Letter to the Editor

Comment on: "A Bibliometric Analysis of Cleft Lip and Palate-Related Publication Trends From 2000 to 2017" by Zhang et al. (2019)

Zhang et al. (2019) recently published a paper in *Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Journal* entitled "A bibliometric analysis of cleft lip and palate-related publication trends from 2000 to 2017." The authors of this paper stated in section Data Collection, that "In this study, we used the internationally recognized citation database from the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) to retrieve the keywords and titles of articles with the following search terms: 'cleft lip' OR 'cleft palate' OR 'cleft lip and palate.' The searches were conducted to differentiate publication dates from January 2000 to December 2005, from January 2006 to December 2011, and from January 2012 to December 2017. The core data set included a total of 2023, 2991, and 4026 articles, respectively, for each period."

Firstly, the search terms Zhang et al. (2019) used were repetitive. They only had to use "cleft lip" OR "cleft palate" since the publications searched out by "cleft lip and palate" is a part of the publications searched out by "cleft lip." Secondly, the results from the original paper came out differently compared to the results we gotten using the same method as the authors. In total 2354 documents (including 1911 articles), 3344 documents (2909 articles), and 4512 documents (3868 articles) in 2000 to 2005, 2006 to 2011, and 2012 to 2017 were retrieved, respectively (Data last updated: May 09, 2019). The results show big differences, 16% of 2303 documents in 2000 to 2005, 12% of 2991 documents in 2006 to 2011, and 12% of 4026 documents in 2012 to 2017 from the results in the original paper (Zhang et al., 2019).

In order to improve the bias when using Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED) for bibliometric studies, a filter named "front page" (including the document title, the abstract, and the author keywords) was proposed by Ho's group and has been widely applied in bibliometric studies (Fu et al., 2012; Fu and Ho, 2014; 2016). Thus, documents with searching keywords in their "front page" were considered to be relevant publications. With the application of the "front page," a total of 2015 documents (86% of 2354 documents) in 2000 to 2005, 2847 documents (85% of 3344 documents) in 2006 to 2011, and 3807 documents (84% of 4512 documents) in 2012 to 2017 were found with searching keywords in their "front page," while 339 documents (14% of 2354 documents) in 2000 to 2005, 497 documents (15% of 3344 documents) in 2006 to 2011, and 705 documents (16% of 4512 documents) in 2012 to 2017 were irrelevant to "cleft lip and palate." In recent years,

similar comments have also been published in *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* (Ho, 2018a), *Renewable & Sustainable Energy Reviews* (Ho, 2018b), *Journal of Soils and Sediments* (Ho, 2019a), *Journal of Foot & Ankle Surgery* (Ho, 2019b), *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (Ho, 2019c), and *European Planning Studies* (Ho, 2019d) for the same problems.

Research is the way to the truth so that innovations are important to discover something new or a new understanding to approach the truth (Ho, 2019c). It is not helpful for researchers to repeat the same problem again and again without improving their research (Ho, 2019c). It was pointed out that the SCI-EXPANDED is designed mainly for researchers to find literatures but not used for bibliometric studies (Ho, 2018a, 2018c). Therefore, it is always necessary to have a data treatment when using SCI-EXPANDED for bibliometric studies (Ho, 2018a, 2018c; Ho, 2019c). Zhang et al. (2019) used the inappropriate method and data to publish bibliometric paper in *Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Journal*, and these may result in misleading the readers of the journal.

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