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A Content Analysis of Theses of Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences in the Period from 2006 To 2013.

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ABSTRACT

There is not enough information about the contents of Iranian thesis, their subjects, possible neglected areas, etc. Therefore, analyzing the content of Iranian thesis is essential. The aim of this study is to analyze the content of the medical theses of Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences in the period from 2006 to 2013. Quantitative content analysis was implemented to study all medical thesis which were published in Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences in the period from 2006 to 2013. We used a self-designed checklist that included "date of publication", "subject", "Study design", "sampling method", and "the presence of a Persian or English abstract. Data was analyzed by SPSS software using descriptive statistics tests such as mean and frequency. We analyzed the content of 358 theses. The majority of subjects in the studied theses were related to "internal medicine" (87 [24.30%]), followed by "pediatric" (65[18.15%]). The most frequent study design was "descriptive" (151[38.21%]), followed by "Clinical Trials" (101[28.21%]) respectively. The most frequently applied sampling method was census (152[42.45%], random sampling (151[42.17%]) and cluster sampling (25[6.98%]), respectively. Researchers in this university should work on the neglected subject areas. The university should encourage medical students to work on thesis with higher quality. We recommend to design and develop a database of theses in the university to be used when necessary.

Keywords: Content analysis; Bibliometrics; Students; Thesis; medical; Iran

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INTRODUCTION

Theses and dissertations as types of scientific and research papers have been studied in different ways. For example, lots of studies have the content analysis method to investigate different aspects of theses and dissertations [1]. Analyzing the content of scientific documents is an important step in tracking research trends of scientific fields [2, 3].

Content analysis is a standard way to study and consider features of registered information such as books, websites, pictures, and theses and it helps an organization in problem detection, decision making, data classification, data examination, finding opportunities and threats, and studying organizational behaviors and it enables the researcher to organize a large volume of information and also it's a useful way for examining thematic process of resources [4].

Moreover, content analysis is used to show a growth in a specific field and to determine the interests of scholars in a special field of study or also in an institution. It also provides a way to identify important areas and possible neglected areas of exploration shows authors with more publications as well as the most used study designs [3, 5].

A number of studies have analysed the content of scientific publications. For instance, a study shows that the most used subjects in Iranian nursing journals were "nursing education" (20%) and "pregnancy" (16.6%) [6]. However, few studies have investigated the content of Iranian theses. For example, Rezakhani Moghadam et al and Gorji et al studies [7, 8].

In this study, we aimed to analyse the content of the thesis of medical students and residents in Bandar Abbas city in Iran.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative content analysis was implemented to study all medical theses which were published in Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences in the period from 2006 to 2013. Using content analysis method. Data collection was done by referring to theses bank of Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences library and examining all of the theses, then the collected data was registered. The statistical population studied concluded all the theses during 8 years which were 358 theses. Sampling was performed by census method. Data collection tool was researcher-made checklist that was designed using previous studies. We used a self-designed checklist that included "date of publication", "subject", "Study design", "sampling method", and "the presence of a Persian or English abstract". Data was analyzed by SPSS software using descriptive statistics tests such as mean and frequency.

RESULTS

We analysed 358 theses. Most of the subjects in theses were related to "internal medicine" which included 87(24.30 %) theses and "pediatrics" which included 65(18.15 %) theses (Table 1).

Table 1: The frequency of subjects in the studied thesis of Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences during.

Subjects in the studied theses	Frequency	Percent
Internal medicine	87	24.30
Pediatrics	65	18.15
Psychiatry	37	10.33
Obstetrics	31	8.66
Surgery	21	5.86
Pathology	20	5.58
Anesthesia	18	5.02
Basic Science	16	4.46
Dermatology	6	1.67
Other Groups	57	15.92
Total	358	100

According to Table 2, the majority of theses are published in 2011, 62 (17.31%) and the least belongs to the year 2008, 33 (9.21 %).

Table 2: Frequency of theses based on the publication year Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences during 2006 to 2013.

Publication year of theses	Frequency	Percent
2006	52	14.52
2007	48	13.40
2008	33	9.21
2009	38	10.61
2010	42	11.73
2011	62	17.31
2012	46	12.84
2013	37	10.05

Table 3 shows the frequency of study design in the studied theses. The most frequent study designs were descriptive and clinical trials, 151 (42.17 %) and 101 (28.21 %), respectively.

Table 3: Study designs in theses of Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences during 2006 to 2013.

Study design	Frequency	Percent
Descriptive	151	42.17
Clinical trials	101	28.21
Analytical	34	9.49
Case-Control	35	9.77
Other types	37	10.33

The majority of these had used census 152(42.45 %), followed by random sampling method 151(42.17 %), cluster sampling method 25(6.98 %), available sampling 5(1.39 %) method and other sampling methods 25(6.98 %).

Of the 358 theses, 51(14.24 %) lacked an English abstract and 4 (1.11 %) theses lacked Persian abstract while only 2 (0.55 %) theses lacked both English and Persian abstracts.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Content analysis is a method for evaluating scientific literature, which is one of the techniques of bibliometrics. It makes experts of this field aware of the most used subjects areas, the neglected subject areas, the most active institutions and authors, the level of evidence used in articles, etc [3]. Research authorities can also use this method for planning for further research projects [8]. In this study, medical students' theses in the period from 2006 to 2013 were analyzed.

In the field of Medical Sciences, Mr Rezakhani Moghadam et al. (2011) examined the theses of health education in a content analysis study during the years 1970-2010. In this article, chronic and infectious diseases were most frequent subjects (74 cases) and breast milk, personal hygiene and vaccination had the least frequency (4 cases) [7]. Another research was done on the theses of medicinal plants during the years 1998-2006. The results of this study found that about 20% of total pharmaceutical theses were devoted to medicinal plants [8]. Another study examined the subjects of 210 theses in School of Health Management and Information Sciences, Iran University of Medical Sciences over 2001-2007. The results showed that "information science" was the most frequent subject (89), while "health economics" was the least frequent one (41 cases) [9]. However, most of the subjects were related to the "internal medicine" which included 87 theses (24.30 percent), and "pediatrics" which included 65 theses (18.5 percent).

Horton and Hawkins (2010) studied the content of 252 theses in the field of "Social Services" at the University of Florida and showed that only 13.49 percent of them et al were interventional studies [10], while in the study of Rezakhani Moghadam et al. 36 percent of the theses have applied interventional studies [7]. However, in this study, about one third (28.21 percent) of these were interventional studies (Clinical Trials). It may be argued that as our study was conducted on medical theses, thus a remarkable number of these had used interventional methods.

This study showed that some subject areas have been neglected in the studied theses. However, the majority of papers were published in internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, obstetrics, surgery, pathology and anesthesia. It may be argued that the existence of resident students in specialties such as paediatrics, pathology and obstetrics, is a reason for the productivity of this fields. Moreover, many medical students spend some months of their internal period in the psychiatric hospital which is affiliated to the university. Thus, it can be a main reason for students' interest in conducting these in psychological areas.

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