



Publication rates of full-text journal articles converted from abstracts presented during the 22nd Turkish National Urology Congress

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To analyze the publication rates of full-text journal articles converted from the abstracts presented in the 22nd Turkish National Urology Congress in 2012.

Material and Methods: A total of 576 abstracts accepted for presentation at the 22nd Turkish National Urology Association Meeting were identified from the published abstract book. The abstracts were categorized into subsections such as endourology and pediatric urology. The subsequent publication rate for the studies was evaluated by scanning PubMed Medline. Abstracts published before the proceedings were excluded from the study.

Results: The abstracts were categorized as being presented orally (n=155), by poster (n=421), or by video (n=78). Of the 28 (18.3%) of 155 oral and 34 (8.15%) of 421 poster presentations, were subsequently published in several journals until March 2015. The publication rates of the abstracts based on urology subsections were as follows: neurology (25%), andrology (18.6%), endourology (17.2%), urolithiasis (15.3%), general urology (12.5%), infectious diseases (7.14%), pediatric urology (6.25%), uro-gynecology (6.06%), reconstructive urology (5.8%), and urooncology (3.8%). The average time to publication was 11.77 (0-33) months.

Conclusion: This is the first study assessing the publication rates of abstracts presented at a Turkish National Urology Congress. It reveals that more qualified randomized studies need to be done to improve the rate of publication.

Keywords: Abstracts to manuscripts; publication rates of abstracts; Turkish National Congress

Introduction

The physicians have a chance to obtain new information thanks to original articles presented in congresses organized by associations. Although it is an important achievement for studies performed to be presented to a scientific community as a publication in a proceedings book and the data acquired in a peer-reviewed journal also signifies its higher scientific value. Publication of studies in scientific journals ensures discussion of submissions presented in congresses in other scientific platforms, and the reports do not remain solely as presentations submitted in congresses.

Publication of reports in national and international peer-reviewed journals, number, and quality of these publications -even not directly proportional- can give an idea of the academic level of the congress. This approach

also provides a scientific, and objective support about the accuracy of the results obtained, and conclusions arrived. One can get a glimpse of the nationality of the participants when distribution of the publications is taken into account.^[1]

With development of subspecialties of urology, these subspecialties are organizing their own congresses. Although publication of all these reports submitted in all of these congresses can be considered to be an indicator of the quality of the congress is open to debate, this issue should not be disregarded. In our study we aimed to determine the publication rate of the presentations submitted in The National Congress of Urology organized in 2012. Although publication rate of the presentations submitted in many international congresses has been previously investigated, and the outcomes of these

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researches have been published, ours is the first study performed in Turkey.

Material and methods

Proceedings book of the 22. Biannual National Congress of Urology organized between May, 2-6 2012 was examined in detail. Medical databases of a total of 570 presentations were scanned using PubMed Medline, Scopus, Google Scholar. The presentations submitted between May 2, 2012 up to March, 2015 were taken as a reference. In the screening, names of the authors, and title of the study were used. Publication of the presentations in the digital media or indexing in databases (which comes first) was taken as a base.

Reports unpublished before submission in the congress which indicated a strict correlation between the abstract and the publication were included in the study. After confirmation of a strict correlation between the subject of the abstract, and the publication, unpublished abstracts were included in the study. The publications converted from the unpublished abstracts were divided into subspecialties, and then according to the title, and type of the journal. Journals were categorized as SCI-E indexed, PubMed indexed, and open-access. The publications were categorized based on subspecialties (Table 1). Besides, the average time elapsed up to the time of publication was estimated.

Abstracts converted into journal articles were grouped as experimental, case report, clinical study, and cross-sectional studies.

Results

Up to March 2015, 28 (18.06%) of 155 oral, 34 (8.07%) of 421 poster presentation submitted to 22. National Urology Congress were converted into journal articles. Seven-teen of 62 publications appeared in non-urological, and 45 of them in urological journals.

