

Investigating the Trend of Medical Journal Publications in Recent Years in Iran

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Today, academics throughout the world perform research with the hope of publishing in respected international journals, to increase the impact of their publications. Thomson Reuters, Scopus, and PubMed are among the institutions that rank international journals. In this report, we attempted to map the overall trend concerning Iranian medical publications.

The Scopus website is an international database in the fields of basic sciences, medicine, engineering, and so on. One service provided by this institution is ranking countries and their accomplishments in these fields, serving as a marker for the level of advancement in various sciences. At present, Scopus ranks and scrutinizes more than 5000 scientific publishers worldwide. In Scopus country rankings, Iran held the 51st rank in the medical field 10 years ago. This rank advanced to 23 in the year 2008, further decreasing to 19 in the past year. The overall positive trend for Iranian medical science is reflected elsewhere as well. In 2017, 70 Iranian journals were included in the ISI database, 74 in PubMed, and 104 in Scopus; comparatively, only 42 Iranian medical journals were included in ISI in 2013 (1).

However, from the 70 Iranian journals in ISI, only a limited number have impact factors. According to the latest statistics from ISI comparing scientific prolificacy, Iran holds the 43rd rank among 107 countries and the 1st rank in the middle-east with almost 9000 individual articles and 31963 citations (3.53 per article). It is important to note that Saudi Arabia, holding the 44th rank worldwide and the 2nd in the middle-east, had a lower overall number of publications (almost 5000) but similar overall citation (almost 30000, 4.95 on average); suggesting that Saudi article on average were of higher quality and more scientific value. Publications belonging to the Ministry of Health and Medical education were 27% of the Iranian ISI journals (2). In the medical field, Iranian scientist publish approximately 15000 articles yearly, qualitatively more than any neighboring country and

placing Iran 18th worldwide, higher than some European states including Russia. Furthermore, there have been recent improvements in the quality of articles published by Iranian scholars. While the number of Iranian researchers paced in the top 1% of their profession internationally (with an impact factor of 15 and higher) was only 8 in previous years, this number has risen to 421 this year (3).

To summarize, while the gross number of scientific publication in Iran has seen a sharp increase in the past few years according to both internal and international sources, our journals lag behind in terms of quality. Reviews have shown many countries with a lower number of published articles placed higher in rankings, with more citations per article and an overall higher quality in their published material. Both researchers and administrators must acknowledge these trends so that in the future, both the quality and quantity of journal articles published by Iranian institutions increase at the same time (4).

Conflict of Interests

Authors have no conflict of interests.

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