

TO ASSESS WHETHER THE NUMBER OF STUDIES PUBLISHED WORLDWIDE IN A SPECIALIST AREA IS INFLUENCED BY THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE.

Hypothesis / aims of study

The number of original research publications in a speciality can reflect ongoing research activity. In today's climate, funding for research and the question of 'where will the money come from' is always a factor to be considered together with gaining ethical approval. Recent periods of economic constraints may have caused a decline in the funds available for medical research and this may be reflected by a decline in publications

Study design, materials and methods

Data was collected from Ovid of the total number of international publications and those published from the USA and UK indexed with 'female urogenital diseases and pregnancy complications'.

Results

The OVID database revealed the total number of publications in obstetrics and gynaecology worldwide since 2003 has increased (figure1). The number of USA authors publishing articles was steady but started declining from 2008. A similar trend was also seen in authors publishing from the UK (figure 2).

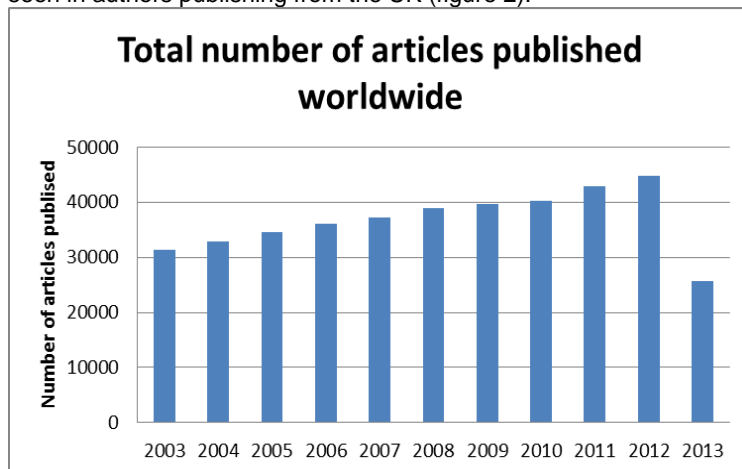


Figure1: Total number of articles published worldwide in obstetrics and gynaecology

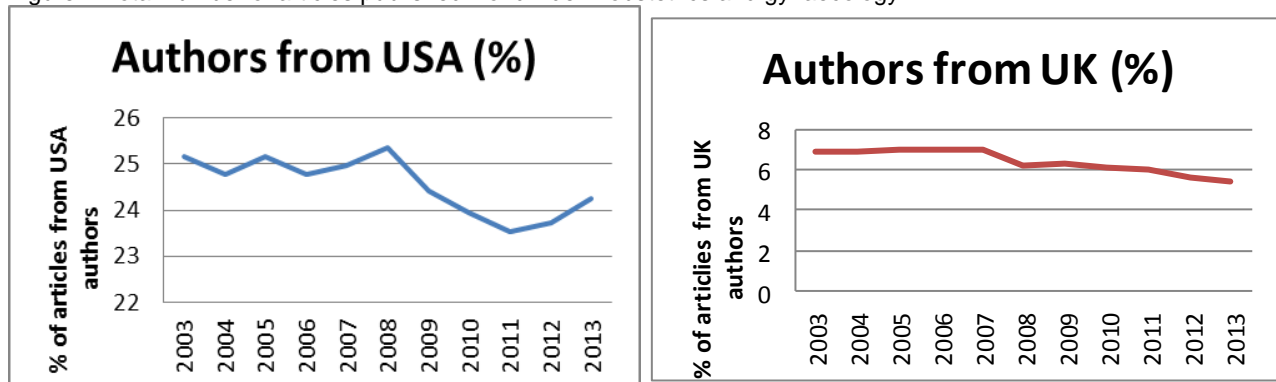


Figure 2: Percentage of articles from USA and UK authors publishing in obstetrics and gynaecology

Interpretation of results

This study has provided a snapshot of publishing trends in obstetrics and gynaecology over the last 10 years. The sharp decline in USA publications from 2008 onwards co-incided with the global financial crisis and it would not be illogical to assume that this would have had some impact on funds available for medical research. The decline in UK authors publishing from 2008, in addition to the economic downturn, may also be due to the implementation of a new ethical approval process (Intergrated Research Application Service, IRAS) at that time. In the USA and UK media and political interest in poor outcomes of medical research may also influence research committees to be less willing to grant approvals and funding.

Concluding message

Financial factors and the ethical approval process could be barriers to pursuing original research in medicine.

Disclosures

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