

What fate befalls the congress proceedings? Conversion rates of National Thoracic Surgery Congress proceedings into international publications

Kongre bildirilerinin kaderi nedir? Ulusal Göğüs Cerrahisi Kongresi bildirilerinin uluslararası yayına dönüşme oranları

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ABSTRACT

Background: The aim of this study was to determine the journal publication rate of the papers presented at the National Thoracic Surgery Congress in the subsequent four years and to examine the variables related to these rates for the published papers in Turkey.

Methods: The papers which were presented at the 6th National Thoracic Surgery Congress in 2011 and published in the international peer-reviewed journals and the Turkish Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, the official publication of the Turkish Society of Cardiovascular Surgery and the Turkish Society of Thoracic Surgery, were identified using the PubMed database. The type of the paper, title, name of the first author and affiliated institution, duration for publication, and journal name were retrospectively analyzed.

Results: Of a total of 312 reports, 35 (11.2%) were reported to be published in the international journals. Five of 23 oral presentations (21.7%), 10 of 61 poster discussions (16.3%), and 20 of 228 poster presentations (8.7%) were found to be converted into publications. Oral presentations were more frequently converted to publications than poster presentations; however, the difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.163$). For the affiliation type, the highest conversion rate of publications was from universities (64.4%); however, the affiliation type was not significant between universities, training and research hospitals, and multi-center studies ($p=0.581$). The time to conversion into a publication was significantly shorter in poster presentations, compared to oral presentations ($p=0.005$).

Conclusion: Our study results show that publishing rate of the congress presentations in peer-reviewed journals is about 10% and the rate is higher in oral presentations and studies conducted at university clinics.

Keywords: Congress; proceeding; publication; PubMed.

ÖZ

Amaç: Bu çalışmada, Ulusal Göğüs Cerrahisi Kongresi'nde sunulan bildirilerin takip eden dört yıl içinde bilimsel dergilerde yayına dönüştürülme oranları belirlendi ve Türkiye'de yayımlanan bu bildiri oranları ile ilişkili değişkenler incelendi.

Çalışma planı: PubMed veri tabanı kullanılarak, 2011 yılında VI. Ulusal Göğüs Cerrahisi Kongresi'nde sunulan ve uluslararası hakemli dergilerde ve Türk Kalp Damar Cerrahisi Derneği ve Türk Göğüs Cerrahisi Derneği'nin resmi yayını Türk Göğüs Kalp Damar Cerrahisi Dergisi'nde yayımlanan yayınlar tespit edildi. Bildirinin türü, konu başlığı, birinci yazarın adı ve bağlı olduğu kurum, yayın süresi ve dergi adı geriye dönük olarak incelendi.

Bulgular: Toplam 312 bildiriden 35'nin (%11.2) uluslararası hakemli dergilerde yayımlandığı bildirildi. Yirmi üç sözlü sunumun beşi (%21.7), 61 tartışmalı posterin 10'u (%16.3) ve 228 poster bildirisinin 20'si (%8.7) yayına dönüştürüldüğü görüldü. Sözel bildiriler, poster bildirimlerine kıyasla daha fazla yayına dönüştürülmüştü; ancak istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark yoktu ($p=0.163$). Kurum tipine göre en yüksek yayına dönüştürme oranı, üniversitelerden idi (%64.4); ancak üniversiteler, eğitim araştırma hastaneleri ve çok merkezli çalışmalar arasında kurum tipi açısından anlamlı bir fark yok idi ($p=0.581$). Poster bildirilerin yayına dönüştürülme süresi, sözel bildirimlere kıyasla, anlamlı düzeyde daha kısa idi ($p=0.005$).

Sonuç: Çalışma sonuçlarımız, kongre bildirilerinin hakemli dergilerde yayımlanma oranının %10 civarında olduğunu ve sözel bildirimlerde ve üniversite kliniklerinde yapılan çalışmalarında bu oranın daha yüksek olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Kongre; bildiri; yayın; PubMed.



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For scientific improvement, study findings should be shared at the congresses and symposiums. Researchers share their knowledge and experience with the audience, and receive feedbacks, which contributes to the maturation of the presented studies. If the reports presented at the congresses are accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals, it indicates that these studies were conducted using scientific methods with reliable results.^[1] Publication of the results of these studies in the international peer-reviewed journals is the gold standard for sharing the information with a wide range of international colleagues.^[2] Therefore, it should be aimed to publish the presented research in a peer-reviewed journal. Planning the study accordingly and preparing them for publication would be an important factor to increase the level of the quality of information and experience shared at congresses and symposiums.^[3]

It has been reported that 31.6 to 69.1% of the reports presented at congresses in various areas of specialties are published in the international journals within four years.^[4,5] In Turkey, studies addressing dermatology, radiology, rheumatology, and physiotherapy congresses report publication rates of the reports presented at the national congresses between 11.8 and 21.6%.^[6,7]

