamar Pahima
Allergy & Clinical
Immunology

Former members



Shamsuddin
Bhuiyan
Neurology



Mary
Walker
Anesthesia



Shreya
Sangam
Medicine

PLC leadership & members

- Eshaani Mitra
- Stecia-Marie Fletcher
- Kanupriya Kusumakar

BWH leadership & organizations

- Allison Moriarty
- Jacqueline Slavik
- Rowan Potter

Departmental leadership


BWH postdoc community

1st Annual Postdoc Survey in 2022

BWH Postdocs What are your **worries**?



The PLC advocacy committee is here to **listen** and **help you!**
Take our survey
(open till 10/17/22)

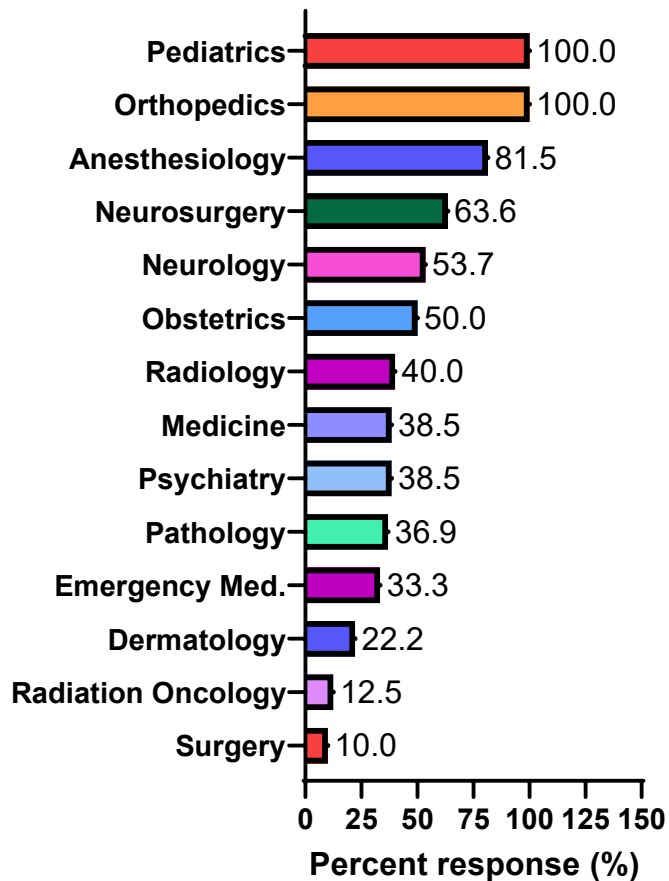


<http://tinyurl.com/bwhpdasurvey2022>

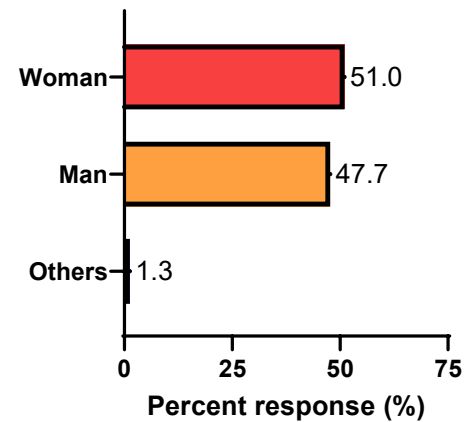
- 1. Biographical information
- 2. Financial compensation and benefits
- 3. Career and professional development
- 4. Work environment and work-life balance
- 5. Others and free responses

Survey Demographics (315 responses)

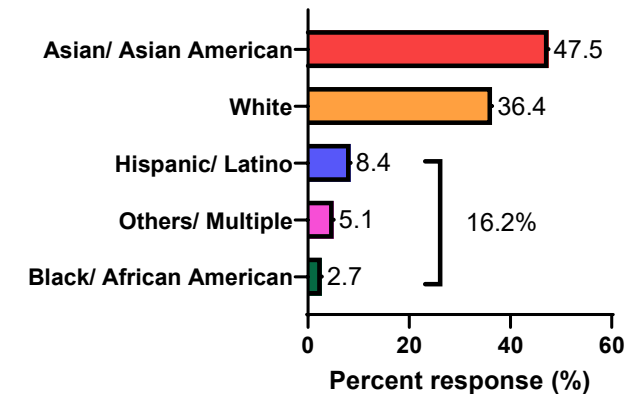
**Response by departments
(BWH: 42%)**



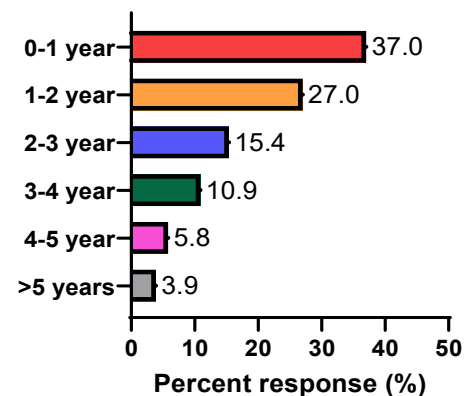
Gender identification



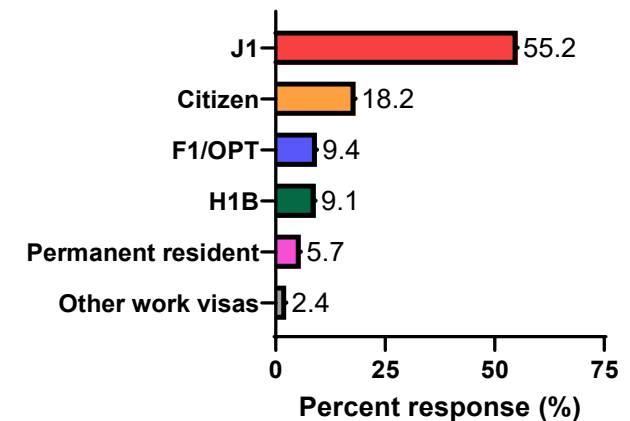
Race & ethnicity identification



Years as postdocs at BWH



Visa status

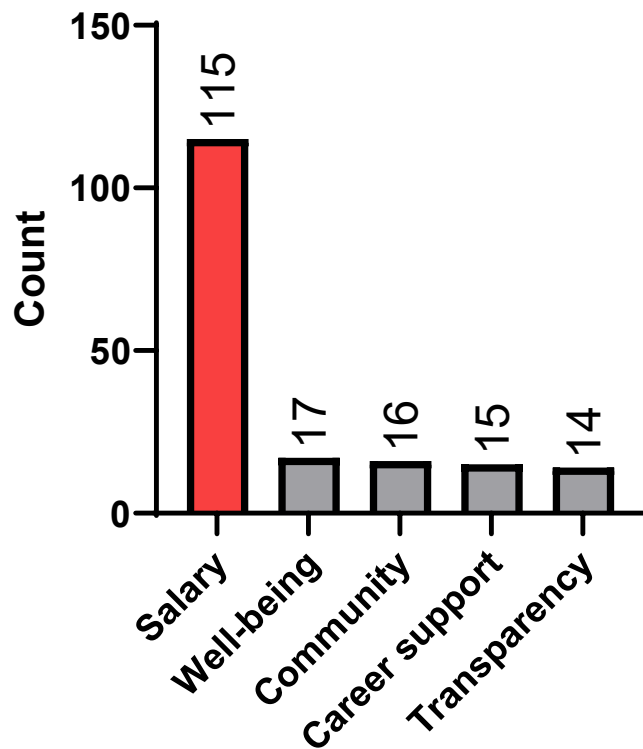




Section 1: Salary and benefits

Low Salary is the Predominant Concern

Top 5 categories mentioned
in free responses (N = 172)



