



Comments on “Research trends and frontiers on source appointment of soil heavy metal: A scientometric review (2000–2020)” by Wang, Jingyun et al., DOI ([https:// doi.org/10.1007/s11356-021-16151-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-021-16151-z))

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Wang et al. (2021) recently published a paper in *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* entitled ‘Research trends and frontiers on source appointment of soil heavy metal: A scientometric review (2000–2020)’. The Wang et al. stated in Data collection that “The data used for analysis were collected from the Web of Science Core Collection. The search term is TS=(source appointment OR source identification) AND (soil heavy metal). The document type was limited to journal and review. A total of 1051 publications were collected from 2000 to 2020.”

The Web of Science Core Collection includes:

1. Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED) -- 1900-present
2. Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) -- 1900-present
3. Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) -- 1975-present
4. Conference Proceedings Citation Index-Science (CPCI-S) -- 1990-present
5. Conference Proceedings Citation Index-Social Sciences & Humanities (CPCI-SSH) -- 1990-present
6. Book Citation Index– Science (BKCI-S) -- 2005-present
7. Book Citation Index– Social Sciences & Humanities (BKCI-SSH) -- 2005-present
8. Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) -- 2015-present
9. Current Chemical Reactions (CCR-EXPANDED) -- 1985-present
10. Index Chemicus (IC) -- 1993-present

The Web of Science Core Collection is primarily intended for researchers to find published literature, not for bibliometric research (Ho 2019a). It is inappropriate to use all different types and levels of databases in the Web of Science directly for bibliometric study. For example, ESCI complements the highly selective indexes by providing earlier visibility for sources under evaluation as part of the rigorous journal selection process of SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, and A&HCI (Ho 2019b). Furthermore, no articles and reviews can be found in Conference Proceedings Citation Index– Social Sciences & Humanities (CPCI-SSH), Book Citation Index– Social Sciences & Humanities (BKCI-SSH), Current Chemical Reactions (CCR-EXPANDED), and Index Chemicus (IC).

The authors used search keywords: (source appointment OR source identification) AND (soil heavy metal) which means ((source and appointment) OR (source and identification)) AND (soil and heavy and metal). A total of 1,068 documents including 1,039 articles (97% of 1,068 documents) and 29 reviews (2.7%) were found from 2000 to 2020. However, three documents do not contain any search keywords in their title, abstract, or author keywords. A total of 974, 16, 595, 859, 698, and 868 documents contain source, appointment, identification, soil, heavy, and metal respectively. Furthermore, 601 documents containing search keywords: (source and appointment) or (source and identification) and 550 documents containing search keywords: (soil, heavy, and metal) in their title, abstract, or author keywords were found. Finally, only 306 documents contained search keywords: (source and appointment) or (source and identification) and (soil, heavy, and metal) in their title, abstract, or author keywords. Based on the methods in the manuscript, 763 searched-out articles and reviews do not contain search keywords in their title, abstract, or author keywords. These documents are irrelevant to the “source appointment of soil heavy metal”.

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Wang et al. publishing “Research trends and frontiers on source appointment of soil heavy metal: A scientometric review (2000–2020)” (Wang et al. 2021) in *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* using inappropriate search strategies and data may mislead readers of the journal.

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