The Orofacial Pain Publication Profile

The article by Robert et al[1] in this issue of the *Journal of Orofacial Pain* provides a "snapshot" of many aspects of the publication record in the orofacial pain field by analyzing 975 papers on orofacial pain published in journals in the years 2004 and 2005.

For this period, the *Journal of Orofacial Pain* was the highest ranked journal and the "most productive" in publishing orofacial pain articles. Also, the number of papers published was highest for authors from the United States, although some northern European countries were the most "productive" based on economic and demographic indicators. While most of the papers were published in the subdiscipline "dental, oral surgery and medicine," a significant proportion appeared in publications categorized as "neurology" and "medical research, organs and systems," and almost 250 different journals published articles on the topic of orofacial pain in the years 2004 and 2005. These features imply that those interested in keeping abreast of the topic of orofacial pain must ensure that they scrutinize journals that do not typically focus on dentistry and orofacial function and dysfunction.

Although the ranking of journals (eg, on the basis of their impact factor) gives some measure of the quality of the journal and the papers it publishes, the scientific quality of the 975 papers published is unclear from the analyses. This was not an aim of the analyses by Robert et al, but it would be of interest in the future to assess the quality of papers as well as the impact and interest they generate outside as well as within the orofacial field, eg, to address the perception that the findings of most papers dealing with orofacial pain diagnosis, management, or mechanisms, even those published in "general" pain journals, are marginalized or not taken into account by most pain scientists and clinicians working outside the orofacial pain field, despite the fact that many orofacial pain papers have findings bearing on pain in general.

The paper by Robert et al makes a point about the extent of national and international collaborations involving the authors of the orofacial pain papers published in their survey. Most countries with more than 10 such papers involved national collaboration, with the exception of Australia, Belgium, Canada, and Switzerland, where more than 50% of the papers were coauthored with researchers from other countries. It would be interesting to know also the extent to which national or international collaborative studies involve interactions between basic scientists and clinical scientists or clinicians in order to provide some insights into the extent of translational research in this field. A related topic is the proportion of basic science and clinical papers; this was examined in the study by Robert et al from the point of view of papers reporting on studies in animals compared to those reporting human studies. The paucity (11%) of animal-based research papers is a striking statistic, although not surprising to one working in the field. The limited number of papers dealing with pain mechanisms demonstrates the need for a more extensive focus on these mechanisms through the use of animal models, complemented by translational studies utilizing experimental pain approaches in humans.[2,3] Such studies are essential to help clarify the processes underlying the etiology and pathogenesis of most orofacial pain conditions, especially those of a persistent or chronic nature, which are still so poorly understood.

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1. Robert C, Caillieux N, Wilson CS, Gaudy J-F, Arreto C-D. World orofacial pain research production: A bibliometric study (2004-2005). J Orofac Pain 2008;22:179–187.
2. Sessle BJ. Animal models of chronic orofacial pain [editorial]. J Orofac Pain 2007;21:5.
3. Svensson P. What can human experimental pain models teach us about clinical TMD? Arch Oral Biol 2007; 52:391–394.