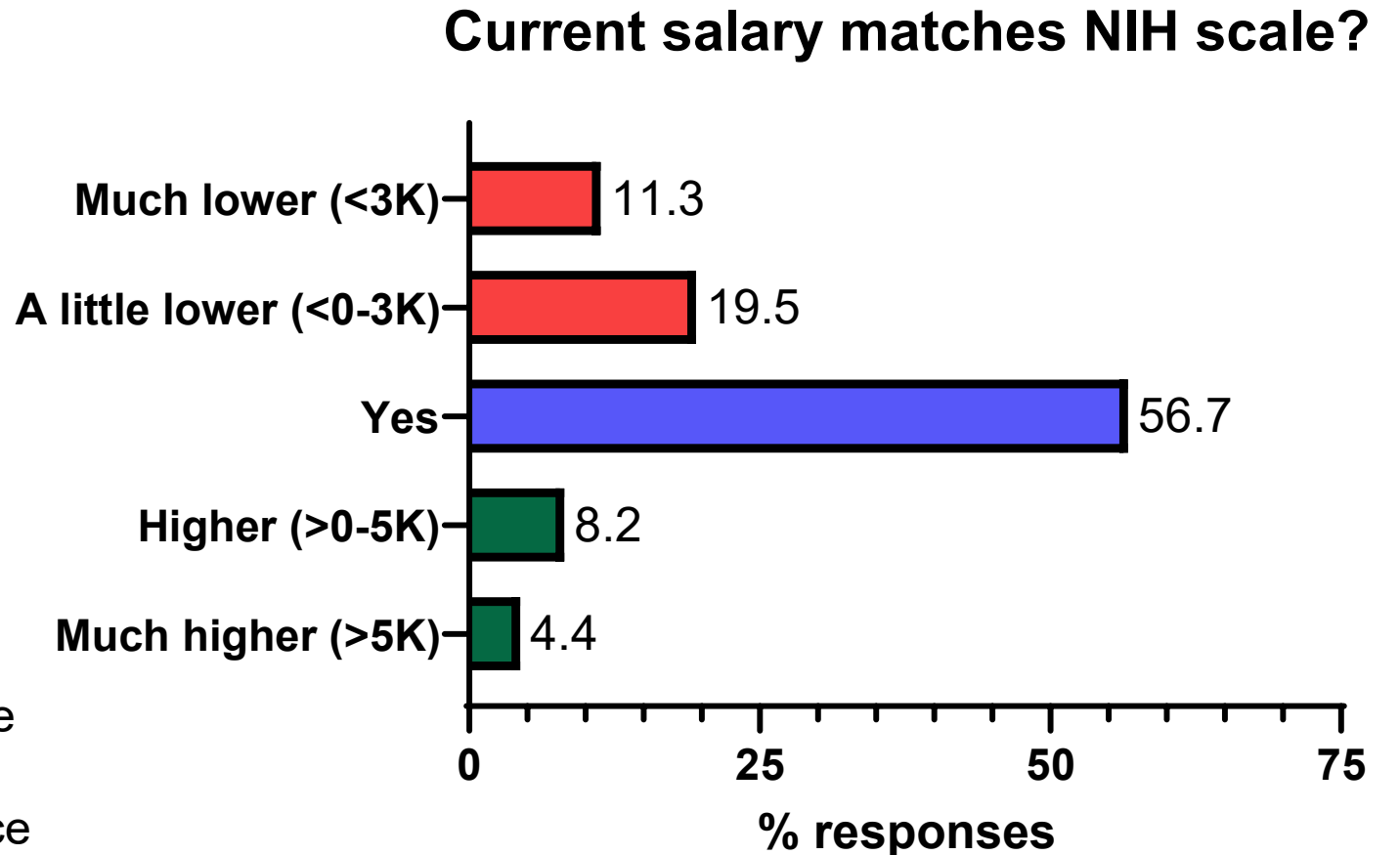
- “[...] Neighboring hospitals have increased salary.. **we are still struggling to get salary according to old nih scales!!**”
- “I’ve had to contact HR each year and **fight to be paid on the right scale [...]**”
- “**I work a second job on the weekends to supplement my postdoc salary.** This has allowed me to pursue my financial and family goals, although it does put me behind other researchers [...].”

30.8% of Postdocs Reported being Paid Below NIH/ BWH minimum

PGY	BWH min – FY 2022	BWH min – FY 2023
0	\$54,840	\$56,484
1	\$55,224	\$56,880
2	\$55,632	\$57,300
3	\$57,852	\$59,592
4	\$59,784	\$61,572
5	\$61,992	\$63,852
6	\$64,296	\$66,228
7	\$66,600	\$68,604

