

STUDY OF BRAZILIAN PUBLICATIONS IN GENERAL JOURNALS OF ARTICLES ON THE MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM

OLAVO PIRES DE CAMARGO, LUIZ EUGÊNIO GARCEZ LEME

ABSTRACT

The authors study the publication profiles of articles relating to the musculoskeletal system in two indexed Brazilian general medical journals registered in PUBMED, over a period of two years. They selected 67 articles with heterogeneous distribution between the journals studied, and observed clear progression in the number of articles between the years studied in both publications, especially in Clinics. Among the areas of inter-

rest, the articles referring to surgery, clinical approaches and biomechanical studies had significant presence in Clinics. In RAMB, the studies were focused exclusively on the area of clinical interest. As regards design, clinical trials, reviews and case series predominated in Clinics, while case series, reviews and diagnostic studies predominated in RAMB.

Keywords: Orthopedics, Musculoskeletal, Publication.

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INTRODUCTION

The increase in the levels of scientific publication in Brazil, particularly in the area of health, has been a perceptible characteristic in recent years¹.

Greater ease of research and publication, particularly in the more developed states, as well as the increase of schools and universities, the facilities of the world wide web and an academic policy of public or perish that is universal may be explanations for this phenomenon.

Surveys and publications on the musculoskeletal system are not an exception to this rule, and there is a significant increase in the quantity and quality of Brazilian publications in this area, which is reflected in the expansion of quality and impact of Brazilian journals focusing specifically on orthopedics, sports medicine and correlated areas.

Part of the academic production regarding the musculoskeletal system, however, ends up being published outside of specific journals, either as they address interdisciplinary topics, or aim at disclosure to a broader audience than just the community involved in study of the musculoskeletal system.

The study of the profile of these publications appears interesting

to us both due to the knowledge of their areas of disclosure and to the qualitative analysis of published papers.

METHOD

Surveys were conducted in 2009 and 2010 on articles with an interest in the musculoskeletal system published in two Brazilian journals not specifically linked to the orthopedic area, currently cataloged in Pubmed (Revista da Associação Médica Brasileira [RAMB] and Revista do Hospital das Clínicas da FMUSP [Clinics]). Having selected the articles, we located 27 publications in Clinics²⁻²⁸ and 12 publications in RAM²⁹⁻³⁹ that were evaluated individually by the authors to define their possible interest in orthopedics and study of the musculoskeletal system.

Inclusion criteria: Articles published in the journals analyzed in the years 2009 and 2010 that fulfilled the search criteria.

Exclusion criteria:

Articles that were not directly or indirectly related to orthopedics and study of the musculoskeletal system.

The articles already selected were evaluated in terms of their research design and the set of topics covered.

The results were incorporated in an Excel spreadsheet.

We used Microsoft's Excel 2007[®] program.

All the authors declare that there is no potential conflict of interest referring to this article.

Department of Orthopedics and Traumatology of Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de São Paulo.

Mailing address: Rua: Ovídio Pires de Campos, 333 - Cerqueira César - São Paulo, SP, Brazil, CEP: 05403-010.
E-mail: olapcama@uol.com.br

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RESULTS

The authors located 39 articles that fulfilled the inclusion criteria, of which 27 (69.2%) were in Clinics and 12 (30.8%) in RAMB. The percent results are recorded in tables 1, 2 and 3.

It is easy to observe a progression in the number of publications of interest on the musculoskeletal system between the years studied that actually triples in Clinics (from 10 to 30 publications). Among the areas of interest the articles referring to surgery, clinical approaches and biomechanical studies had significant presence in Clinics. In RAMB the studies were focused exclusively on the area of clinical interest.

As regards the design, clinical trials, reviews and case series predominated in Clinics, while case series, reviews and diagnostic studies predominated in RAMB.

Table 1. Number of articles published by journal and year.

Journal / Year	2009		2010	
	Clinics	04		23
RAMB	05		07	
Total	09		30	

Table 2. Percent number of articles published by area, journal and year.

Tema	Clinics		RAMB	
	2009	2010	2009	2010
Osteometabolic/ Osteodegenerative	2.56	7.69		
Surgery		10.25		
Anesthesia		2.56		
Clinical	2.56	17.94	12.82	17.94
Scales	2.56	2.56		
Biomechanical		15.38		
Epidemiological	2.56			
Diagnostic		2.56		

DISCUSSION

In this article we were able to find a notable difference both in number of publications, area of interest and in research design between the two journals, being the highest number of publications in Clinics and, on a lesser scale, in RAMB. These differences can be explained by the fact that they

Table 3. Percent number of articles published by design, journal and year.

Design	Clinics		RAMB	
	2009	2010	2009	2010
Clinical Trial		25.6		
Case series	2.56	5.12	7.69	5.12
Scale validation	2.56	2.56		
Comparative description		2.56		2.56
Letter	2.56			
Cohort	2.56	2.56		
Anatomical		2.56	2.56	
Therapy		2.56		
Review		12.82	2.56	5.12
Diagnostic	2.56	2.56	5.12	

are journals of different design, with Clinics more closely associated with articles related to academic studies and clinical surveys, while RAMB has a strong inclusion in clinical updates and reviews.

As regards topics, most of the articles covered articles of clinical interest, including aspects of arthropathies and of physical medicine. This fact can explain the reason why these publications have targeted general journals and not those specialized in orthopedics. However, a significant number of essentially surgical articles was published by Clinics, which may reflect adequate dynamics of the flow of articles and the progressive increase of the factor of impact and internationalization of this publication, which could thus compete with journals specialized in Orthopedics and Traumatology. As regards the research design, we can find a balance among several designs with an expressive number of intervention studies, with clinical trials corresponding to more than 25% of the whole in an apparent progression in relation to previous studies^{40,41} What draws our attention in the current period is the absence of case reports, which demonstrates qualitative progression in both publications. As a conclusion we can observe that the number of publications on studies of the musculoskeletal system exhibits progressive presence in general journals, which continues to show the existence of room for growth for specialized publications.

During this period we also noticed the absence of secondary studies such as systematic reviews or meta-analyses, which may characterize an area to be stimulated in the short term.

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