

## Using the Quran and Nahjul-Balagha in English Scientific Articles Published by Iranian Universities of Medical Sciences -2014

Aram Tirgar<sup>1</sup>, Zahra Aghalari<sup>2</sup>, Davood Farajzadeh Alan<sup>3\*</sup>

1- Social Determinants of Health (SDH) Research Center, Health Research Institute, Social Medicine Department, Babol University of Medical Sciences, Babol, Iran.

2- Environmental Health Department, Gonabad University of Medical Sciences, Gonabad, Iran.

3- Quran and Hadith Research Center, Baqiyatallah University of Medical sciences, Tehran, Iran.

\*Correspondence should be addressed to Mr. Davood Farajzadeh Alan; Email: farajzad@bmsu.ac.ir

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### Abstract

**Background and Objective:** The Quran Al-Karim is not a book in the field of medicine and public health; however, it contains many verses in relation to health and hygiene. It also explores the root of events relevant to health and disease. Nahjul-Balagha also contains brilliant clues of health and hygiene. Therefore, the present study was conducted with the aim of determining the degree to which these two guidebooks have been utilized in writing medical articles.

**Method:** The current applied, cross-sectional investigation was conducted by citation analysis; that is, frequency counts were obtained of original English language scientific articles which were published by Iranian universities of medical sciences in 2014. Data was collected using a researcher-made check-list through the survey of all scientific articles and their references. Descriptive statistical indicators were used for data analysis. In this study, The ethical issues were all considered and the authors declared no conflict of interest.

**Results:** Of 201,071 studied references from 6,907 published articles and in 696 English language scientific journals belonging to 31 Iranian universities of medical sciences, Quran Al-Karim had been cited 218 times (less than 1%). Also, none of the articles had used Nahjul-Balagha as a reference. The most frequently cited Surahs of the holy Quran in published articles were Al-Baqarah, An-Nisa, Al-Anaam, and Al-Isra, in that order.

**Conclusion:** Although the findings have shown that the Quran was cited as a reference among published articles in the field of medical sciences, its utilization rate seems to be inadequate.

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### Summary

**Background and Objective:** Over 1000 verses of Quran Al-Karim have discussed various sciences. These verses can be divided into three groups: miraculous scientific references, amazing scientific references, and thought-provoking scientific references (1). Out of these science-related verses, around 300 have to do with health and hygiene (2). For example, a verse like “So, clean your clothes” emphasizes the importance of respect for personal hygiene and the

necessity of keeping clothes clean from contamination (3). The Quran also contains the treatment of many psychological problems. As mentioned by God in Surah Al-Isra, the Quran is healing (for heart) and (divine) mercy for believers. Also, in Surah Yunus, God says, “O People of the world, from the Lord came to you a letter which is all guidance, healing for hearts, and guidance and mercy for believers indeed” (4).

Nahjul-Balagha also contains brilliant clues of health and hygiene. In fact, the word “health” and other words related to it have been used in Nahjul-Balagha while talking about various subjects like physical and spiritual health. For example, it has been said that

jealousy jeopardizes body health (5) or that prevention of vice removes pollutions from the heart (6).

On the one hand, academic journals and articles, which constitute the major tool for disseminating the results of scientific research, have the responsibility of providing scientific information in national, regional, and international domains (7). On the other hand, using religious teachings in writing medical science articles can facilitate people's acceptance of and compliance with hygienic facts. Therefore, the present study was conducted with the aim of determining the degree to which Quran Al-Karim and Nahjul-Balagha have been utilized in writing medical articles published in Iranian universities of medical sciences.

**Method:** The current applied, cross-sectional investigation was conducted during the fall semester of 2015. The study focused on English language articles published by Iranian universities of medical sciences during the previous year (2014). In order to collect the data, journals with scientific-research status were examined by consulting the website of 47 universities of medical sciences in Iran. In total, frequency counts were obtained for 171 English language journals. Adopting a citation analysis procedure, data was collected using a particular check-list designed based on previous studies (8,9).

**Results:** The results of data analysis revealed that, during the period which was the focus of the study (2014), 7571 English language articles were published in 2,258 issues of 171 journals belonging to 31 Iranian universities of medical sciences. It was found that over 201,071 references had been used in these articles.

In terms of the number of papers, 16 articles (0.2 % of all articles) cited Quran verses. With respect to frequency, however, 159 verses had been used 218 times (0.1% of all references listed in the reference section).

Considering the distribution of the citations, these 159 verses belonged to 57 Surahs of Quran Al-Karim, with the most frequently cited Surahs of the holy Quran in published articles being Al-Baqarah (34 times), An-Nisa (21 times), Al-Anaam (14 times), and Al-Isra (14 times).

Out of 30,558 keywords in 7,571 studied articles, 11 keywords (0.03% of all keywords) belonged to Quran. Also, none of the articles had used Nahjul-Balagha as a Keywords.

Regarding the study type of the published articles related to Quran Al-Karim, most of the papers (13 articles accounting for 81.2% of all Quran-related papers) were review articles. In most of these articles, the study setting consisted of books and articles. Finally, the most widely used instrument in such papers (13 articles which is equal to 81.2% of all Quran-related papers) was research-made checklists.

**Conclusion:** The results of this study indicate the shortage of research and scientific articles published by Iranian universities of medical sciences which have utilized the Quran and Nahjul-Balagha. More specifically, there were only 16 Quran-related articles, which contained 218 references to the Quran. This is

negligible in comparison with the total number of published articles in these journals (7,571) and the overall number of references in these publications (over 200,000 references).

On the other hand, it was discovered that none of the published articles had used brilliant sermons, wisdoms, or letters of Nahjul-Balagha. The results of another study demonstrated that, during a 22-year period, only 2 articles published by the journal of a university of medical sciences (0.01% of the total number of published articles) had made citations to Nahjul-Balagha (9).

Taken together, the results of this study showed that the Quran and Nahjul-Balagha are used as references in articles published in the realm of medicine. However, the total number of such articles is not satisfactory. People in the academia should pay more attention to these two sources in their scientific articles.

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