

Comment on biomedical research in Saudi Arabia

To the Editor

We read with interest the paper of Al-Bishri¹ titled "Evaluation of biomedical research in Saudi Arabia" published in the Saudi Medical Journal. In this article, an important erratum appears. While the author stated that the study comprised the period of 2010-2011 years in abstract section, in the methods section it was mentioned that the search was limited to 2011-2012 period.

Secondly, we think that 2 more points in that paper deserve criticism. The legends of the first 3 tables are not informative enough. It is hard to understand that these 3 tables showed the number of articles of 2 years. At first glance, one can think that those tables showed the numbers of articles publishing in one year. But instead, it is seeing that it was for 2 years in the method section. Another criticism is that the author have not described the method clearly. It would be more understandable and repeatable if he would explain how he used the filters like human studies and how he excluded non-research articles as editorials, letters, and case reports.

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Reply from the Author

I would like to thank Prof. Bayramlar and Dr. Karadag for their interest in my article. First, the study comprised the period between January 2010 up to December 2011. A 2-year-period, as mentioned correctly in the abstract section. Unfortunately the period mentioned has been overseen by myself and the editorial team of the journal on the methods section of the manuscript during the review process of the article before its publication.

Secondly, Prof. Bayramlar has raised question regarding the legend of the tables. The table has shown data for 2 years, and it is well mentioned in the text of the manuscript as well. The information is self-explanatory and to the point. There is no way I could explain it further.

Regarding the methodology, Prof. Bayramlar wanted further clarification. In this regard, I would like to suggest that with the wide use of internet and PubMed by researchers across the world for decades, there is no need to discuss such details at length. It is in itself a different and detailed topic. Discussing further details of internet search and so forth would deviate from the basic aim of this manuscript. Keeping in view word count constraints, it is not possible to discuss such details at length.

It is self-understood that searches have been carried out on articles regarding the research on humans beings across the globe, and comparison has been made with similar research in Saudi Arabia. This manuscript has highlighted how much we need to do in the field of biomedical research to come at par with the international standards of research. It has further highlighted which institutions are doing better towards this aim in our country.

I am sure I have been able to put the message across. I have focused mainly on studies as only studies on a given subject reflect the research potential of an institution in a given country. Furthermore I have extracted data from PubMed, which implies that the research is of high standard and peer-reviewed. Case reports and review articles are usually individual efforts, and it is very clearly discussed in the article .

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References

1. Al-Bishri C. Evaluation of biomedical research in Saudi Arabia. *Saudi Med J* 2013; 34: 954-959.