

## **Comments on: “Case reports and research productivity among Syrian medical students: Review, reality, and suggested solutions”**

The Editor,

We would like to address the feedback we received from some readers concerning our recently published article, “Case reports

and research productivity among Syrian medical students: Review, reality, and suggested solutions” published in October–December 2015 issue of Avicenna Journal of Medicine.

**Table 1: The 14 case reports that were not included in the original paper**

Journal name	Institution	Year of publication	Title
Clinical and Experimental Dermatology	Dermatology Department, Tishreen Hospital, Damascus, Syria	1997	Topical glyceryl trinitrate: A possible treatment for cutaneous leishmaniasis
The Journal of Heart Valve Disease	Damascus University Cardiovascular Surgical Center, Syria	2000	The mitral pulmonary autograft: A follow-up cautionary report
Endoscopy	Division of Gastroenterology, Saint Louis Hospital, Aleppo, Syria	2002	Endoscopic discovery of a Taenia in the duodenal bulb
Dermatology Online Journal	Ministry of Health, Syria-Hama	2006	Plate-like cutaneous osteoma on the scalp
Dermatology Online Journal	Ministry of Health, Syria-Hama	2003	Segmental facial hemangioma accompanied by brain anomalies: Report of a case
Molecular Medicine Reports	Department of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Division of Human Genetics, Atomic Energy Commission of Syria	2012	Detailed analysis of an idic (Y)(q11.21) in a mosaic karyotype
Saudi Journal of Kidney Disease and Transplantation	Pediatric Nephrology Department, Kidney Hospital, Damascus, Syria	2011	Spontaneous remission of posttransplant recurrent focal and segmental glomerulosclerosis
Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine	Faculty of Medicine, University of Aleppo	2011	Country cardiograms case 40
American Journal of Medical Genetics	Human Genetics Division, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Department, Atomic Energy Commission of Syria	2011	A new case of de novo translocation (12;17;18)(q21.2;q22;q21.1) and cranio-cerebello-cardiac (3C) syndrome
Dermatology Online Journal	Ministry of Health, Syria-Hama	2009	Unknown: Erythematous nodules on the right cheek and chin
International Urology and Nephrology	Aleppo University	2014	Central pontine and extrapontine myelinolysis secondary to fast correction of severe hyponatremia and hypokalemia in an alcoholic patient
Turkish Journal of Pathology	Department of Oral Pathology, Aleppo University, Faculty of Dentistry	2013	Immunohistochemical expression of p16 in pleomorphic salivary adenoma
Molecular Medicine Reports	Department of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Division of Human Genetics, Atomic Energy Commission of Syria	2013	A unique case of female pseudohermaphroditism with 21-hydroxylase deficiency and small supernumerary marker chromosome 7
Arab Journal of Gastroenterology	Department of Gastroenterology, Saint Louis Hospital, Aleppo, Syria	2013	A rare cause of odynophagia and dysphagia: Oesophageal lichen planus

A major concern was that our search of case reports missed several publications that met the study's inclusion criteria. This resulted in underreporting the total number of Syrian case reports. We admit that our methods missed mentioning the search end period. We would like to clarify that our search was open-dated in PubMed until July 2014, the date we started analyzing the data and preparing the manuscript. Therefore, case reports after this date were not counted in our study.

Moreover, other reason of miscounting some reports is that few case reports were published as reviews and not under case report category.

Using the same search time frame and expanding to other publication categories, we re-examined our search process and had found a number of other case reports. The total number of missed case reports was 14, which raises our results from 47 to 61 case reports published by Syrian medical personnel.

Despite miscounting these case reports, we believe that our comparison provided a valid conclusion since we used the

same search methods, keywords, and publications timing for both countries compared in the study, Syria and Tunisia.

Another concern is that how could this article reflect medical students' productivity in medical research when only evaluated case reports published from Syria. This might have shown a discrepancy between the title, introduction, and conclusion from one side to the methods and results on the other side. To clarify: We were aiming to show what percentage of those published case reports included medical students among their author teams, but that was unfortunately not possible because most authors did not classify their academic degrees or positions. Nevertheless, the discussion section highlighted the importance of focusing on medical students as strategic and pivotal step to face the major deficiencies in Syrian medical research productivity [Table 1].

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#### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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