Publication rates of the abstracts (62/570; 10.8%) presented in 2012 National Urology Congress were analyzed as for their distribution among subspecialties, and classified as follows: (Table 1): urooncology 5/129 (3.8%); pediatric urology 1/17 (5.8); reconstructive urology, urogynecology 2/33 (6.06 %); pediatric urology 3/48 (6.25%), genitourinary infections 2/28 (7.14%), general urology 12/96 (12.5%), urinary stone diseases 17/ 111 (15.3%), endourology 5/29 (17.2%), andrology 14/75 (18.6%), neurourology 1/4 (25%). Excluding 6 publications, all of these articles were published in SCI, and SCI-E indexed journals.. The highest and lowest impact factors [Impact factor (IF)] of these journals were 3.75, and 0.20, respectively. Median impact factor was 1.44. One of the other 6 articles was published in an open-access journal, and the remaining 5 articles in a PubMed indexed journals. On an average 11.77 months (1-33 months) elapsed between presentation of an abstract in a scientific

Table 1. Publication rates of presentations submitted in 2012 National Turkish Urology Congress categorized according to subspecialties, and general

	Oral presentations	Poster presentations	Total number of presentations (based on subspecialties)	Number of presentations converted into journal articles	Publication rates
Oncology	37	92	129	5	0.038
Reconstructive urology	1	16	17	1	0.058
Urogynecology	13	20	33	2	0.0606
Pediatric Urology	8	40	48	3	0.0625
Infectious Diseases	2	26	28	2	0.0714
General urology	29	67	96	12	0.125
Stone diseases	27	84	111	17	0.153
Endourology	12	17	29	5	0.172
Andrology	24	51	75	14	0.186
Neurourology	0	4	4	1	0.25
Total	153	417	570	62	

meeting, and its publication in a journal. The published studies were performed in medical faculties, and state hospitals (n=6), training and research hospitals affiliated with ministry of health (n=11), military hospital (n=1), only medical faculties (n=38), only training and research hospitals (n=6). Sixty-two abstracts converted to publications were related to single- (72.5%) or multi-centered (27.5%) studies.

Total of 62 abstracts related to case reports (n=5; 8%), experimental (n=14; 22.5%), clinical (46.7%) -and cross-sectional (n=9; 14.5%) studies were converted to full-text publications. However only 3 of them were randomized, and 2 of them were non-randomized studies. The method of randomization had not been indicated in randomized studies.

Discussion

Periodically organized scientific meetings ensure objective discussion of various subjects, and provide scientific improvement. These meetings allow discussion of many important issues by their experts, and aid in arriving at a consensus. In addition to their contributions to theoretical, and practical education, submission of scientific studies in the form of posters, verbal presentations or videotapes make them available for their discussion in academic platforms with resultant contribution to the scientific literature.^[1-3]

In a meta-analysis performed by Scherer et al.^[2] detected mean publication rate of 44.5% for articles converted from abstracts. In this study they reported mean publication rate as 52.6% for articles converted from abstracts. Publication rates of articles converted from abstracts presented in meeting of general urology were lower when compared with those submitted in congresses of subspecialties except for 2003 Brazilian Congress of Urology. Nearly 39% of the abstracts presented in this congress were published as journal articles within an average of 14 months. However this high percentage might be due to inclusion of articles published before the date of the congress.^[4] It has been reported that mean time to publication for 22.1% of the abstracts presented in the 2002, and 2004 congresses of Societè Internationale d'Urologie (SIU) were published within an average of 13 months. Publication rate (47.3%), and mean time interval (16.4%) to publication of full-text articles converted from abstracts presented in World Congress of Endourology (WCE) 2000, and 2001 were reported as indicated in parentheses. Within an average of 13.01 months, 29.8% of the abstracts presented in Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ) (2005-2009) were converted to journal articles.^[5-7] These conversion rates were higher than our estimates. In our study within an average of 11.7 months 10.8% of the submitted abstracts were converted to articles. Differences between titles of the abstracts, and publications, and deficient care, and attention

paid for the editing of articles because of time constraints lower these publication rates have been attained.

In a study investigating Urological Brazilian Meeting (2003), it was stated that only oral presentations had been included in the study mostly of cross-sectional design (75%), while any information about the percentage of randomized studies was not provided.^[4] In a study encompassing 2000, and 2001 WCE congresses, the authors reported that 60% of the presentations were randomized trials, while video presentations were not included in the study.^[6] The percentage of randomized studies among those presented in USANZ congresses organized between the years 2005, and 2009 was not indicated, however a higher rate (44.12%) of randomized studies had been reportedly published.^[7] A total of 62 abstracts converted to publications were either related to single- (n=45; 72.5%), and multi-center (n=17; 27.5%) studies. In their studies on USANZ congress, Yoon et al.^[7] reported that 36.36% of the studies were multi-center trials which showed parallelism with our study. As a remarkable issue, clinical trials are multi-center studies.

According to our evaluation under the light of the data we obtained, publication rate (10.8%) of abstracts presented in 2012 National Urology Congress of Turkish Association of Urology approximated that cited in international publications, still this publication rate remained lower than achieved in similar publications. The publication rate especially increases in congresses organized by subspecialties [ie. 61.5% in European Society of Paediatric Urology (ESPU)].^[8] Conduction of more specific, and result-oriented studies in subspecialties, and suitability of presentations for publication may account for high publication rates.

