

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Peer-Reviewed Veterinary Journals From Arabic-Speaking Countries: A Systematic Review



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Abstract

BACKGROUND The prevalence of diseases of foodborne and zoonotic origin in Arabic-speaking countries highlights the importance of collaboration between human and animal health professionals. However, accessibility of research and evidence-based practices in these countries is not well characterized. This brief report determines the availability of professional veterinary journals within the Arabic-speaking region.

METHODS An electronic search using 6 databases assessed for publication period, activity status, and available languages incorporated all aspects of veterinary medicine and specialties.

RESULTS Among 29 veterinary journals identified, the oldest current publication originated 63 years ago, with 10 journals currently interrupted or ceased. All 19 currently active journals are available electronically as open access, with 8 also offered in paper format. Veterinary journals published within Arabic-speaking countries are predominantly produced in Egypt, Iraq, and Sudan.

CONCLUSION Electronic access is lacking compared with English-speaking countries, and there is a lack of journals with an Arabic-language option. The reasons associated with language options in veterinary publications are not immediately apparent, yet may highlight differences among public health, health education, and zoonotic professionals and the populations they serve. Veterinary journals in Arabic-speaking countries do not adequately represent the overall region and are limited in access. Further evaluation of regional culture and publisher preferences is indicated to identify new collaboration opportunities among health professionals and local stakeholders.

KEY WORDS Arabic, Middle East, North Africa, research, veterinary medicine.

INTRODUCTION

Arabic-speaking countries currently face various public health challenges regarding zoonotic and foodborne diseases, with globalization of disease transmission of high interest at the international level. The key to effectively addressing these challenges lies in collaboration among public health agencies, as well as physicians and animal health professionals.¹ With continued urbanization, environmental depletion, and social and economic struggles, veterinary medicine is at the forefront in ensuring

livestock sustainment, food safety and security, and response to global health crises.²

The veterinary profession is a critical link between the health of humans and animals, public policy, and their interaction with the environment.^{3,4} The relationship among these 3 entities is the overall aim of the One Health concept.⁵ Six of every 10 infectious diseases in humans include an animal vector, and investigatory processes of these diseases span human, veterinary, and zoonotic agencies.⁶ Interprofessional collaboration among veterinary institutions, policymakers, physicians, and animal health

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practitioners broadens existing knowledge and strengthens international partnerships aimed at advancing global health.^{5,7}

Veterinary medical education within Arabic-speaking countries is heavily focused on livestock species,⁸ with veterinarians being critical in promoting animal health, decreasing production loss, and protecting the human population from both zoonotic and foodborne diseases. Because of the significant risk of zoonotic disease transmission within the Middle East and spread outside its borders, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations is focused on livestock health and disease control within Arabic-speaking countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Oman, Tunisia, and Yemen.⁹⁻¹⁵ Opportunities exist to improve and promote hands-on educational experiences of Arabic-speaking veterinarians and interactions with professionals of Arabic-speaking countries regarding food security and public health and to foster growth in current scientific journals and collaborative efforts in the Arabic-speaking region.^{8,9,16-18}

Instrumental to collaboration among veterinary professionals within the Arabic-speaking countries are the sharing and promotion of research and evidence-based practices, particularly through peer-reviewed scientific journals. However, despite a historical scientific heritage, Arabic-speaking countries account for less than 1% of research citations worldwide and devote significantly less resources to research production and dissemination compared with China and Europe.¹⁹ Currently, availability of veterinary journals, research development, and publication output suggest that the importance of veterinary medicine as a significant component of human health is lacking. The purpose of this brief report is to evaluate the presence and accessibility of peer-reviewed veterinary journals within the Arabic-speaking region and determine potential opportunities for further development of veterinary-directed scientific collaboration in this area.

METHODS

An electronic search was conducted using (1) PubMed NLM (National Library of Medicine) Catalog of journals referenced in the NCBI (National Center for Biotechnology Information) database records,²⁰ (2) Scopus, (3) Google Scholar, (4) Science Direct, (5) Index Medicus for the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office Database Journals Directory,²¹ and (6) Iraqi Academic Scientific Journals database²² to identify veterinary journals published in Arabic-speaking countries. An integrative search was carried out using a combination of search terms “veterinary; animal; medicine; science; studies; journal AND Algeria;

Bahrain; Comoros; Djibouti; Egypt; Iraq; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Libya; Mauritania; Morocco; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Somalia; Sudan; Syria; Tunisia; United Arab Emirates; Yemen; Palestinian Territories” to identify each respective journal listed. An electronic appraisal of the search results identified the corresponding journal’s website. Each respective journal website was reviewed to identify its publication period and other journal-related information such as activity status and languages available. Results of the electronic search were compiled and tabulated (Table 1). For the purpose of this search, veterinary journals were defined as a peer-reviewed journal encompassing any or all disciplines of veterinary medicine, sciences, and specialties. Given the nature of this review, ethical approval and clearance was not necessary and therefore not obtained. **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.** Given the wide spectrum of the veterinary profession, veterinary journals that explicitly stated veterinary medicine or veterinary-related disciplines within the journal’s respective aim and scope were included in this search. Also, only peer-reviewed journals were included in this search. Both active and interrupted or ceased journals were included in the search results to provide a comprehensive snapshot for discussion purposes. Given the predominant languages used in this region, Arabic, English, and French search terms were used, respectively, in this search. Journals with a clearly stated primary aim and scope focusing only on human medicine, zoology, human public health, nursing, and other discipline-specific health professions were excluded. The authors acknowledge that valuable and applicable data may have been excluded as a result of this delimitation.

RESULTS

The database search returned 29 journals that fit within our inclusion and exclusion criteria and published in Arabic-speaking countries: 13 are from Egypt, 7 from Iraq, 4 from the Sudan, and 1 each originating in Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen (see Table 1). The oldest journal in our sample was published from 1940-2015 (*Journal of the Egyptian Veterinary Medical Association*); the oldest journal still in publication began in 1954 (*Veterinary Medical Journal Giza*). Among the full sample, 10 journals are currently interrupted or ceased; 3 of these journals had publications periods of approximately 50 years or longer, 1 journal actively published for 18 years, and 5 had periods less than 10 years. Fourteen journals in our sample are or were offered

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