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Peer Review Report

Peer review report 1 on “The 100 most influential manuscripts in emergency abdominal surgery: A bibliometric analysis”

1. Original submission

1.1. Recommendation

Major Revision.

1.2. Comments to the author

Summarize the article in a short paragraph. This shows the editor you have read and understood the research.

A bibliometric analysis of the 100 most-cited articles in the emerging speciality of Emergency Abdominal Surgery, reported as being the first of this form of analysis. Details the papers that have had the highest number of total citations and organises them by sub-categories e.g topics (i.e. Vascular surgery). States these factors are a basis on what makes an EGS paper highly-cited.

Give your main impressions of the article, including whether it is novel and interesting, whether it has a sufficient impact and adds to the knowledge base.

Yes; interesting and has use but perhaps needs rephrasing in its analysis of impact and methodology as to what citation analysis can truly allude to.

Point out any journal-specific points - does it adhere to the journal's standards?

Yes; appropriate for the aims and scope of the IJS with its international leadership.

If you suspect plagiarism, fraud or have other ethical concerns, raise your suspicions with the editor, providing as much detail as possible. Visit Elsevier's Ethics site or the COPE Guidelines for more information.

No. Give specific comments and suggestions, including about layout and format, Title, Abstract, Introduction, Graphical Abstracts and/or Highlights, Method, statistical errors, Results, Conclusion/Discussion, language and References.

Title: Influential is a strong word, perhaps use of 'cited', otherwise fine.

Abstract: Results were ranked according to 'total' citation number, otherwise fine.

Introduction: From the aim, what will be the purpose of having a list of most-cited articles, will people tailor their research interests to make their papers more 'highly-cited'? Are these papers of high scientific quality and if people wanted to become highly-cited, then would the quality of the paper have any influence?

Methods: may benefit from having a second author review

categorisation of articles into their allocated groups e.g. 'vascular surgery' to reduce single-author allocation bias. Within the first top 100 results, were any articles excluded then others added to replenish the list? Search period in years? Date searched? Search terms are appropriate for this analysis.

Results: you start talking about limitations in the results section 'a possible limitation of this type of study' This is useful as to why different forms of citation analysis are/can be used but should be included in the discussion. Otherwise fine.

Tables: Table 3; give an explanation (below table) as to how citation rate was calculated for easier reading. Might be interesting to see the spread of number of most-cited articles (y) against years (x), to highlight perhaps the lead-time bias as discussed in limitations.

Discussion: In depth when related to the actual citations and paper details which is good. Limitations and analysis of bias are brief - why is the USA so prominent in the Top 100 list; socioeconomic status, research funding? Local bias? In-house bias? National bias? You've only searched English -language bias?

You comment on research activity with reference to citation numbers being low however you do not talk about scientific quality, what is the OECBM of these papers? Is there a skew towards observational cohort series data vs trials etc. which I suspect there may be and you talk about but don't assess?

Conclusions: It would be useful to see whether they are say present in current teaching curriculum/material used by trainees as a proxy of influence of these papers. And where/whether further higher-quality research may need to be undertaken? Use of the abbreviated form 'EGS' is inconsistent.

References: A lot of references, perhaps the ones referred to as the 'Top 100' could be attached as an appendix and only the essential references needed in the manuscript should be included in the reference list? Figures: perhaps the inclusion of a flow diagram showing the methodology may be of use. Language: English, fine throughout.

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