Reviewer’s report

Title: Nursing and midwifery research activity in Arab countries from 1950 to 2017

Version: 0 Date: 21 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Ibrahim Saleh Al-Busaidi

Reviewer's report:

I enjoyed reading this interesting paper. In this bibliometric study, the authors attempted to examine the quantity (i.e., publication output, areas of research focus and trends over time) and quality (i.e., international collaboration, Scimago Journal Rank and citation rates) of nursing and midwifery research emanating from Arab countries. Overall, the writing and readability of the paper could be improved (see comments and suggestions below).

Comments:

Abstract:
1. Results section: Does the reported number of authors (i.e., 10,573) represent the number of 'unique' or 'total' authors?

Background:
1. Page 3, Lines 67-701; The following statement "Despite that the number of qualified nursing staff in healthcare facilities is extremely important in providing adequate healthcare services, the research output remains the true indicator of the progress in nursing profession and the quality of healthcare services in any country." should be referenced. Please provide reference(s) that support this statement or paraphrase the sentence to better convey your message.

2. Page 3, Lines 71-72; It seems excessive using multiple references [6-10] to support the definition and cite the common use of bibliometric studies. I suggest

3. Page 3, Lines 75-76; Please reference this statement "Literature review indicated that no
bibliometric analysis of nursing and midwifery research in Arab countries had been published."

4. Page 4, Lines 84-93: This part (from "This study was carried out using .... extent of research evidence." is related to the methods and should be moved from the Methods section. It could be argued that these sentences do not provide additional relevant information, and thus can be removed from the manuscript.

5. The introduction is general and broad. It needs to be expanded with points relevant to the main purpose of the paper. Important studies that examined nursing and midwifery research activity outside of the Arab World should be cited.

Methods:
Points that require clarification:

1. Search strategy, Page 4, Line 103: Please reference this sentence. In addition, it would be prudent to report the 22 Arab countries which are included in the study (perhaps at the end of the manuscript).
2. Search strategy, Page 5, Lines 112-115: Please clearly state the basis for choosing the specific 'nursing-related keywords' reported in the manuscript.
3. The validity of the search strategy, Page 5, Line 128: The authors reported the interclass correlation as '0.97%'. This is clearly a typographical error, which should be corrected.
4. The validity of the search strategy, Page 6, Line 129-131: Please report the number of false positive studies/abstracts.

Results
1. Research output, Page 7, Lines 161-162: Please state the 'exact' number of nursing and midwifery publications produced worldwide instead an approximate figure.
2. The ten most cited documents, Page 8, Line 185: Please correct the sentence to "The 10 most cited articles were published … "
3. I suggest reporting the mean/median number of authors (whatever is more suitable) and range of authors per document as this gives an indication of the degree collaboration

Discussion
This section should be re-written and statements ought to be supported by evidence/references.

1. Page 11, Lines, 263-264: Please provide supporting references to back the claim that the reason behind the low number of RCTs in Arab countries is 'cultural and legal issues.'
2. Page 11, Lines 265-267: It is difficult to accept these statements as facts unless supported by evidence.
3. Page 12, Lines 274: Please mention in full the countries that are part of the 'Arab Gulf' (Oman, Qatar, UAE, Bahrain, KSA, and Kuwait). It should be assumed that readers are not familiar with this group of nations that share common socio-demographic and economic characteristics.
4. Page 12, Lines 272-284: Many of the statements reported in this paragraph lack supporting evidence.
Conclusion
Please differentiate between conclusions drawn from the results and recommendations/implications for future research and clinical practice. It is of utmost importance to highlight the main findings which include 1) nursing research output has dramatically increased especially over the past five years, 2) despite this, nursing research is still in its infancy, lagging in quantity and quality.
Some of the suggestions/conclusions advanced by the authors are not necessarily informed by the study's results. For example, the sentence (Lines 307-310) "Despite that nursing is an independent and well recognized profession, nursing research in Arab countries need to get other medical professions being involved in nursing research. Such research collaboration with other medical specialties helps in better integration of medical professions as one unit." Is not supported by the data presented in this study.

Tables and Figures:
Nil.

End

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript
Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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