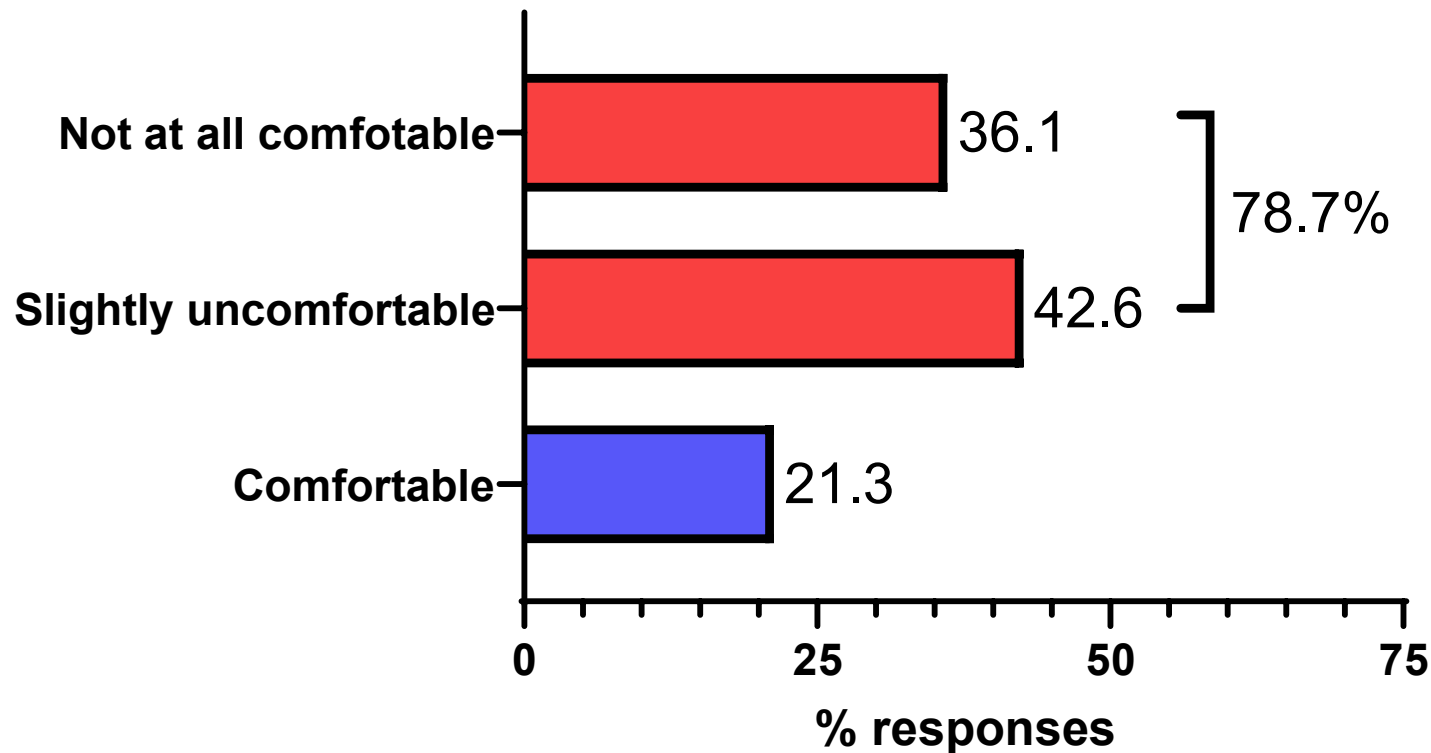
Possible reasons:

- Delays or not getting a yearly increase
- Being assigned lower PGY at hiring, especially for postdocs with experience outside the US



Most postdocs are not comfortable discussing salaries with their PIs

Comfortable discussing salary with PI?



“Discussions with my PIs always end up in **“people are coming anyway, no matter what conditions are in the lab”**, or **“I cannot pay more anyone because that’s what I have to pay according to NIH standards”** (which is an obvious but very comfortable for the PI lie), or **“other postdocs have a few kids and manage to survive on one salary”**.”

Inequity in Postdoc Salary between BWH and Neighboring Institutions

PGY	BWH min – FY 2022	BWH min – FY 2023	HMS – FY 2023
0	\$54,840	\$56,484	\$65,000
1	\$55,224	\$56,880	\$66,000
2	\$55,632	\$57,300	\$67,000
3	\$57,852	\$59,592	\$68,000
4	\$59,784	\$61,572	\$70,000
5	\$61,992	\$63,852	\$72,000
6	\$64,296	\$66,228	\$74,000
7	\$66,600	\$68,604	\$76,000

- Neighboring institutions, including HMS, DFCI, Boston’s Children, and MIT have implemented the HMS salary scale for postdocs
- The HMS scale (or higher) has also been adopted by the University of California System, Yale University, Princeton, St. Luke’s, and others
- The lower scale makes BWH not competitive for both academic and industry research in Boston and nationally

New Actions Implemented by BWH

PGY	BWH min – FY 2022	BWH min – FY 2023	HMS – FY 2023	NIH 2023+ 20%
0	\$54,840	\$56,484	\$65,000	\$67,780
1	\$55,224	\$56,880	\$66,000	\$68,256
2	\$55,632	\$57,300	\$67,000	\$68,760
3	\$57,852	\$59,592	\$68,000	\$71,510
4	\$59,784	\$61,572	\$70,000	\$73,886
5	\$61,992	\$63,852	\$72,000	\$76,622
6	\$64,296	\$66,228	\$74,000	\$79,473
7	\$66,600	\$68,604	\$76,000	\$82,324

- All postdocs should receive, at minimum, salary at **NIH scale for their years of experience (PGY)**
 - PGY counts **all post-PhD research experience**, not just at BWH
- If you are receiving less than that, please communicate with your PI or HR.
- BWH recommends PIs **pay 20% above NIH immediately**, which will be **mandatory by 10/2024**.
- Unless reasons are provided and approved, PIs must pay all postdocs on the same salary scale (**equity rule**).

Additional benefits and changes

Automatic job code

- Research fellows will move to a new job code every year to ensure that they get the annual raise automatically

Health plan coverage

- Research fellows are eligible for no-cost health coverage for employee-only in the Select plan through the Mass General Brigham Health Plan starting 07/01/2023 (~\$100 saving per month)

403(b) Retirement Savings Plan

- Effective July 1, 2023, Mass General Brigham will make an employer contribution equal to 2% of pay into the 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan for each research fellow.
- This is a direct contribution, not a match, and will be automatically contributed on your behalf whether you contribute your own savings or not.

