

Scientific Publications at a Turkish Medical School

Bahadır M. Güllüoğlu, MD, and A. Özdemir Aktan, MD

ABSTRACT

The authors studied the scientific publishing trend for 1991 to 1998 at Turkey's Marmara University School of Medicine. Although publications increased both in real numbers and in ratios per faculty member, most were not original, peer-reviewed articles. Mere quantity of publications cannot accurately reflect a school's research reputation. *Acad. Med.* 2000;75:760.

In Turkey, as in many countries, scientists feel increasing pressure to publish, which may force them to sacrifice quality for quantity. We investigated the trend in the quality of publications from Istanbul's Marmara University School of Medicine (MUSM) from 1991 to 1998.

Method. We searched the Science Citation Index from 1991 to 1998 for all scientific publications from MUSM. For each year, we counted the publications and calculated the rate of publications per faculty member (PPF). As a rough proxy for quality, we split the publications into two groups: original, peer-reviewed articles versus letters, meeting abstracts, and reviews.

Results. MUSM publications increased from 15 (0.07 PPF) in 1991 to 80 (0.22 PPF) in 1998. Table 1 details the MUSM publications by type. Although original articles increased from 12 in 1991 to 44 in 1998, their percentage of total publications decreased from 80% to 54%. Numbers and per-

centages of letters and meeting abstracts increased throughout the study period.

Discussion. In Turkey, academic appointments are mainly decided by the quantity and quality of international publications. Associate professorships, for example, are given after The Turkish Council of Higher Education conducts a review, the first step of which is the evaluation of the academic's publications.¹ The number of scientific publications from MUSM and all of Turkey has increased along with national income, research budgets, and academic staffs.² As a result, Turkey's international scientific ranking increased from 42nd in 1991 to 25th in 1998.² But quantity means little. Original, peer-reviewed articles are valued more highly than are letters, meeting abstracts, or reviews, whose inclusion as publications can skew an institution's research reputation. Although MUSM faculty pub-

lished more papers from 1991 to 1998, the quality of those papers deteriorated.

Dr. Güllüoğlu is assistant professor, and Dr. Aktan is professor, Department of General Surgery, Marmara University School of Medicine, Istanbul, Turkey.

Correspondence and requests for reprints should be addressed to Dr. Aktan, Marmara University Hospital, Department of General Surgery, Tophanelioglu cad.13-15, Altunizade, Uskudar, Istanbul 81190, Turkey; e-mail: <mailto:oaktan@sim.net.tr>.

REFERENCES

1. The Turkish Council of Higher Education (YOK). Academic staff. Available from: URL (<<http://www.yok.gov.tr/yoik/yoist/tab2.html>>); accessed 30/03/00.
2. The Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK). [Annual report of the inspiration program for international scientific publications for 1998] 1998 yılı uluslararası yayınları teşvik programı yıllık raporu. TUBITAK yayınları, Ankara, Turkey, 1999.

Table 1

Types of Scientific Publications from Marmara University School of Medicine, 1991 to 1998					
Year	Number (%)				
	Articles	Letters	Meeting Abstracts	Reviews	Total
1991	12 (80)	3 (20)	0	0	15
1992	20 (83)	3 (13)	1 (4)	0	24
1993	25 (78)	3 (9)	4 (13)	0	32
1994	27 (68)	9 (22)	3 (8)	1 (2)	40
1995	37 (63)	8 (13)	14 (24)	0	59
1996	44 (67)	4 (6)	18 (27)	0	66
1997	42 (58)	12 (16)	19 (26)	0	73
1998	44 (54)	18 (22)	19 (23)	1 (1)	80