In the present study, we aimed to determine the rate of publication of all proceedings presented at the 6th National Annual Congress of the Turkish Society of Thoracic Surgery in the international journals within the subsequent four years and to examine the variables related to rates for the published papers in Turkey.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

To obtain the reports published in the international peer-reviewed journals, we searched all case reports and study abstracts accepted to the 6th National Congress of Thoracic Surgery, which was held in 2011, and published in the international peer-reviewed journals and the Turkish Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, the official publication of the Turkish Society of Cardiovascular Surgery and the Turkish Society of Thoracic Surgery, using the PubMed database (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed>).^[8,9] All data of the reports presented at the congress were obtained using the abstract book provided to the participants during the congress. All oral, poster discussions, and poster presentations accepted to the congress were included in the study. For all presentations, the type of presentation, and name of the first author and affiliated institution were recorded. The presentations were categorized in four groups based on the researcher's institution

as university hospital, training and research hospital, state hospital; or labelled as multi-centered.

The PubMed and Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery online databases were searched entering the name and surname of the authors, specifically the first and the last authors, with title and keywords from the title.^[10,11] In case there was no match, all publications of each researcher were scanned on an individual basis and the search was repeated in other databases. Abstracts of the publications resembling the title of reports in the abstract book were reviewed to ensure that the content was identical or derived from the report presented at the congress. For those reports that were confirmed to be published, date of publication, name of the journal, and any revision in the author list were noted. Date of publication was evaluated according to the month and year.

Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis was performed using the IBM SPSS version 20.0 software (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA). Analyses were made using the Mann-Whitney U and chi-square tests. Numerical variables were expressed in mean and standard deviation, while categorical variables were expressed in percentage. A *p* value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant with 95% confidence interval.

RESULTS

There were a total of 312 accepted abstracts at the 6th National Thoracic Surgery Congress in 2011, of which 23 were oral presentations, 61 were discussion poster discussions, and 228 were poster presentations. Of these presentations, 35 (11.2%) were published in the international peer-reviewed journals. According to the type of presentation, five of the oral presentations (21.7%), 10 of poster discussions (16.3%), and 20 of poster presentations (8.7%) were published. The publication rate for oral presentations was relatively higher than poster discussions and poster presentations; however, the difference was not statistically significant (*p*=0.163) (Table 1).

According to the type of institution, proceedings from the universities had the highest ratio of publication (64.4%), followed by studies from training and research hospitals (24.1%), multi-centered studies (8.9%), and state hospitals (2.5%), respectively. There was no significant difference in the rate of publication of presentations from different institutions (*p*=0.581).

A total of 48.6% of the published presentations had the list of the authors altered, irrespective of the order.

Table 1. Distribution and publication rates of the 6th National Thoracic Surgery Congress proceedings among different types of institutions

	Oral presentations			Poster discussions			Poster presentations			Total publication	
	Total	Published		Total	Published		Total	Published		n	p
	n	n	%	n	n	%	n	n	%		
University (n=201)	11	3	30	34	5	15	156	16	10	24	
Training and research hospital (n=75)	9	1	11	17	2	12	49	3	6	6	
Multi-center (n=28)	3	1	33	10	3	30	15	1	6	5	
State hospital (n=8)	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	
Total (n=312)	23	5	22	61	10	16	228	20	9	35	0.163

A total of 12 (34.3%) papers had additional co-workers, in contrast to five (14.3%) which had lost at least an author. Additionally, 5.7% of the published papers had the name of the first author altered (Table 2).

The mean publication time for 35 papers was 12±2.8 months (range 3 to 42 months). Publishing time for oral presentations was relatively longer compared to others, whereas poster presentations had the shortest time. There was a statistically significant difference in the publication durations of different presentation types (p=0.005), although no significant difference between the durations and the institution of the presentations (p=0.153). When university hospitals were compared to training and research hospitals, there was no statistical difference in the publication durations (p=0.233).

Of all the reports published in 24 different peer-reviewed journals, 49% were published in four major journals (the Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons, Turkish Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, Surgery Today, and European Journal of CardioThoracic Surgery) (Table 3).

DISCUSSION

Our study is the first determine the factors associated with publication course of the proceedings presented at thoracic surgery congresses, addressing the abstracts presented at the National Thoracic Surgery Congress. Our results showed that only one of every nine, which

corresponds to 11.2% of the abstracts, were converted to manuscripts and published in the international peer-reviewed journals within the subsequent four years. Several studies addressing the congresses of various specialties in Turkey, such as radiology, rheumatology, and dermatology, reported the ratio of publication of national congress proceedings in the international journals between 11.8 and 29.1%.^[6,7] Similar studies from the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia reported this ratio between 29.8% and 61.6%.^[12-15]

