Trends in UK Ophthalmic Publication Rates From 2013 to 2019

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Introduction

New academic requirements outlined in Curriculum 2024 echo the nationwide move towards "research by all".[1,2] To measure success in this strategic goal it is important to establish current trends in research outputs in UK ophthalmology. Conference abstract to publication rates (APR) is a means of assessing research trends. A meta-analysis of ophthalmic conferences showed a 38% APR, with The Royal College of Ophthalmologists' (RCOphth) Annual Congress having a 26.6% APR from 2008-2012.[3,4] This study aims to assess Congress' APR from 2013-2019 and examine the factors which predict publication.

Methods

1504 abstracts presented at RCOphth Annual Congress from 2013-2019 were recorded, including their subspeciality. Each abstract was then searched for using the abstract title, first author or supervising author on PubMed and Google Scholar. The publication status, time to publication and impact factor were recorded.

Results

- Across all 1504 abstracts, the mean APR from 2013-2019 was 27.3% with a mean impact factor of 2.400 for the publishing journals and no significant trends over time (Table).
- There was substantial geographic APR variation across the 19 deaneries which first authors represented, ranging from 16.4% in Severn and 45.2% in Scotland South with an IQR of 20.0%-33.3% among the deaneries.
- Similarly, the total number of abstracts accepted over the 7 years studied, normalised by trainees per deanery, varied 3.2-fold (Fig).
- Abstracts presented orally (n=133) had a significantly higher APR than poster presentations (n=1371), 41.4% and 26.0% respectively (p<0.05).

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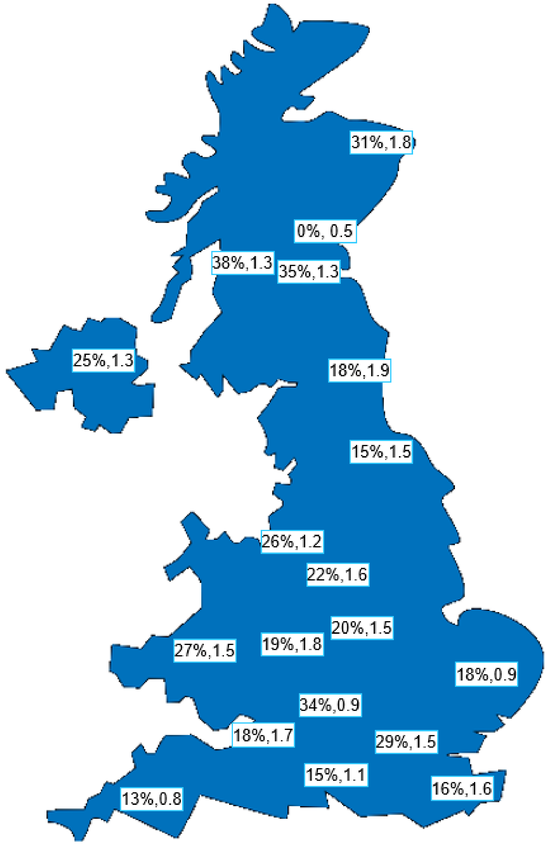


Figure: Geographic differences in % abstract to publication rate (APR) and total number of abstracts presented per trainee across 19 deaneries

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Mean time from presentation to publication	15.7	14.0	14.1	13.1	15.3	12.4	13.5
Proportion published within 36 months	22.6%	29.8%	27.6%	24.2%	21.4%	27.5%	23.2%
Mean IF of publishing journal	3.347	4.191	3.952	5.422	3.049	4.552	3.595

Table: Time between presentation and publication with mean impact factor (IF) of publishing journals by year.

Conclusions

- Annual congress has a lower APR than the 37% described in a Cochrane review of biomedical abstracts.[3,5]
- The RCOphth congress APR has been stable from 2008 to 2019.
- Oral presentations were 1.6 times more likely to be published than posters indicating the efficacy of the congress peer-review process.
- Further analysis of research culture and infrastructure within deaneries with higher APRs may provide insights to scale their performance.

References

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