



Editorial

The Scientific Contribution of the Al-Kindy College Medical Journal to the World Literature on the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The beginning of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China in late December 2019 and its worldwide transmission has led the World Health Organization to formally address the pandemic. The pandemic has imposed influential impacts on different environmental, economic, social, health, and living aspects. Publishing in scholastic journals was not immune from these impacts.

Worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has sparked a torrential flow of articles, particularly in developed countries, and placed numerous challenges on the editorial boards. The most serious challenges were to set a balance between sustaining the scientific integrity of a particular journal and the pressure to quickly publish the increasing input of articles as well as cautiously taking into consideration the introduced medical knowledge and their clinical applicability in pressing COVID-19 content. Nevertheless, scientific journals have early and timely responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by giving the priority to publish COVID-19-related articles at the expense of other headings with sustained editorial boards efforts preferring open-access to research, sending calls for research submissions, constructing specific sections, and releasing special issues on COVID-19. As a result, thousands of articles on COVID-19 have been published in the world literature and the content of these articles was extremely variable, ranging from molecular genetics to management.

In parallel with the worldwide scholastic journals, Al-Kindy College Medical Journal (KCMJ) has timely responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and actively taken part in disseminating scientific knowledge on COVID-19. Apart from a special issue on that issue released in July 2020 containing 6 esteemed articles, a further 15 articles were launched between the years 2020 and 2022. Articles about COVID-19 fell into four categories: clinical sciences, basic sciences, medical education, and miscellaneous cases. The total number of both COVID-19 and non-COVID-related articles published between the years 2020 and 2022 was 117 which covered four areas, namely clinical sciences 69(59%), basic sciences 20(17.1%), medical education 5(4.3%), and miscellaneous areas 23(19.6%) (Figure 1).

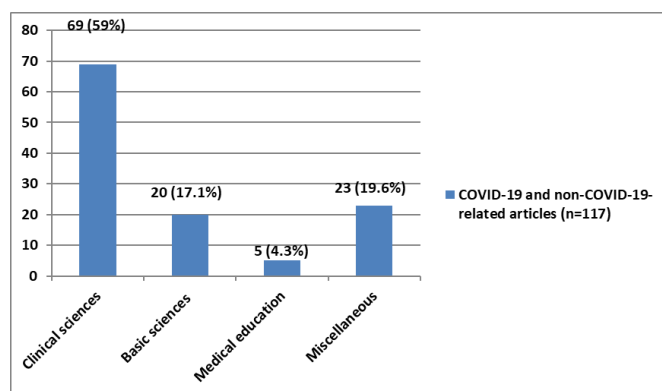


Figure 1: The covered areas of articles published in KCMJ between the years 2020 and 2022

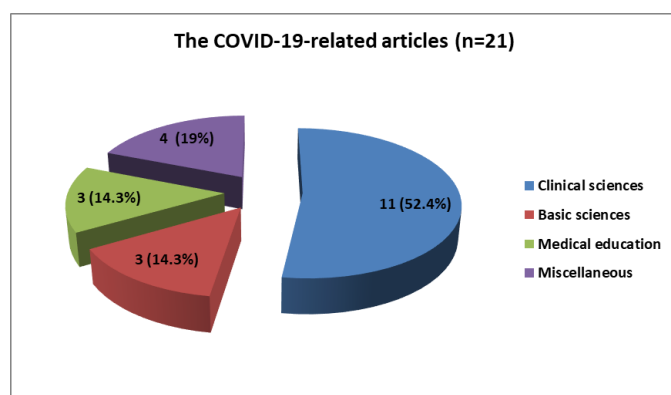


Figure 2: The covered areas of COVID-19-related articles published in KCMJ between the years 2020 and 2022.

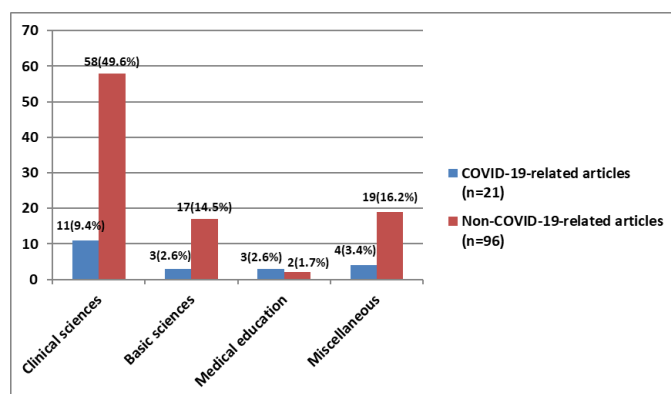


Figure 3: The covered areas of COVID-19 and non-COVID-19-related articles published in KCMJ between the years 2020 and 2022.

The number of COVID-19-related articles constituted 21(17.9%) of the total articles published in the years 2020-2022 and covered the areas of clinical sciences 11(52.4%), basic sciences 4(19%), medical education 3(14.3%), and miscellaneous areas 3(14.3%) (Figure 2).

On comparing COVID-19-related articles to non-COVID-19-related articles, there were 11(9.4%) vs. 58(49.6%) in clinical sciences, 3(2.6%) vs. 17(14.5%) in basic sciences, 3(2.6%) vs. 2(1.7%) in medical education, and 4(3.4%) vs. 19(16.2%) in miscellaneous areas (Figure 3).

The KCMJ's scientific publications have not been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic despite its global disruption of numerous aspects. We hope that articles focusing more on diagnostic tools, patient care management, and clinical trials of drugs and vaccines, if any, should continue to be published alongside descriptive, observational, retrospective, case reports, and review type of research already published in KCMJ. Although the number of published articles on COVID-19 in KCMJ was relatively low compared to the highly impactful medical journals in developed countries, it still amounts to a substantial cumulative contribution to the world literature from a developing country's academic medical journal. Since KCMJ is an open-access journal, these distinguished articles could be easily accessed and cited by international readers and researchers respectively.

Despite the advent of different vaccines to defeat COVID-19, the eruption of new, complex, more virulent strains of COVID-19, and the unavailability of a timetable for totally lifting COVID-19 restrictions in many regions of the world heavily infected with COVID-19 have led us to believe that the fight against the infection is not yet won and COVID-19 could come roaring back. As a result, we issue a call to researchers across the country and around the world to continue conducting research on COVID-19 and we welcome them to publish their contributions in the prestigious KCMJ. Last but not least, we hope that the global bibliometric analysis will enlighten the overall contribution and impact of KCMJ research's publication status on the COVID-19 pandemic.

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