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COVID-19 — the leading topic of scientific publications of the last 5 years

For the past five years, one particular topic has heavily dominated the scientific debate: COVID-19. Since its beginning at the end of the year 2019, many aspects of the pandemic have been extensively studied, which found its reflection in numerous publications. A review of the PubMed database reveals that short of 300 publications on COVID-19 can be found already in the year 2019, even before this novel virus outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization [1]. The following year 2020 saw a dramatic increase in the number of articles published on COVID-19, amounting to almost 94,000 positions. This trend continued, to reach its peak in the year 2021 with over 140,000 publications, and to slightly decrease in the year 2022 with over 130,000 publications. After the two fruitful years of COVID-19-related literature, a steep decline to about 88,000 positions in the year 2023 can be seen. As of right now, at the end of the first quarter of 2024, more than 16,000 articles covering COVID-19 have been published so far. The issue of SARS-CoV-2 and the pandemic has undoubtedly become the leading topic of scientific publications around the world, in countless journals.

Medical Research Journal (MRJ), aiming to publish papers on the most relevant issues and latest achievements of the medical world could not have gone without covering this topic. What started with just two letters to the editor in volume 5, number 2 in 2020 [2, 3], the very first mentions of COVID-19/ SARS-CoV-2 on the pages of MRJ, continued to rise mirroring the aforementioned global patterns in publications. Years

2021 and 2022 were the most productive, with 18 and 15 COVID-19-related articles, respectively. Adjacent years saw four publications each. As of right now, additional five original articles published in the current issue of MRJ must be added to the overall number of publications on COVID-19 [4–8]. Two of the articles are systematic reviews and meta-analyses on the impact of the pandemic on emergency medical services, that is dispatcher-assisted cardiopulmonary resuscitation and airway management in out-of-hospital cardiac arrest patients [4, 5]. Another two articles investigate medical services, namely medical emergency team interventions to stroke and delayed brachytherapy in cervix cancer, during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown [6, 7]. Finally, the last one touches on a particularly difficult topic of mental health and COVID-19 [8].

The continued interest of the scientific medical community in the topic of COVID-19, reflected in the current issue of MRJ, shows its significance and relevance. Undoubtedly, the pandemic has impacted every aspect of our lives, including and especially the healthcare system [9–15]. It appears that this topic as well as the virus itself is here to stay.

Article information

Acknowledgments: *None.*

Conflict of interest : *None.*

Funding: *None.*

Supplementary material: *None.*

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 Medical Research Journal 2024; Volume 9, Number 1, 1–2, DOI: 10.5603/mrj.100004, Copyright © 2024 Via Medica, ISSN 2451-2591, e-ISSN 2451-4101

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