



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Analysis of Scientific Production in Otolaryngology in Spain in the Period 2011–2015<sup>☆</sup>



Jose A. Lopez-Escamez,<sup>a,b,\*</sup> Raquel Manrique-Huarte,<sup>c</sup> Eduardo Martin-Sanz,<sup>d</sup> Gabriel Trinidad<sup>e</sup>, COMISIÓN DE INVESTIGACIÓN de la SEORL-CCC

<sup>a</sup> Otolaryngology & Neurotology Group CTS495, Department of Genomic Medicine-Centro de Genómica e Investigación Oncológica – Pfizer/Universidad de Granada/Junta de Andalucía GENYO, Granada, Spain

<sup>b</sup> Department of Otolaryngology, Instituto de Investigación Biosanitaria ibs Granada, Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves, Granada, Spain

<sup>c</sup> Departamento de Otorrinolaringología, Clínica Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain

<sup>d</sup> Servicio de Otorrinolaringología, Hospital Universitario de Getafe, Madrid, Spain

<sup>e</sup> Servicio de Otorrinolaringología, Unidad de Otoneurología, Complejo Hospitalario Universitario de Badajoz, Badajoz, Spain

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### KEYWORDS

Scientific publication;  
Otorhinolaryngology;  
Impact factor;  
Medical education

### Abstract

**Introduction:** Publishing in scientific journals is an indicator of hospital quality and has become a standard of excellence for medical doctors and institutions. The aim of the study is to identify the scientific publications performed by Otolaryngology Departments in Spain within the period 2011–2015 and to compare them to a previous period between 1998–2002.

**Material and methods:** Original papers published by Otolaryngology Departments in Spain in PubMed within 2011–2015 were retrieved. They were classified according to the type of journal published (international or Acta ORL Española) and the following subspecialty areas: Otolaryngology, Audiology and Neuro-Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery (including Oncology), Rhinology and Paediatric ENT. Hospitals were ranked according to: number of original papers, accumulated impact factor and total number of publications.

**Results:** Between 2011 and 2015, 49 342 publications were included in PubMed, 1.44% from Otolaryngology Departments in Spain. Between 1998 and 2002, 3.80% publications were from Spanish ENT departments. Of the 712 papers published within the period 2011–2015, 389 were published in Acta ORL Española and 323 in international journals. From the latter, 20.7% belong to the Otolaryngology area, 19.2% to Audiology-Neuro-otology, 30.6% to Head and Neck Surgery, 15.2% to Rhinology and 3.4% to Paediatric ENT. Five tertiary centres published at least 10 original papers in the same period.

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\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [antonio.lopezescamez@genyo.es](mailto:antonio.lopezescamez@genyo.es) (J.A. Lopez-Escamez).

**PALABRAS CLAVE**

Publicación científica;  
Otorrinolaringología;  
Factor de impacto;  
Educación médica

*Conclusions:* Spanish otolaryngology's contribution to international journals has decreased in the last 12 years. A few institutions are responsible for the majority of publications and they have notably increased the cumulative impact factor.

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## Análisis de la producción científica en otorrinolaringología en España durante el periodo 2011-2015

### Resumen

*Introducción:* La publicación de artículos científicos es un indicador de calidad del hospital y se ha convertido en un criterio de excelencia entre los indicadores clínicos que acreditan a un profesional o a una institución. Se evaluaron las publicaciones científicas realizadas en los servicios de otorrinolaringología españoles durante el periodo 2011-2015 comparándolas con el periodo 1998-2002.

*Material y métodos:* Se extrajeron los artículos de Pubmed publicados por los servicios de ORL de España en el periodo 2011-2015, clasificándose según el tipo de revista (ACTA OTORRINOLARINGOLÓGICA ESPAÑOLA o internacional) y el área de conocimiento: otología, audiología y otoneurología, cirugía de cabeza y cuello incluyendo oncología, rinología y ORL pediátrica. Se estableció un ranking de hospitales considerando el número total de originales, el factor de impacto acumulado y el número total de publicaciones.

*Resultados:* En el periodo 2011-2015 se han identificado 49.342 publicaciones, de las cuales el 1,44% proceden de España, mientras que entre 1998-2002 el 3,80% proceden de España. De los 712 artículos hay 389 publicados en ACTA OTORRINOLARINGOLÓGICA ESPAÑOLA y 323 internacionales. De estas últimas el 20,7% pertenecen a la sección de otología, el 19,2% a audiología-otoneurología, el 30,6% a cirugía de cabeza y cuello, el 15,2% a rinología y el 3,4% ORL pediátrica. Cinco centros hospitalarios publicaron al menos 10 artículos originales en el período estudiado.

*Conclusiones:* La producción científica de la ORL española a nivel internacional ha descendido en los últimos 12 años. Se observa un fenómeno de concentración en determinados centros, asociado a un incremento considerable del factor de impacto acumulado.

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## Introduction

Different models of medical education have been present throughout the history of medicine in the 19th and 20th centuries. From a predominant situation in the 19th century where clinical practice was founded on individual experience and conveyed through teachers, the publication of the Flexner report in 1910 led to a profound transformation in medical education.<sup>1</sup> Taking the German model of medical education based on the book by Theodore Billroth "*Über das Lehren und Lernen der medizinischen Wissenschaften an den Universitäten der deutschen Nation*",<sup>2</sup> Abraham Flexner proposed a reform of the medical education system based on biomedical research, which led to the creation decades later of the *National Institute of Health*. Twentieth century clinical medicine was mostly founded on research projects based on the scientific method, which were published in scientific journals following paired assessment of methodological quality.

In 20th century medicine the publication of scientific articles became a clinical indicator of excellence which

validated a professional, a service or an institution.<sup>3</sup> In fact, investigative activity and its bibliometric impact has become one of the essential requisites for university professor entitlement. Furthermore, in several hospital centres scientific production is a strategic indicator which conditions the recruitment criteria of medical personnel, not only due to the innovative vision of these institutions, but also from the added value that research and teaching activity offers these professionals. The raising of direct and indirect financial resources which research projects contribute to the institutions also plays a part.<sup>4</sup>

This growing interest in collecting and assessing the bibliography produced is responsible for many studies in different specialties.<sup>5-7</sup> However, there are few studies which have assessed the research activity in the speciality of otorhinolaryngology (ENT) in Spain,<sup>8,9</sup> and the analysis of bibliometric indicators which try to quantify the relevance of these publications.<sup>10</sup> In 2003 a descriptive analysis of the scientific production of the ENT services was published by hospital centres and regions,<sup>8</sup> but no subsequent studies have been performed to compare with it.

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