Turkey's contribution to cancer publication: Expected quantity, unsatisfactory quality

Cancer is a major public health problem worldwide and is the second leading cause of death in the United States of America (USA).[1] A total of 2,820,034 deaths were recorded in the USA in 2017, 21% of which were from cancer after heart disease (23%).

The assessment of the output of research necessarily becomes a priority issue and has progressively developed for the scientific research community. Many studies have focused on scientific production in various biomedical fields, including cancer research. Several studies published in literature provide an overview of the productivity of cancer research at national and continental levels.[2–4] In these studies, while Europe and North America are the two leading continents of the world that have significantly contributed to global cancer research, countries like the USA, Italy, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Japan, and China are some of the leading oncology research countries of the world.[2–4]

However, the literature lacks studies estimating the quantity and quality of Turkish research production on cancer. In this study, we aimed to determine and assess the Turkish performance in oncology-related publications during the last 25 years.

Performance was evaluated both quantitatively (as number of publications) and qualitatively (as number of citations and H-indexes) by SCImago between 1997 and 2019.[5] These parameters were adjusted for the population by Worldometer in 2020[6] and gross domestic product (GDP) by the World Bank in 2020.[7]

Over the entire study period, Turkey ranked 18th with 11,600 oncological documents, which is comparable with both the population (17th with 84.3 million) and GDP (19th with $754.4 billion). However, it placed 27th with 141,495 and 34th with 101 in the number of citations and H-indexes, respectively. Over the study period, the rankings of Turkey declined during first 20 years; however it has increased its place markedly within the last 3–4 years for the both number of publications and citations [Figure 1].

In terms of quantity, the performance of Turkey in cancer research was not poor as expected, owing to its large population and GDP. On the other hand, the quality of papers -measured by the number of citations and H-index- is quite low and unsatisfactory. Not only compatible publications with low impact but also the marked decline in production of publication and citation, particularly within the last few years, should provoke scientists and policymakers into finding solutions to reverse the unsatisfactory situation.

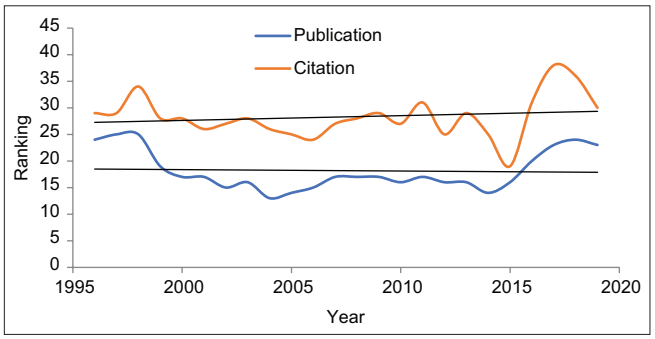


Figure 1: Evolution of ranking of Turkish cancer publication and citation output over the years

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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