Many factors may be held responsible for conversion of all abstracts to journal articles. Evaluation by referees in journals differs from assessments of presentations in congresses. Priority, format, and construction of the abstracts to be presented in meetings may demonstrate differences from those of the articles published in peer-reviewed journals. Because of these characteristic features, investigators naturally feel the need for an additional effort which complicates or even prevents publication of scientific papers.^[9] Besides in a questionnaire survey performed among investigators, "time constraints" has been demonstrated as the most frequent reason for lack of this type of publications.^[5] Inability to demonstrate sufficient care, and attention in writing an article because of time constraints unfortunately decreases the chance of acceptance rates of manuscripts. In consideration of this fact, reservation of sufficient time for writing an articles which is the product of scientific endeavours will increase the conversion of abstracts to full-text articles.

The studies presented in 2001, and 2002 Congresses of World Association of Endourology which were converted to full-text

articles were analyzed in 3 groups based on the impact factors of the journals. Although total number of publications in the study amounted to 234 articles, based on IF values, publication rates of articles accepted for publication in SCI, and SCI-E indexed journals were as follows (for IF values of 0-1, 1-3, and 3-10, 8.2, 74.8, and 17% of the publications.^[6] In a paper investigating annual congresses organized by Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ) between the years 2005, and 2009, a higher mean IF value than our IF value of 2.90 was found.^[7] In our study all but 6 articles converted from abstracts were published in SCI or SCI-E indexed journals Mean IF value of these journals was estimated as 1.44 (0.2-3.75). One of these 6 articles was published in an open access journal, and the remaining 5 articles was published in PubMed indexed journals.

Mean time intervals up to publication differed for articles presented in various congresses as follows: in our study 11.77 months (1-33 months), 14 months in 2003 Brazilian Congress of Urology^[4], 13 months in 2002, and 2004 International Congresses of Urology (SIU: Societe Internationale d'Urologie)^[5], 14.6 months in 2001, and 2002 World Congresses of Endourology^[6], 14.46 months in 2005-2009 Annual Scientific Meetings (ASM) of the Urological Society and new Zealand (USANZ)^[7], one year in half of the abstracts presented in 2003-2010 Meetings of European Society for Paediatric Urology^[9], 16.4 months in 2004, 2005, and 2006 World Congresses of Endourology, and, 24 months in Meetings of American Urological Association organized between the years 1998, and 2000^[11] In the light of these values obtained, our results are in compliance with those of many studies. The most important factors which effect mean time intervals to publication can be enumerated as randomization status of the study, statistical methods used, and quality of the study. The randomization status of a study, presence (if any) of a placebo arm, detailed, and professional statistical analysis are determinative factors on the quality of a publication or a presentation.^[12] High-quality presentations increase their publication rates, and shortens time interval to publication. Though rarely, some deficiencies overlooked by the scientific boards may be revealed by editors, and reviewers of the journal.

In a meta-analysis performed by Scherer et al.^[2] the authors investigated the characteristics of the abstracts submitted to scientific congresses which were later converted to full-text publications. According to this study presentations which provided statistically significant results or those suggested preference of a treatment alternative had a higher chance of being converted into full text publications. Besides randomized controlled studies, experimental studies, and large-scale studies have also higher publication rates. Abstracts submitted to the congresses organized in different continents were compared, and the

language used in the congresses was found to have no effect on publication rates. Lower publication rates of the abstracts not deemed to be worth presenting in the congress were also emphasized. Therefore, insignificant, uninteresting, low-quality articles that do not deserve presentation in a congress are known to have hardly any chance of publication. Apart from these considerations, studies submitted as verbal presentations in congresses had a higher publication rates when compared with those poster presentations.^[2]

Although our study is the first trial on publication rates of abstracts presented in the 22nd National Turkish Urology Congress, it has still some limitations. Priorly abstracts were screened using the most frequently used search motors (PubMed, Scopus and Google Scholar), it should not be forgotten that some publications might not be indexed in these cited websites. Especially national databases as Turkish Citation Index were not included in these databases, so publications in Turkish could not be included in our analysis. Despite hairsplitting scrutiny, it should not be forgotten that articles published with a different title or altered order of authors' names during editing could not be included in this study.

Ethics Committee Approval: Due to its nature, this manuscript do not contain any information about the patients and have any deontological content, because of this ethics committee approval was not required.

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