The Cochrane review revealed possible reasons for why the abstracts presented at congresses and meetings cannot be converted into publications as follows: researchers not giving the required priority to their studies, and their lack of time which should be mostly allocated to the academic studies.^[16] Other possible reasons included the presence of previous studies with similar study designs and results, preconceived judgement about the rejection by the journals, study results not providing new scientific contributions, and presence of deficits and errors in statistical methodology.^[8,17]

Although some studies did not find any significant difference between the publication rates of oral and poster presentations,^[17-20] others showed that the publication rate of oral presentations was higher than poster presentations.^[8,21,22] In general, well-designed studies with interesting results which have a higher scientific value are selected as oral presentations

Table 2. Distribution of revised author lists

	Oral presentations	Poster discussions	Poster presentations	Total	
	n	n	n	n	%
Author addition	2	1	9	12	34.3
Author removal	2	1	2	5	14.3
First author alteration	1	-	1	2	5.7

Table 3. Distribution of published publications presented at the 6th National Thoracic Surgery Congress proceedings according to the journals indexed in PubMed

Journal name (Index Medicus abbreviations)	Impact factor (2015)	Institution type				Total
		University	Training and research hospital	State hospital	Multi center	
Ann Thorac Surg	3.849	1	-	-	-	1
Eur J Cardiothorac Surg	3.304	-	-	-	2	2
Asian Pac J Cancer Prev	2.514	1	-	-	-	1
Am Surg	2.291	-	1	-	-	1
Muscle Nerve	2.283	1	-	-	-	1
Surg Today	1.526	2	1	-	-	3
J Int Med Res	1.438	1	-	-	-	1
J Laparoendosc Adv Surg Tech	1.335	-	-	-	1	1
Exp Ther Med	1.269	1	-	-	-	1
Clinics (Sao Paulo)	1.185	1	-	-	-	1
J Forensic Sci	1.160	1	-	-	-	1
J Cardiothorac Surg	1.028	1	-	-	-	1
Thorac cardiovasc Surg	0.979	6	1	-	-	7
J Cancer Res Ther	0.791	1	-	-	-	1
Acta Chir Belg	0.408	-	1	-	-	1
J Clin Imaging Sci	0.349	1	-	-	-	1
Ulus Travma Acil Cerrahi Derg	0.269	1	-	-	-	1
Turk Gogus Kalp Dama	0.140	3	1	-	1	5
Asian Cardiovasc Thorac Ann	-	1	-	-	-	1
Gen Thorac Cardiovasc Surg	-	1	-	-	-	1
Multimed Man Cardiothorac	-	1	-	-	-	1
Tuberk Toraks	-	-	-	-	1	1
Turk Patoloji Derg	-	-	1	-	-	1

by the review committee of the abstracts, and these reports mature further with the feedbacks from the audience. These may be the main reasons why oral presentations had higher publication rates than poster presentations. Although the difference was not statistically significant, according to our results, oral presentations had 2.5 times higher publication rate than the poster presentations.

Based on the distribution of proceedings according to the affiliated institutions, the highest ratio was from the universities. In addition, when we consider that some of the studies from state hospitals might have been sent by physicians who completed their training and started their compulsory service in state hospitals, and that their studies might, indeed, be initiated while they were residents, it is possible that universities might even have a greater contribution in this rate. The reason why we did not find statistically significant difference between the institution types may be also related to the limited number of presentations. The publication rate of presentations

from training and research hospitals was lower, and this can be due to several reasons, such as less time allocated for academic studies compared to universities, differences in training courses, and slower management of the publication course.

Of the publications included in this study, 48.6% had a revised author list, irrespective of its order. Considering that many studies are matured in time following its presentation at a congress and they are composed of specifically for publication afterwards, there may be additional collaborators working together throughout this period. On the other hand, we found that the first author changed during the publication process of some of these studies (5.7%).

In our study, the mean publication duration for the 35 reports issued in the international peer-reviewed journals was 12±2.8 (range 3 to 42) months. Considering the time spent for submission and evaluation processes, this result indicates that reports published in the international peer-reviewed journals were sent to the journals without losing considerable time after the

congress. Additionally, poster presentations were often case reports and were sent to peer-reviewed journals sooner than the other types. It should be noted that clinical studies may take longer time for evaluation, maturation, data collection, interpretation, and inscription.

Several recommendations have been made for the publication of reports presented at congresses and scientific meetings. Some authors suggested a more selective approach during the evaluation of the abstracts.^[23] Some required submission to a journal for publication to be accepted at the congress.^[24] Periodic analysis of publication rates of the reports presented at a congress may be also beneficial. In addition, the Turkish Thoracic Society provides “Published Congress Presentation Award” to encourage researches for publication, which sets a good example as a motivation method in this respect.

In conclusion, we found similar rates of the publication rate of the reports presented at 6th National Congress of Thoracic Surgery to the other national congresses of different specialties in Turkey, but relatively lower compared to the rates at international congresses. We suggest that unpublished presentations should be interrogated and the underlying causes should be examined in detail to publish scientific studies in peer-reviewed journals and to share the information with a larger audience.

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