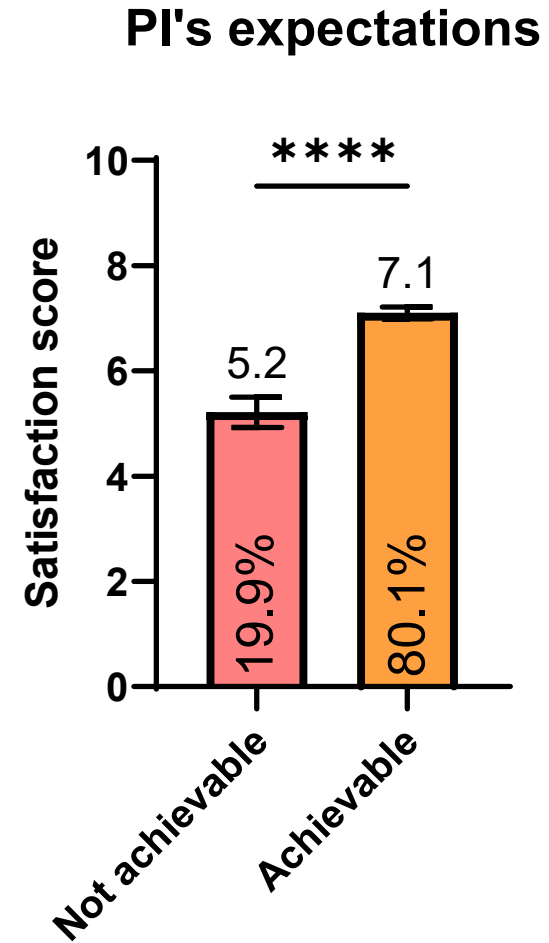
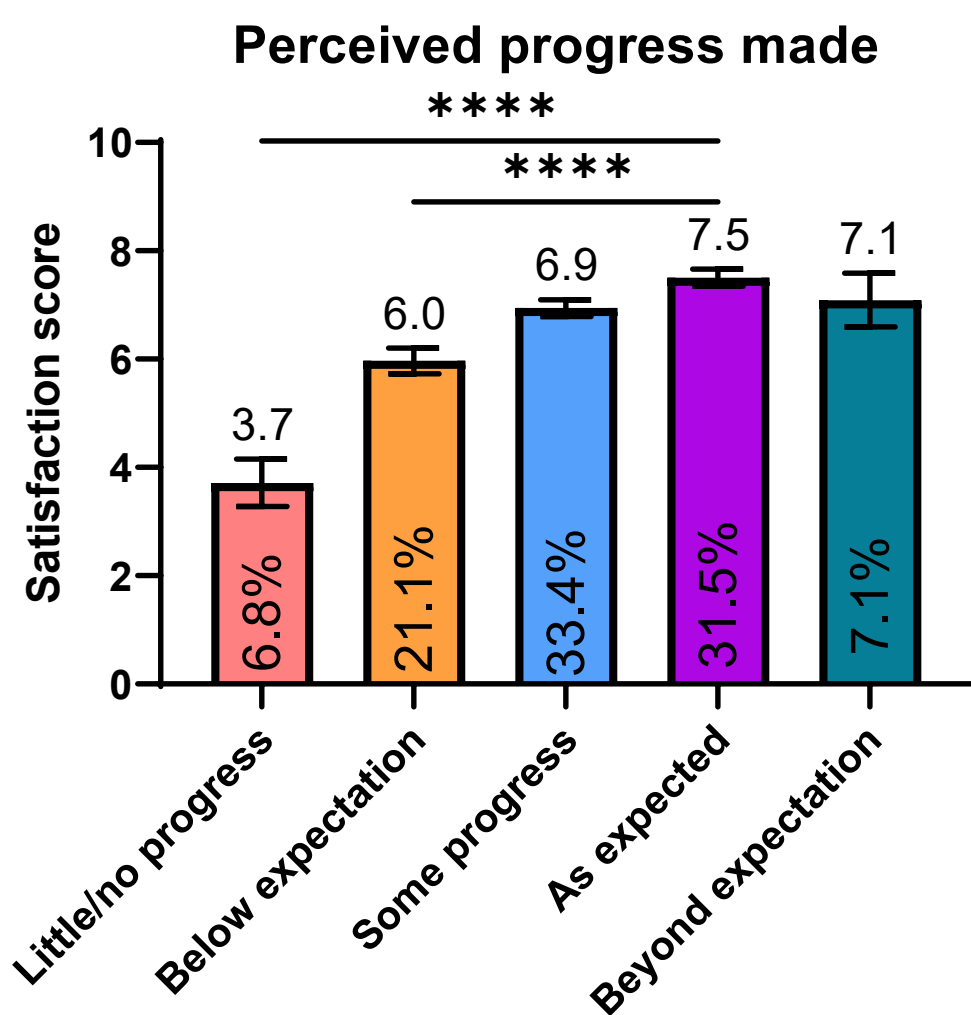


**Questions or feedback on
salaries & benefits?**



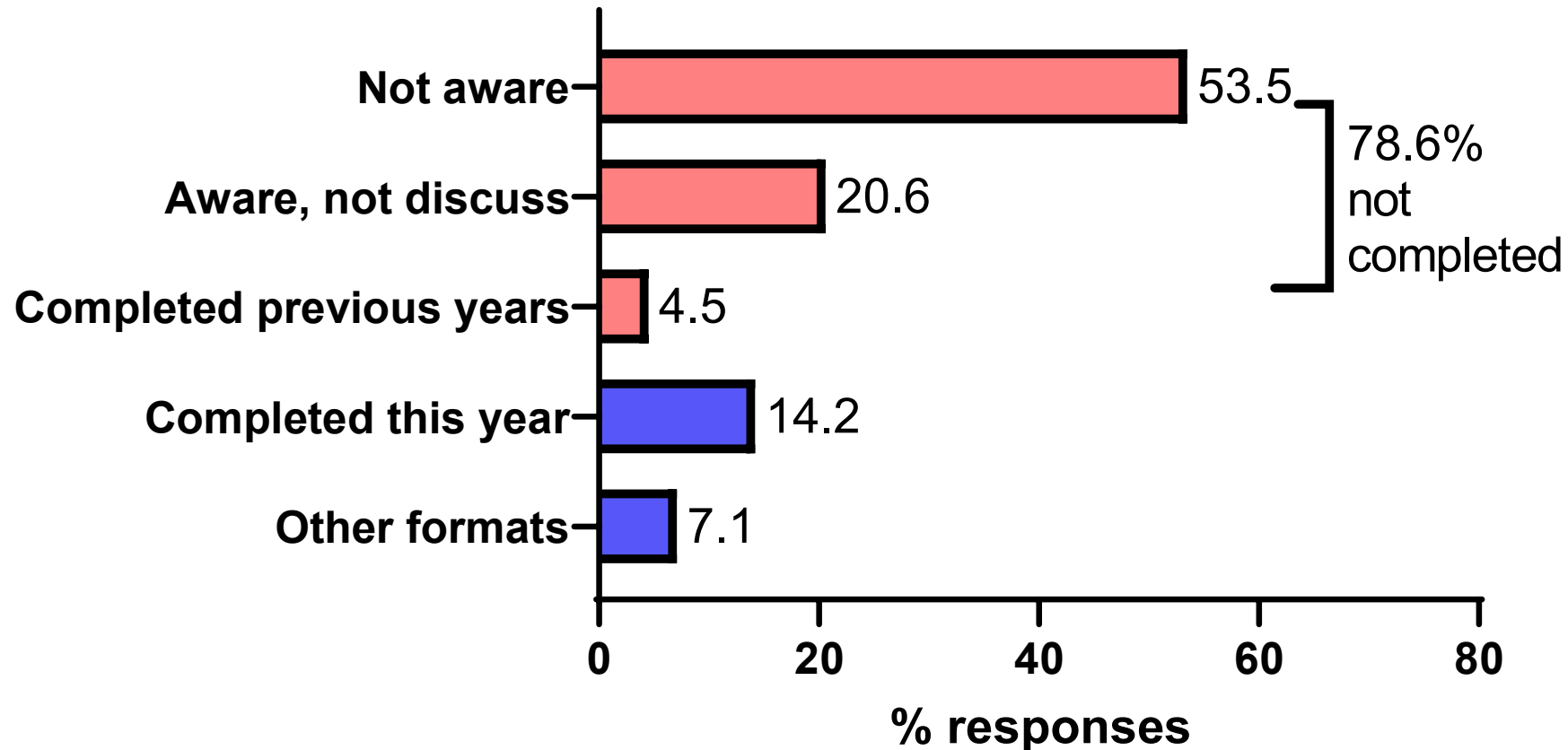
Section 2: Professional Development & Mentorship

