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British Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery xxx (2017) xxx–xxx

BRITISH
Journal of
Oral and
Maxillofacial
Surgerywww.bjoms.com

Publication of scientific research presented at scientific meetings of the British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons: 10 years on – have we published or perished?

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Accepted 21 June 2018

Abstract

In 2009 we evaluated the publication of research presented at annual scientific meetings of the British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (BAOMS) 2002–2006, inclusive. Since then, the format of these meetings has changed, there has been a rapid increase in the number of online-only journals, and restraints on time during training and consultant practice have continued. We have therefore investigated the pattern of publication after presentation at these meetings between 2010 and 2014. All abstracts accepted for oral presentations or posters were included, and publication had to follow no more than four years later. We searched PubMed for papers in peer-reviewed journals and compared the data with those from 2002–2006. A total of 975 abstracts were accepted (2010–2014) of which 221 (23%) went on to be published. The median (IQR) delay to publication was 13 (4–25) months. Most were clinical papers from groups based in the UK ($p < 0.001$) and most were published in BJOMS ($p < 0.001$). The rate of publication has not changed significantly between the two periods (23% compared with 24%), and patterns in the type of papers, delays, journals, and research groups, were similar. Despite consistent rates of publication within the specialty, OMFS produces fewer publications after presentation than other surgical specialties. Further research is required to evaluate this more fully.

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Keywords: publication; presentation; abstract; surgery; OMFS

Introduction

Since we reported the publication rate of abstracts presented at annual scientific meetings of the British Association

of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (BAOMS) 2002–2006, inclusive,¹ the format of the meetings has changed and the number of online-only journals has increased. Training commitments and busy consultant practice continue to put pressure on time, but the necessity for trainees to be involved in research and to publish has continued to increase. Despite large amounts of credible research being presented each year, rates of publication within the specialty are relatively low, and problems with research itself do not seem to be primary reasons.

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bjoms.2018.06.013>

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Please cite this article in press as: Watson L, et al. Publication of scientific research presented at scientific meetings of the British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons: 10 years on – have we published or perished? *Br J Oral Maxillofac Surg* (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bjoms.2018.06.013>

Table 1

Number of clinical and scientific abstracts published by number of abstracts presented at annual scientific meetings of the British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (2010–2014). Data are number (%).

Year	No. of papers published/No. of abstracts accepted for presentation		
	Clinical	Scientific	Total
2010	53/178 (30)	3/10	56/188 (30)
2011	37/266 (14)	2/9	39/275 (14)
2012	30/151 (20)	3/8	33/159 (21)
2013	22/109 (20)	14/19	36/128 (28)
2014	37/186 (20)	20/39	57/225 (25)
Total	179/890 (20)	42/85	221/975 (23)

The main aims of this study therefore were to record the publication rates of clinical and scientific work accepted for presentation at BAOMS annual meetings between 2010 and 2014 and to compare the patterns of publication with those previously reported (2002–2006); also, to explore any differences and discrepancies within the specialty and in comparison with other surgical specialties, and finally, to suggest possible reasons.

Methods

Our methods for data collection and analysis were similar to those reported previously¹ to allow for ease and accuracy of comparison. Data were collected on abstracts accepted for presentation at BAOMS annual scientific meetings between 2010 and 2014, inclusive. They included all types of presentation (poster/oral) and the nature of the study (clinical/scientific). We used a validated algorithm, a Boolean search string (“first author” OR “last author” AND “title”) to search for international publications of abstracts listed on PubMed.^{2,3} At least two search combinations were tried before an abstract was discounted. A maximum interval of four years was allowed between presentation and publication.

Data were analysed using the chi squared and Mann-Whitney U-tests where appropriate, and results were compared with those from 2002–2006.

Results

Between 2010 and 2014 inclusive, 975 abstracts were accepted for presentation at the five consecutive BAOMS sci-

entific meetings (Table 1), and 221 (23%) of them went on to be published. Most were clinical (890/975, 91%), and only 85/975 (9%) were scientific. The rate of publication of scientific research was significantly higher (42/85, 49%) than that of clinical abstracts (179/890, 20%) ($p < 0.0001$). Significantly more abstracts were accepted for oral presentation (39%) than for poster presentation (17%) ($p < 0.0001$). The median (IQR) delay to publication for 2010–2014 was 13 (4–25) months.

Forty-nine percent of the publications associated with BAOMS abstracts appeared in BJOMS, and 72% of all publications appeared in just eight journals (Table 2).

Between 2010 and 2014, over 45 OMFS units in the UK submitted abstracts that were presented at these meetings, but only five centres produced over half (53%) of those that went on to be published (Table 3). Sixty-one (6%) of those presented were submitted by units outside the UK. The publication rate for these (16/61) was not significantly different from that of work based in the UK.

Discussion

This study has shown that only 23% of abstracts accepted for presentation at BAOMS conferences were published. Compared with the results from 2002–2006, an extra 352 abstracts were presented, which reflects the BAOMS initiative in 2007 to increase the number of presentations. However, publication rates did not differ significantly between the two periods (23% compared with 24%, $p > 0.05$).

Both periods were comparable in terms of the proportion of clinical and scientific material presented, for example, 90%

Table 2

Number of papers published in major OMFS journals 2010–2014.

Rank	Journal	No. (%) papers published (n = 221)	Impact factor
1	British Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	109 (49)	1.218
2	International Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	20 (9)	1.918
3	Journal of Craniofacial Surgery	9 (4)	0.788
4	Oral Oncology	5 (2)	4.794
5	British Dental Journal	5 (2)	1.082
6	Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	4 (2)	1.333
7	Head and Neck	3 (1)	2.276
8	Journal of Cranio-Maxillo-Facial Surgery	3 (1)	1.252
9	Other	63 (29)	N/A

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