Commentary on the review paper: Mapping the Health and Medical Research Excellence in Nepal: A Study of High-Cited Papers During 1994-2023

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Dear Editor,

The review paper *"Mapping the Health and Medical Research Excellence in Nepal: A Study of High-Cited Papers During 1994-2023"* (1), published in *Apr.-Jun. 2024*, offers a valuable bibliometric analysis of highly cited papers (HCPs) in Nepal's medical research over nearly three decades. Identifying leading researchers, institutions, and key research areas, provides important insights into Nepal's evolving medical research landscape. However, the methodology for identifying the critical papers and leading researchers has notable limitations, warranting careful interpretation. This letter highlights key methodological gaps, findings, and implications, suggesting improvements for future studies.

The paper's methodology, which identifies 326 HCPs from Scopus data, is commendable for its comprehensive scope. Metrics like citations per paper (CPP) and the relative citation index (RCI) provide a robust framework for assessing academic impact. However, several concerns arise:

Overemphasis on Citation Metrics: While citations reflect academic influence, they may not align with societal or policy relevance. Incorporating policy citations would enhance the paper's utility by showcasing research with broader real-world impact.

Lack of Role Identification in Author Analysis: The paper ranks researchers solely based on citations without acknowledging their specific contributions (e.g., first author, last author, corresponding author). This approach risks misrepresenting contributions, as researchers with minor roles might overshadow those with significant input. For instance, many highly cited papers in the review are linked to global initiatives like the *Global Burden of Disease* (GBD) study, where Nepali researchers often play supporting roles. Including such papers inflates citation-based rankings while underrepresenting critical contributions.

Exclusion of Non-Scopus Literature: Reliance on Scopus may overlook important research published in local or regional journals, potentially underrepresenting research funded by local organizations.

Impact of International Collaboration: While the paper highlights strong international collaborations, the true context of these contributions could be clarified by adjusting for the influence of GBD papers.

In conclusion, the study is a commendable effort to map Nepal's research contributions and trends. Addressing methodological limitations and refining the interpretation of findings can enhance its impact and provide a more accurate representation of Nepal's research ecosystem. These insights can better guide stakeholders in strengthening Nepal's medical research capacity to address national health challenges effectively.

REFERENCES

1. Vaishya R, Gupta BM, Mamdapur GMN, Ali K, Vaish A, Joshi P, et al. Mapping the Health and Medical Research Excellence in Nepal: A Study of High-Cited Papers During 1994-2023. Journal of Nepal Health Research Council. 2024;22(2):213-25.https://www.jnhrc.com.np/index.php/jnhrc/article/view/5225

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