Perception of Career Progress Significantly Impacts Postdocs' Satisfaction



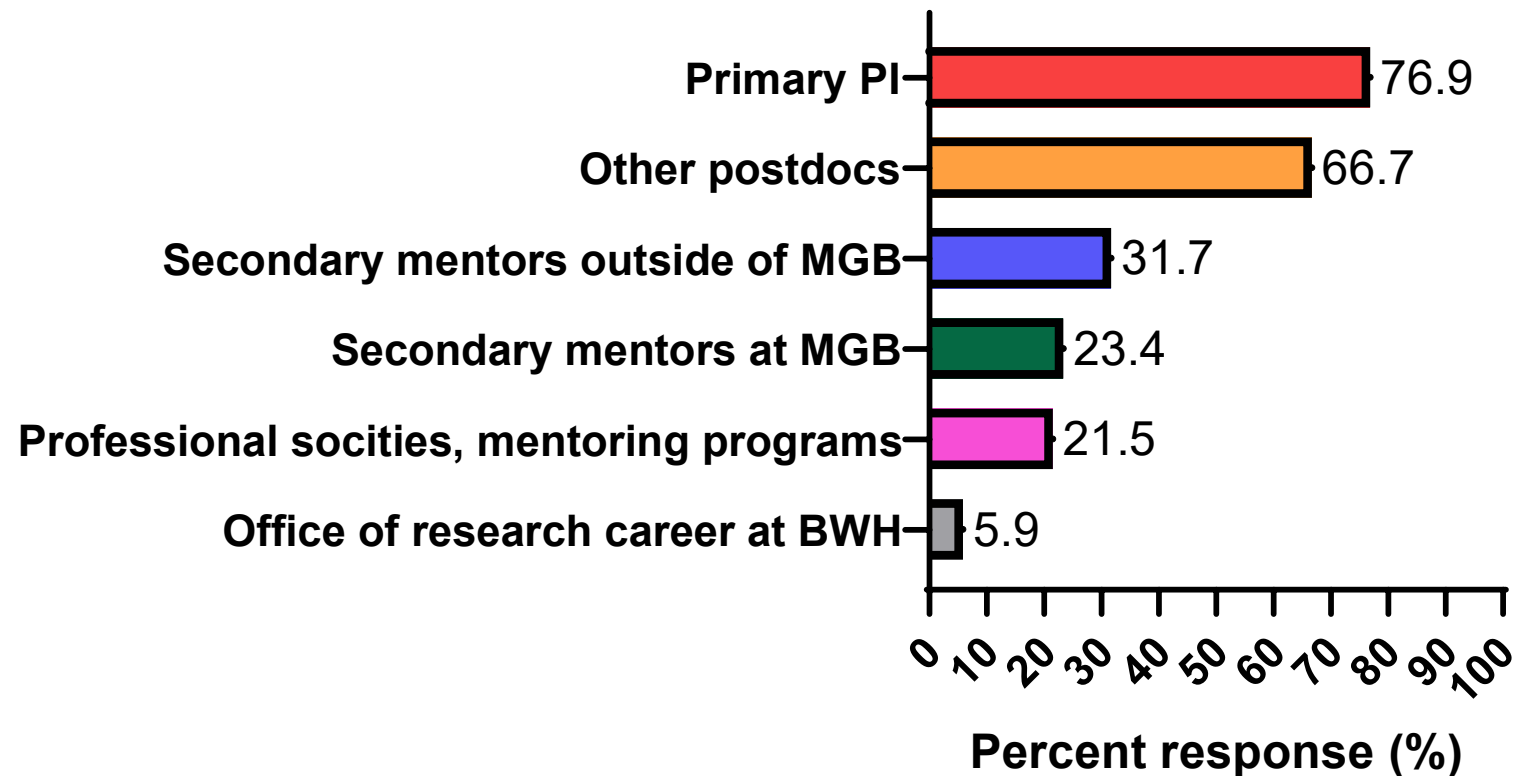
Vast Majority of Postdocs Did Not Complete an Annual Performance Review in 2022

Annual career conference form



Vast Majority of Postdocs Did Not Have a Secondary Mentor at MGB

Who have you turned to for advice on professional development and career progression?



Many Postdocs also Feel Isolated from the Broader Research Community

“I think each postdoc should be assigned a **mentoring PI from outside their department** who the postdoc can have a monthly 30-minute meeting with to discuss non-research related considerations.”

“PIs have to **prove mentoring progress.**”

“Regular meetings with the PI, both for research conduct, and career mentoring, and also more meetings with other teams and researcher to **better know the research community and get out of my small research bubble.**”

“I expected a lot more connection to other basic science researchers, for example, at HMS. **I didn't find any connection at all.**”

“It is frustrating to be a BWH postdoc and constantly feel like a **second-tier citizen** compared to our neighboring institutions; particularly quad-based HMS postdocs. Examples: we weren't eligible for Color COVID testing, despite being in an HMS building; we **do not get the postdoc cafeteria discount**, despite being in an HMS building; **our salary is now substantially lower** than HMS postdocs; the bureaucracy at MGB is opaque and more sprawling than that of HMS postdocs; **grants administration at MGB is a black box** that has resulted in my fellowship almost being rescinded; resources at MGB are worse than our HMS neighbors.”

