

What is The Big Life Scientist Survey?

We conducted The Big Life Scientist Survey during March and April 2018 to highlight the biggest challenges life scientists are facing around issues such as funding, pressure, publication and more.

Why did we carry out the survey?

Over the last few months, we've spoken to a lot of life scientists for our Interviews with Scientists blog series and our inaugural Lab Heroes Awards, and we're hearing the same issues coming up again and again. Whether it's stress and pressure, access to funding, or diversity in the lab, we wanted to shine a light on the main barriers life scientists are facing, help them get heard, and tell it like it really is.

How was the survey conducted?

The survey was conducted by asking our customers, contacts, and social media followers from around the world to indicate the extent to which they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with statements about funding, study replication, publications, lifestyle, and diversity.

222 life scientists responded, predominantly from the UK and US, working in the field of neuroscience.

How are the results presented?

We've presented the [key findings from the survey here](#) which you can download as a visual PDF.

The full survey results are below.

The Big Life Scientist Survey: All Findings



Question 1: Are you?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	40.09%	89
Female	58.56%	130
Other	1.35%	3
	Answered	222
	Skipped	0

Question 2: Which areas best describes your research interests? (Select one)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Cancer	2.70%	6
Cardiovascular	2.70%	6
Cell biology	6.76%	15
Developmental biology	1.80%	4
Epigenetics & Nuclear signalling	0.45%	1
Immunology	1.80%	4
Metabolism	2.25%	5
Microbiology	3.15%	7
Neuroscience	54.50%	121
Pain	4.05%	9
Signal transduction	3.60%	8
Stem cells	0.90%	2
Other (please specify)	15.32%	34
	Answered	222
	Skipped	0

Question 3: Which of the below best describes your current role? (Select one)

Answer Choices	Responses	
PI / Lab head / Manager / Director	24.32%	54
Post doc / Research Fellow	26.13%	58
Research Assistant	3.15%	7
Technician	3.60%	8
Student - PhD	31.53%	70
Student - other	5.86%	13
Other (please specify)	5.41%	12
	Answered	222
	Skipped	0

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Question 4: How much do you agree with the following statements about funding?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Budget cuts prevent me from progressing within my capacity as a life scientist	36.97%	42.86%	10.92%	6.72%	2.52%	
Proposals for funding take too much time away from my research	31.93%	42.02%	19.33%	6.72%	0.00%	
Funding / money is routinely wasted on poorly designed studies	11.76%	35.29%	36.13%	15.13%	1.68%	
Research is largely determined by large corporations who provide funding	14.29%	24.37%	30.25%	26.89%	4.20%	
Research projects are determined by funding providers' agendas	23.53%	57.98%	13.45%	5.04%	0.00%	
Funding agencies prefer to support projects that find new information instead of confirming old results	42.86%	38.66%	14.29%	3.36%	0.84%	
It is harder to get funding if you are an early career scientist	33.61%	31.09%	20.17%	14.29%	0.84%	
The likelihood of me obtaining funding is high	2.52%	23.53%	33.61%	33.61%	6.72%	
I will only get funding if I'm published in a peer reviewed journal	63.87%	25.21%	7.56%	2.52%	0.84%	
					Answered	119
					Skipped	103

Question 5: How much do you agree with the following statements about study replication?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The pressure to obtain new findings discourages scientists from trying to replicate studies	34.63%	46.34%	10.24%	7.80%	0.98%
Journals tend not to publish replication studies unless the conclusions contradict the previous studies	31.71%	41.46%	20.49%	6.34%	0.00%
There isn't enough time to conduct high-quality studies	16.59%	31.71%	21.46%	21.95%	8.29%
Pressure prevents scientists from checking their work thoroughly before publication	15.12%	33.66%	23.90%	21.95%	5.37%
Budget cuts prevent scientists from checking their work thoroughly before publication	16.59%	31.22%	24.39%	23.90%	3.90%
Researchers often do not share enough detail on their methods to allow replication	33.17%	43.90%	14.63%	7.80%	0.49%
Published work is often difficult to reproduce because of poor quality methods	12.68%	47.32%	26.34%	13.17%	0.49%
				Answered	205
				Skipped	17

