

Bibliometrics to improve our patients' care!

Luigi Paglia
Editor in chief
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editorial

Bibliometrics is the statistical analysis of scientific publications and trends on a given topic. The use of bibliometric indicators is based on the fact that academic publishing is an essential outcome of research activity, as advancement of science and treatments increases with dissemination of knowledge.

Therefore, investigation in our specific field is obligatory, as learning what the current lines of research are can help us to properly orient our research in the coming years.

A soon-to-be-published paper analyses 3,027 articles that have appeared in the leading journals of Paediatric Dentistry included in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR): *Pediatric Dentistry*, the *International Journal of Pediatric Dentistry*, the *European Journal of Paediatric Dentistry* and the *Journal of Clinical Pediatric Dentistry* considering all issues and all articles published from 2008 to 2020.

The most frequently addressed topic is surgery (23.4%), which more generally includes pulp treatment, conservative treatments and the use of dental materials (operative dentistry), while the second most discussed topic is prevention (13.2%), followed by oral pathology (10.6%). Subject matters covered less frequently include early childhood caries (ECC) (2.5%) and occlusion (2.7%).

In terms of study types, research articles are the most frequently published (74.2%). Among them, the most common study design is observational studies (61.1%), followed by cross-sectional studies (36.9%) and case-control studies (11.9%). With regard to experimental studies, randomised controlled trials (RCTs) are the most common type (11.6%). The number of case series has fallen sharply over time, from 20% 10 years ago to 5% today.

Another striking point is that two journals, the *International Journal of Pediatric Dentistry* and the *European Journal of Paediatric Dentistry*, have published more than half of the world's output.

By looking at the nationality of the authors, it is apparent that research frequently takes place within limited geographical areas, a sign that collaboration between different countries is struggling to take off.

Despite the fact that prevention is the second most common topic among the articles analysed in the study—both in absolute terms and also taking into account dental journals focused on different specialties—it still does not play the prominent role it deserves. It is important to emphasise the need for further investigation into the prevention of dental diseases in young patients, as the desired oral health objectives have not yet been achieved. The early identification of risk indicators and the implementation of preventive oral health campaigns aimed at the paediatric population can reduce or prevent the progression of caries, and related expenditures for the replacement of missing teeth at a later age.

A final consideration is how interesting it would be to analyse how many of the paediatric medical journals publish papers and articles on paediatric dentistry, as this is in fact another crucial step towards ensuring good oral health for all our young patients!