Planned Actions by BWH and Further Suggestions

In plan:


- Automatic system for filling out annual career conference forms

Further suggestions:

- Each department to explore having a mentorship committee/ assign a secondary mentor for postdocs and also to measure PIs' ability to mentor well

Additional resources:

- Make existing resources more visible for postdocs
- [Harvard Catalyst](#), [MGBmentor.org](#)
- [Peer Mentoring Circle Program](#)



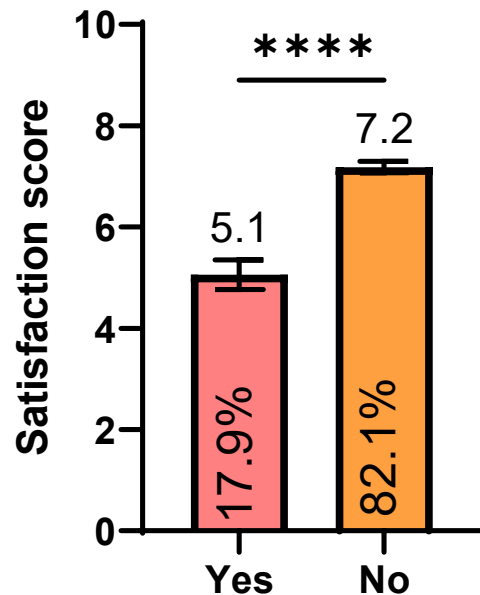
**Questions or Feedback for Professional
Development & Mentorship?**



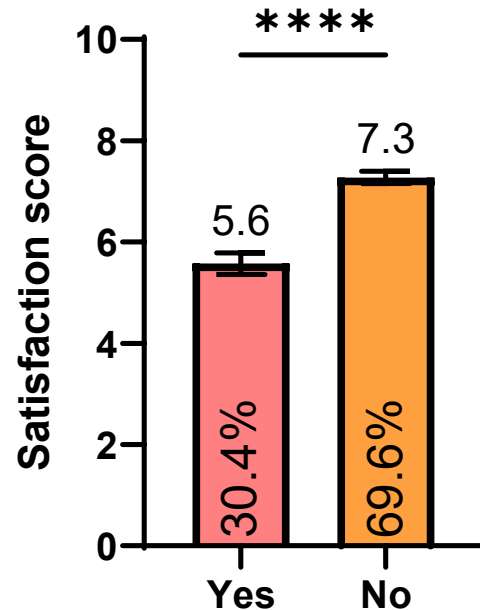
Section 3: Unprofessional workplace environment

Experiencing or Witnessing Unprofessional Behavioral Significantly Decreased Satisfaction

Personally affected by unprofessional behaviors?



Witness unprofessional behaviors?

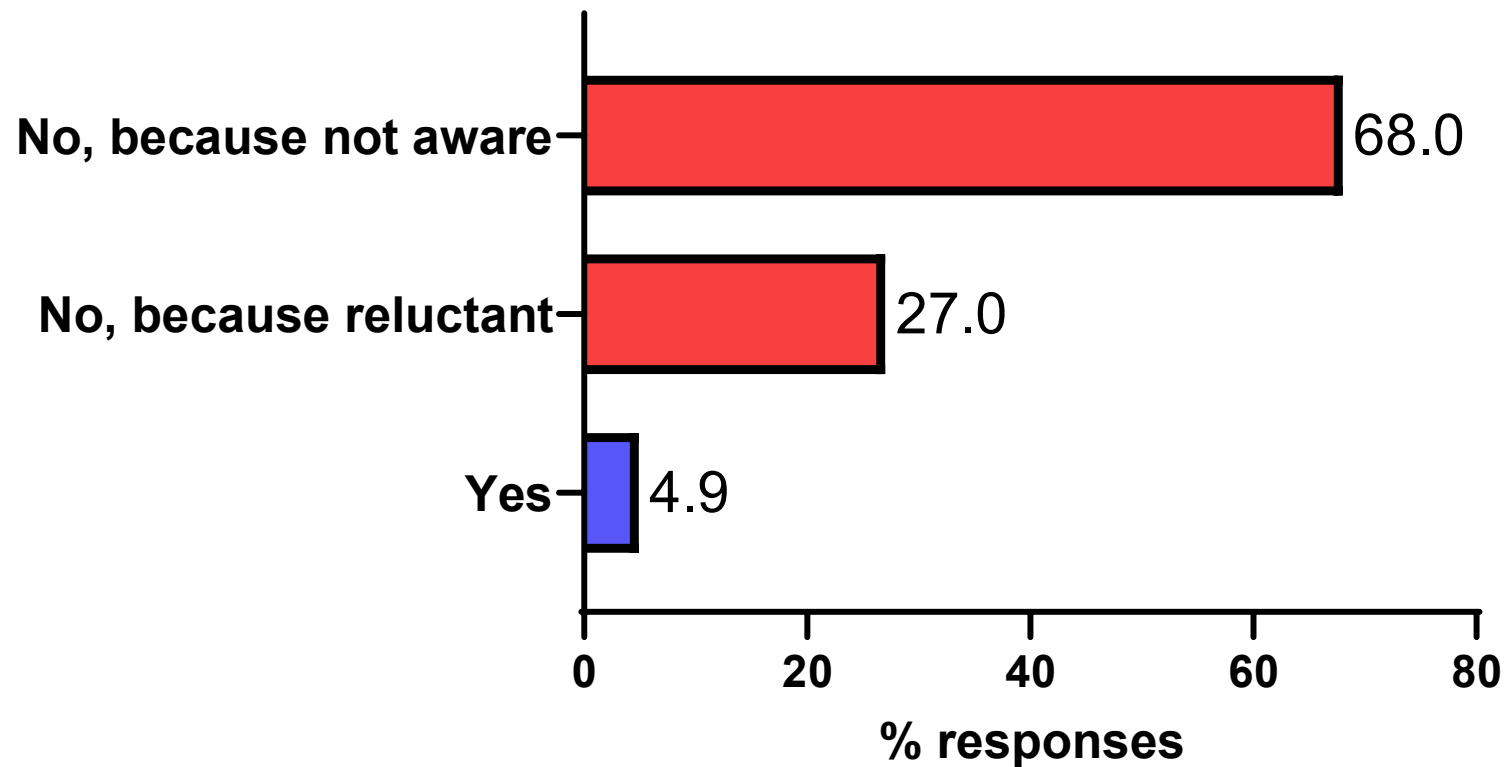


“Highly inappropriate sexual comments frequently made during work hours and social events at work.”

“There should be a way for trainee's to anonymously evaluate their PIs - **fear of retribution is real**, especially when the lab group is primarily work from home and disconnected from services.”

Most Postdocs Are Not Aware of Resources for Conflict Resolution

If needed, did you utilize BWH resources for conflict resolution?



