

Citations in Science – Original Research vs Review Papers

Although the Covid-19 pandemic dominates both daily life and science these days, we want to concentrate on our own field in this Editorial. But first of all: stay safe, dear readers!

Looking at the content of *The Journal of Adhesive Dentistry* over its almost 23 years of existence, the vast majority (99.97%) of our papers have traditionally been original articles relating to adhesive dentistry in vitro and in vivo. Whereas in many journals the publication of systematic reviews dramatically increased during the last decade, reviews in our journal have been more or less unintentionally evenly distributed over these 23 years. However, approaching this topic from the very bibliometric side, it becomes evident that systematic reviews simply receive substantially more citations compared to single original articles.¹ This is a well-known fact – but is it really useful?

Every researcher today is regularly confronted with bibliometric evaluations of her/his work in both faculty life and applications for other positions.² Due to standard procedures, bibliometrics have turned into a trend, accompanied by multiple accesses to user-friendly databases with results available by just a few clicks. On the other hand, several problems have been reported due to both misuse and misinterpretation.³ As in any other discipline, bibliometrics presuppose an appropriate understanding of metrics to avoid adverse effects.⁴ Against this background, we clearly recommend to our authors that they cite research correctly: a scientifically proven fact should be cited using the primary source, ie, the original paper and not primarily the systematic review which cited the primary source.

To get this straight: Systematic reviews are highly relevant and always welcome in our Journal. However, the predominant value of original research should be honored with correct citations giving original data its deserved credit. Otherwise, young researchers could be tempted to approach their computers instead of going to the lab or patient.



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