Question 6: How much do you agree with the following statements about publications?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Peer review is a broken system	13.43%	27.36%	35.32%	20.90%	2.99%	
Peer review often fails to detect fraud and other problems with manuscripts	19.40%	41.79%	27.86%	10.95%	0.00%	
Anonymity of institution and researcher at peer review stage would give a study more chance of being published	34.33%	35.82%	19.90%	8.46%	1.49%	
My research will never get published even if I have a breakthrough	2.99%	8.96%	22.89%	44.78%	20.40%	
Publications should be free for all	46.27%	31.34%	14.93%	6.97%	0.50%	
Paywalls (paying for publications) prevent me from furthering my research	18.41%	31.34%	28.86%	16.92%	4.48%	
Scientific breakthroughs are often mis-reported in the press	42.29%	39.80%	14.43%	3.48%	0.00%	
					Answered	201
					Skipped	21

Question 7: How much do you agree with the following statements about scientists' lifestyles?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My ability to do my job is affected by high levels of stress	29.74%	43.08%	12.82%	12.82%	1.54%
I am passionate about my research	54.36%	36.41%	5.13%	3.59%	0.51%
Being a scientist is rewarding	24.62%	46.15%	14.87%	10.77%	3.59%
There is a disparity between male and female pay in my industry	12.31%	29.23%	32.82%	20.00%	5.64%
There is flexibility in my job	20.51%	49.23%	15.38%	9.74%	5.13%
It is easy to have a family and be a scientist	4.62%	11.28%	18.97%	42.56%	22.56%
My job pays enough to have a social life	9.23%	34.36%	17.95%	24.62%	13.85%
I go on holiday at least once a year	22.56%	47.69%	9.74%	12.31%	7.69%
There is adequate support for female scientists	4.62%	26.67%	29.23%	28.72%	10.77%
There is adequate support for early-career scientists	4.62%	20.51%	22.56%	38.46%	13.85%
There is pressure on postdocs to publish frequently	34.36%	46.67%	16.92%	2.05%	0.00%
Science is racially diverse	10.77%	37.44%	19.49%	25.13%	7.18%
There is a lack of female role models in science	18.46%	34.36%	22.56%	21.03%	3.59%
				Answered	195
				Skipped	27

The Big Life Scientist Survey: All Findings



Question 8: Please select the answer which most often applies to you: "I tend to work..."

Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 40 hours a week	8.72%	17
Between 40 and 60 hours a week	68.21%	133
More than 60 hours a week	23.08%	45
	Answered	195
	Skipped	27

Question 9: In what country do you work?

Answer Choices	Responses	
United Kingdom	31.44%	61
United States of America	24.74%	48
Australia	3.61%	7
Canada	3.61%	7
France	3.61%	7
India	3.61%	7
Germany	3.09%	6
Italy	2.58%	5
Denmark	2.06%	4
Belgium	1.55%	3
Greece	1.55%	3
Hungary	1.55%	3
Netherlands	1.55%	3
Portugal	1.55%	3
Brazil	1.03%	2
Czech Republic	1.03%	2
Israel	1.03%	2
Romania	1.03%	2
Spain	1.03%	2
Switzerland	1.03%	2
Turkey	1.03%	2
Afghanistan	0.52%	1
Angola	0.52%	1
Bulgaria	0.52%	1
Cambodia	0.52%	1
Ireland	0.52%	1
Latvia	0.52%	1
Malaysia	0.52%	1
Nigeria	0.52%	1

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Pakistan	0.52%	1
Philippines	0.52%	1
Serbia	0.52%	1
South Africa	0.52%	1
Sweden	0.52%	1
	Answered	194
	Skipped	28