Institutional Policies

- **Non-retaliation Policy:** BWH has a formal non-retaliation policy to protect individuals who report known or suspected inappropriate conduct or non-compliant activities in good faith. See [HR-103](#) for details and procedures relating to this policy.
- If you are experiencing a problem related to **discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or retaliation**, there are a number of options available to discuss or file a complaint, some of which are confidential. Please refer to both [HR-102](#) and the [Know the Line FAQ](#) for a comprehensive list of these options.
- If your issue involves or might involve [research misconduct](#), you should instead bring it to the [BWH Research Integrity Officer](#) directly

Resources for Conflict Resolution

1. Direct convo
with PI

[BWH OMCOS](#)

[Harvard Ombuds](#)

2. Department
Leadership

Chief/Chair

Research Admin

[3. HR Team](#)

ResearchHelpline@bwh.harvard.edu



**Question or Feedback for Unprofessional
Workplace Environment?**

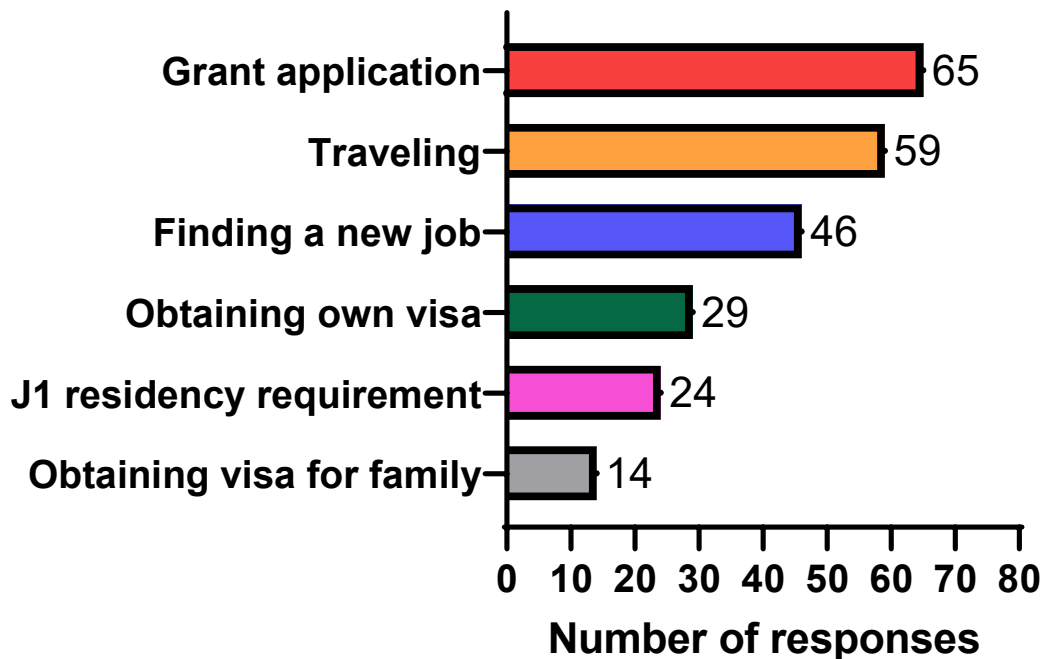


Section 4: Additional Concerns

Challenges Faced by Postdocs on Visas

80% of respondents to the survey were on work visas

Have you encountered difficulties due to your visa status during your time at BWH



“As an international postdoc, my progression is limited to my US peer counterparts due to my **inability to apply for grants** etc, something that is crucial in the progression to becoming an independent researcher and for growth.”

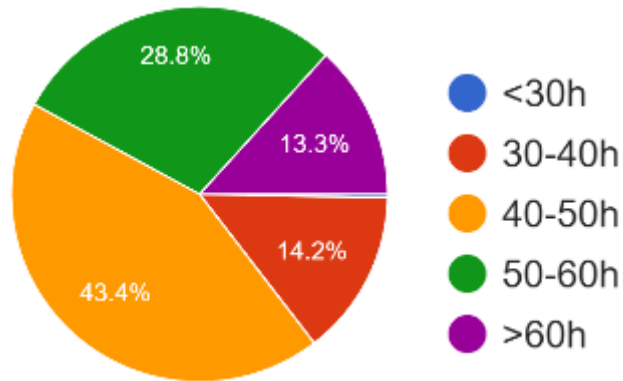
“More assistance for international students including **access to immigration lawyers** who can help navigate the process. Particularly as it pertains to my partner; **the visa I'm on doesn't allow her to work**. How are we to afford living in Boston on a single postdoc income? “

“Before hiring new postdocs the HR team should clearly **lay out the J1 visa restrictions**.”

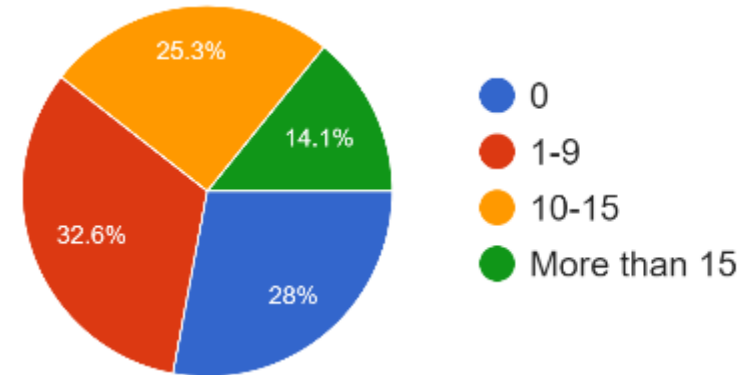
“It would also be very helpful if BWH **improved immigration support and resources** available to the international postdocs.”

Majority of Postdocs Work Beyond the Number of Hours They're Paid For

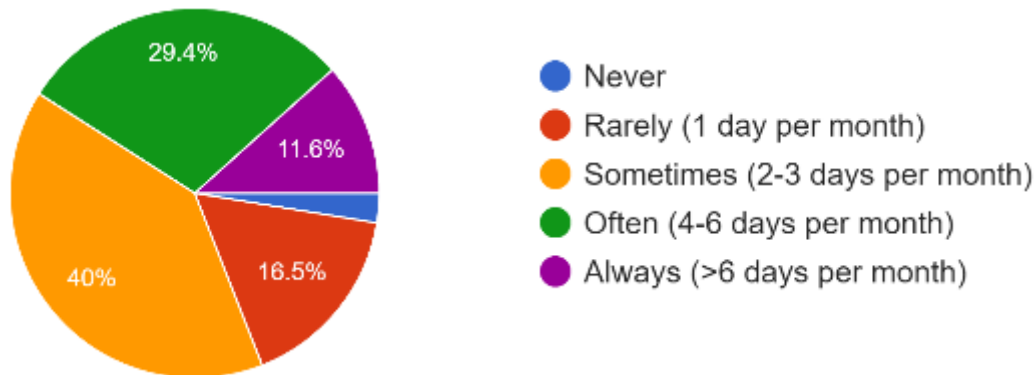
How many hours do you work a week?



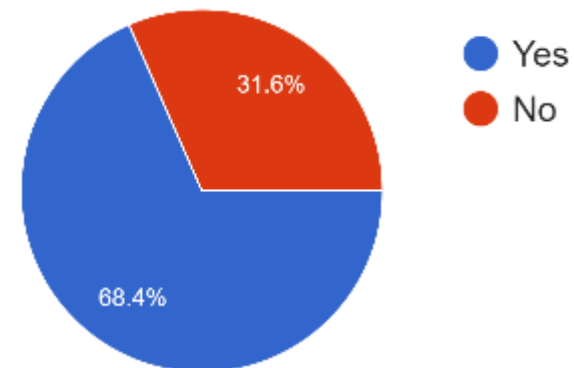
How many paid days off did you take last year?



