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Peer review report

Peer review report 1 on “Worldwide productivity in the hand and wrist literature: A bibliometric analysis of four highly cited subspecialty journals”

1. Original submission

1.1. Recommendation

Minor Revision.

1.2. Comments to the author

This article aims to look at the quantity and quality of hand research worldwide and to look to see if there are changes in the last ten years. It aims to look at the characteristics of worldwide productivity in hand research. It does this by a literature search using Web of Science to identify hand articles in four highly cited hand journals. Contributions from different countries were analysed and then adjusted for population. They looked at quantity and in an attempt to address quality stated that the highest citations per article had the highest quality. They concluded that the number of publications of hand research shows a significant increase in the past ten years. The United States was the most productive country, however Sweden had the highest quality of articles if quality according to mean citations per article.

This is a worthwhile look at what is happening in hand research and the question is worth asking. This work is following on from bibliometrics analyses used to investigate national contributions in other fields of medicine.

The introduction is clear and logical and the aim is straightforward.

Regarding Materials and method, the Wos was used to identify publications in hand research. It then says four highly cited subspecialty journals were chosen from 'Orthopaedics' category. It doesn't explain why. It says that all publications from these journals were included except for letters, editorial material and corrections. Hand research publications are not clearly defined. If all articles from these four journals are included some will involve elbow for example. A clear definition of Hand Research is not given.

There is no mention as to why only those four hand journals were included. Hand is another subspecialty journal, Journal and Journal of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery which is also highly cited also has original articles regarding hand research. There is also Journal of Plastic and Hand Surgery and there are also hand

research articles found in other journals as well.

Table one shows Journals in search but doesn't explain impact factor. Previous articles have discussed 2 and 5 year impact factors.

The four journals are looking at english speaking literature only.

There are different ways of looking for these hand research articles (for example reference 4 looked at arthroscopies for all WoS journals but did state limitations in that they could have mentioned arthroscopy but not been in depth about the subject. Reference 6 also looked at Medline)

The quantity of research productivity was determined by number of published articles and the quality according to number of citations.

The results state that there was an increase in publications in the four journals from 240 to 504. Does this mean the journals have doubled in size? The world map shows the distribution and Figure 3 shows the difference in incomes and that no articles came from low income countries.

The results were clear and easy to follow.

The discussion show a similar trend to the '10/90' divide. It discusses the results well. With regards to limitation it does mention non Wos cited journals and that it only looked at orthopaedic category in the JCR. It goes on to state that the four highly cited journals could represent the main contributions without backing this up. There are also general orthopaedic, general surgery and plastic and reconstructive surgery journals with hand articles. I did a quick look at 2014 for Journal of Hand and Plastic Surgery and counted 36 articles for hand surgery for one year. This would be a much more significant study if the claims that the four highly cited journals was the main contribution in the field was backed up or the more significant other cited journals were also included.

Note in Abstract... The United States is the... However Sweden had the...

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