**Publish or perish in cancer – but where?**

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**Background:** Bibliometric analysis has previously been employed as a

method of correlating research productivity in oncology with geographic

variation in output and funding, and the development of translational research.

Investigation of output across a range of disciplines within oncology has

not been undertaken previously. The aims of this study are to measure the

proportion, quality and relevance of articles relating to common malignancies

in the medical press.

**Materials and Methods:** Both PubMed and the WoS databases were

consulted for the reference period 01/01/2007 to 31/12/2007. Publications

were retrieved by searching for each malignancy using its medical subject

heading (MeSH) term in PubMed. The subheadings encompassed by each

MeSH term were then employed to perform an equivalent search in the WoS

database. The 26 malignancies with the highest incidence as defined by the

Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) database of the National

Cancer Institute (NCI) in 2006 were included in the study. The top twenty

journals by impact factor (IF) and eigenfactor (EF) in general medicine and

oncology journals, and the presence of each malignancy within these titles

was then analysed. The journals publishing most prolifically on each neoplasm

were also identified and their impact assessed.

**Results:** The two databases generated 63260 (PubMed) and 126845 (WoS)

entries, respectively. The 26 neoplasms accounted for 25% of total output

from the top medical publications. 5 malignancies dominated the first

quartile of output in the top oncology journals; breast, prostate, lung, and

intestinal cancer, and leukaemia. Journals publishing most frequently on

these neoplasms are associated with much higher IFs and EFs, though

these measures are not equivalent across all sub-specialties. The EF and

IF correlated strongly in the general medical (r = 0.854, p = 0.000) but not in

the oncology literature (r = 0.289, p = 0.217).

**Conclusions:** Oncology enjoys a disproportionately large representation in

what are traditionally regarded as the more prestigious medical journals.

5 malignancies receive the majority of this attention however, and there is

a need to delineate between proxy measures of quality and the relevance of

output when assessing its relative merit. Our results also suggest that the most

relevant information for those working in many of the oncologic sub-specialties

is not necessarily to be found in the most prestigious journals as delineated by

proxy indicators of quality. These findings raise significant questions regarding

the best method of assessment of research and scientific output in the field of

oncology