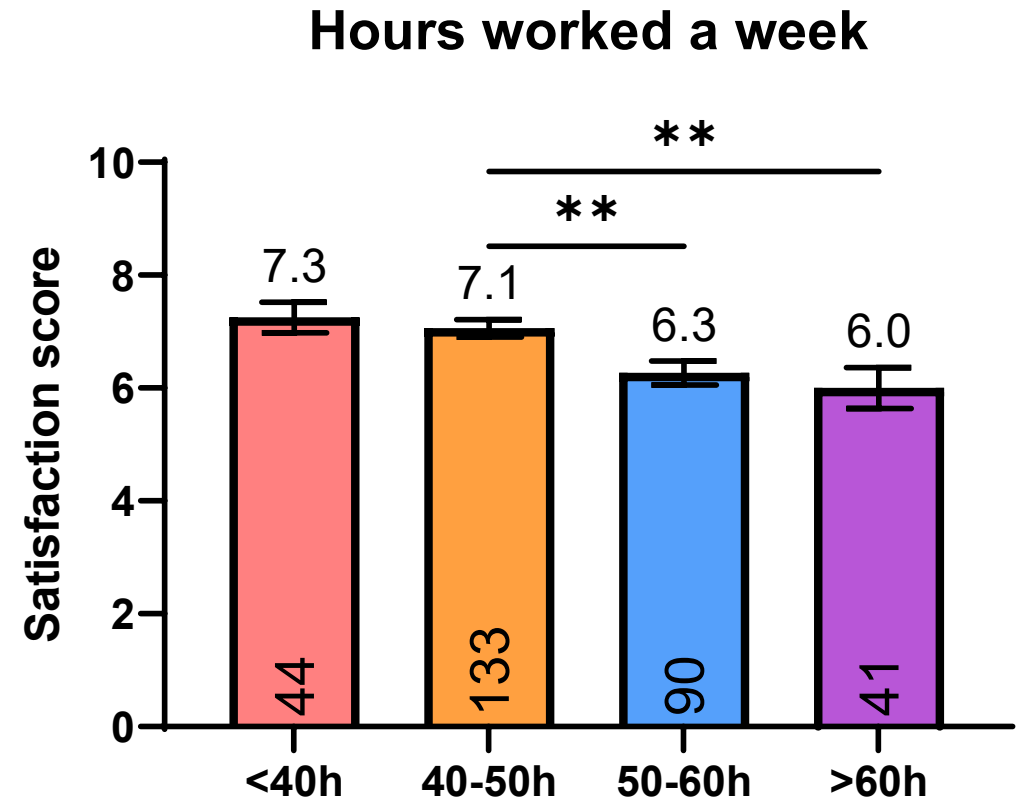
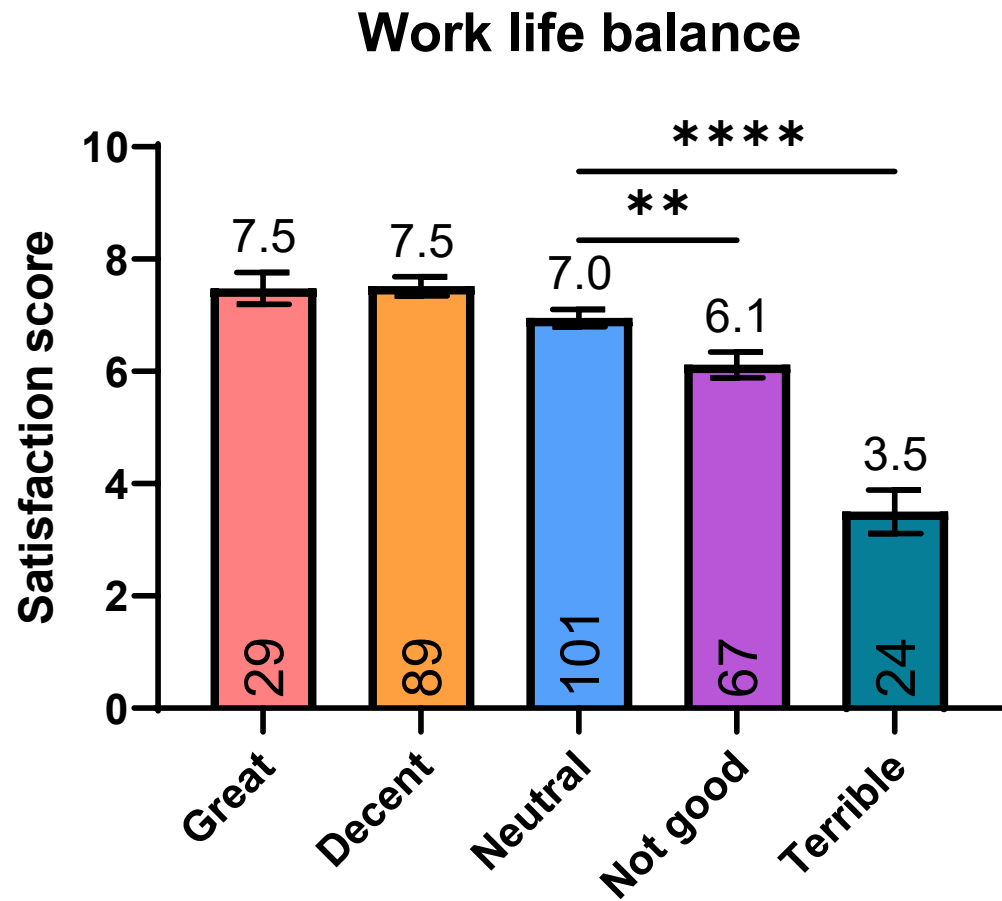
Do you work on weekends & holidays?



Do you feel comfortable discussing paid time off with your PI?



Poor work-life Balance is Associated with Decreased Satisfaction



Challenges with Onboarding and Administrative Tasks

“Understanding how BWH works can be very difficult and highly frustrating (who to ask for administrative related things, who to go to when ordering goes wrong, how mail works, who are contacts for in person safety training, support for onboarding interns).”


“I also feel the postdoc onboarding process could be improved. I still feel very new and **confused about all the different offices** and where I should seek support first when needed,”

“Some administration employees do not do their work properly, making it really hard especially for visa holders, which is extremely stressful.”

“The administrative support is truly unacceptable. Everything from ordering to asking questions about grants is a nightmare.”

Suggested Improvements

- BWH PLC is working with GPS to hold visa/ immigration info sessions for postdocs on specific visa types
 - J1 visa session: August 7th
- PLC is also working on a resource website for postdocs



**Questions or Feedback on Additional
Concerns?**



All Questions or Feedback?

**Join us and bring about
the changes you want to see!**



<https://www.discoverbrigham.org/pda/>