Reviewer's report

Title: Geographic trends of scientific output and citation practices in psychiatry

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Reviewer: Michel Thibodeau

Reviewer's report:

The authors present a succinct, well-written, and interesting article regarding scientific output of psychiatry researchers and departments in Europe and North America. The authors outline a clear rationale regarding the need for this study, use methods adequate to reach their aims, and outline sensible conclusions based on their findings. I have several minor comments, outlined below, and one moderate comment.

Moderate comment (Minor Essential Revisions)

Some of the methods used by the authors are described in the results section, and may be better suited for the methods section. I found myself at times thinking that the methods section was missing some information, and I later found this information in the results section.

Minor comments (Discretionary Revisions):

1. There is an extra space in the last line of the first paragraph in methods section.

2. The authors report doing a representative sampling of records. What did this sampling include? The authors may wish to demonstrate how their sampling is indeed representative. The authors could, for example, gather a second sample and demonstrate the similarity between both samples, although this is not mandatory. (I noticed upon further reading that the nature of the representativeness is described in the results. Can this be moved to the methods section? It would seem more appropriate).

3. The authors write “who cites whom in psychiatry?” The article may benefit from this question being broken down into more specific questions. For example, are the authors referring to self-citation? Or perhaps which authors from what countries cite authors from which other countries?

4. In table 4, the meaning of the total citations column is not immediately apparent. What are these numbers (and percentages) referring to?

5. The authors may wish to further elaborate the “local” units described in the results section. Were these based solely on geography? The authors could elaborate on this in the methods section rather than in results section. The authors also write that “the rankings were broadly confirmed”, but it is unclear what rankings they are referring to. Presumably this refers to the ranking using
the “non-localized” units, but this is not obvious.

6. The authors apparently used the 500 oldest papers as the sample for citation flow. It seems possible that publication trends have changed in the last 10 years. The authors could mention this as a limitation, if appropriate.

7. The authors mentioned using Pearson correlations in the methods section, but I did not notice any correlations in the results section. Please correct me if I am mistaken, or remove mention of the Pearson correlations.

8. The authors mention “When counting separately for UK publications (n=693), we found that British publications more often cited other Europeans (30%), but cited American (22%)”. It is unclear whether these differences are statistically significant, or only informal observations. If possible, perhaps the authors could conduct chi square tests (or similar) as they did for other proportions.

9. “research collaborations and found that 22% (n=755) of were” seems grammatically incorrect.

10. The authors mention examining subject trends in the results, but this topic did not get any attention in the methods section. The authors present a few topics (schizophrenia, treatment, etc.) but not others. How were these topics chosen? It seems unclear why these topics were chosen, how they were chosen, and why others were not included.

11. The authors write in discussion: “One notable difference was that between Germany and the Netherlands, where citation rates differ two-fold”. Can the authors put in parentheses what these citation rates were per article? This would give some context.

12. Line 297 (second to last paragraph) – “his” scientific work should likely be “his or her”.

13. Some interesting information is presented in the appendices. The authors may wish to include these as regular tables if the journal allows it.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests