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Current electronic journals on occupational therapy: A descriptive study

Revistas de terapia ocupacional disponibles en línea: estudio descriptivo

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| Abstract |

Introduction: The quantity and quality of papers published in journals are often considered as research trends indicators in several fields of study. In the case of occupational therapy (OT) there are few studies addressing this issue.

Objective: To describe the characteristics of occupational therapy electronic journals, including year of creation, publication frequency, peer review process, language of publication, and content access policies.

Materials and methods: A descriptive, quantitative study was carried out based on a search conducted in the following databases using the term “occupational therapy”: Web of Science, Scopus, SciELO, CINAHL, OTDBASE, Ulrich’s International Periodical Directory, NCBI Databases, CINAHL-EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Medline, and Directory of Open Access Journals. Simple descriptive statistics was used to analyze data.

Results: After the search was conducted, 39 journals were included for analysis, of these 85% had been created after 1990. All journals were indexed in different databases, but most of them were in Journal Citation Reports, CINAHL, Medline, Science Citation Index Expanded, OTDBase, and PsycINFO. Likewise, approximately 36% publish an issue every three months, and mainly in English.

Conclusion: A more comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of these journals may help OT researchers choosing the best option to submit their works for publication, and contribute to achieving higher rates of production and dissemination of knowledge on OT by said journals.

Keywords: Occupational Therapy; Publications; Bibliometrics (MeSH).

| Resumen |

Introducción. Con frecuencia, la cantidad y la calidad de los artículos publicados en revistas se consideran como indicadores de las tendencias de investigación en diversas áreas de estudio. En el caso de la terapia ocupacional, hay pocos estudios que aborden este tema.

Objetivo. Describir las características de las revistas de terapia ocupacional disponibles en línea en relación a su año de creación, periodicidad, procesos de revisión por pares, idiomas de publicación y políticas de acceso.

Materiales y métodos. Se realizó un estudio cuantitativo y descriptivo basándose en la búsqueda del término “terapia ocupacional” en las bases de datos Web of Science, Scopus, SciELO, CINAHL, OTDBASE, Directorio Periódico Internacional de Ulrich, Bases de Datos del NCBI, CINAHL -EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Medline y DOAJ. Los datos fueron analizados mediante estadística descriptiva simple.

Resultados. Una vez realizada la búsqueda, se incluyeron 39 revistas para análisis, de las cuales 85% fueron creadas después de 1990. Todas las revistas estaban indexadas en diferentes bases de datos, pero la mayoría se encontraban incluidas en Journal Citation Reports, CINAHL, Medline, Science Citation Index Expandido, OTDBase y PsycINFO. Asimismo, se encontró que cerca del 36% publica un número cada tres meses, principalmente en inglés.

Conclusión. Una comprensión más amplia de las características de estas revistas puede ayudar a los investigadores en terapia ocupacional a elegir la mejor opción para enviar sus trabajos para su publicación y contribuir a lograr mayores tasas de producción y difusión de conocimiento en terapia ocupacional en dichas revistas.

Palabras clave: Terapia ocupacional; Bibliometría; Publicaciones Electrónicas (DeCS).

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Introduction

The amount and quality of papers published in journals is often considered as an indicator of the research trends in several fields of study. (1) Provided the important role they play, scientific journals have been the analyzed by several studies addressing scientific publication systems. (2) In addition, since 1655, the year in which the first modern era journal, *Le Journal des Scavans*, was published, the number of academic and scientific journals has increased significantly. (2)

From the decade of 1990, with the emergence of internet, academic publishing has experienced considerable changes, including a continuous increase of online journals. (2) In this regard, it has been reported that the number of print-only and print plus electronic journals has decreased over the last years, while the number of electronic journals has increased. (2)

The objective of occupational therapy (OT) scientific journals is to publish papers addressing topics related to OT practice. (3) These journals work as a place to store knowledge on the field and as a way to document and validate OT theories and practices, and to disseminate information on research progress in the area and vocational training. (4,5)

Archives of Occupational Therapy, first published in 1922 by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), was the first official academic journal on OT, but in 1925, it was renamed to Occupational Therapy and Rehabilitation and, since 1947, it has been published as The American Journal of Occupational Therapy (AJOT). (6)

Although there are records of OT journals being published since the early 1920s, few studies have worked on characterizing OT journals, in particular those available online (1,6), and most of these studies have focused on publications from English-speaking countries, so OT journals from other countries or published in other languages have not been included. Likewise, considering that research on OT has increased over the last years, especially in Latin American countries, it is important to know the characteristics of OT journals to promote further research in the area as reported by other authors. (1) Then, taking the above information into account, it is possible to say that currently new investigations in this regard are necessary to increase our understanding of OT journals, including those that are published in languages different than English and in non-English speaking countries. (3)

The objective of this study was to study the existing electronic OT journals worldwide and describe their main characteristics: first publication date, country, language, frequency, impact factor, type access to articles (open access or non-open access), and how articles submitted to each journal are reviewed for publication (whether they are peer reviewed or not, and if the process is blind or double-blind, etc.). In addition, another objective was to describe the type of papers accepted by each journal for possible publication and the databases in which said journals are indexed, especially those with impact factor.

Materials and Methods

Study design

Descriptive study in which a characterization was made based on a quantitative approach. All electronic OT journals available were considered for the study. Inclusion criteria: online availability, use of the term “occupational therapy” in the journal title, and regular publication frequency. Furthermore, “occupational therapy” and “ergotherapy” terms were used for searching the journals. Exclusion criteria: journals without a regular publication frequency at the time of data collection (from January to May 2017), and journals considered as magazines or advertising publications.

Databases

The search was conducted in Web of Science, Scopus, SciELO, CINAHL, OTDBASE, Ulrich's International Periodical Directory, NCBI Databases, CINAHL-EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Medline, and the Directory of Open Access Journals. In addition, in order to include journals that might not be indexed in said databases, a search was conducted in Google search engine by using the following terms: “occupational therapy periodicals” and “occupational therapy journals”.

Data collection and analysis

Data collection was made through a script created by the authors of the present study. Then, the data obtained with the script were entered in a Microsoft Excel software spreadsheet. The script was made up by 10 items to be completed for each journal that was found: (I) title of the journal; (II) year of creation; (III) publication frequency; (IV) country and continent of origin, and language of publication; (V) databases in which the journal is indexed; (VI) are articles peer reviewed or not?; (VII) type of access to the contents published by the journal (open access or non-open access); (VIII) type of articles accepted for publication, in the case of those journal with an impact factor; (IX) impact factor, and (X) publishing company.

Although there are several aspects that can be considered to classify a journal as an open access journal (7,8), in this study only those publications in which access to all its contents was completely free, i.e. not registration, subscription or any other fee required, was considered as being “open access”.

Provided this study aimed to conduct a characterization of OT electronic journals, the collected data were analyzed quantitatively through simple descriptive statistics by using tables to organize said data; it is noteworthy to say that this form of analysis has been frequently used in similar studies. (3,6,9) To ensure data reliability, data collection process was assessed by two independent examiners, who subsequently met to carefully verify these data and remove any discrepancy. The index of reliability between both examiners was 80% (IF=0.008).

Results

Once the initial search was completed, 45 journals were found. Of these, 5 did not have a regular publication frequency, and 1 had already ceased publication, so that 39 journals were included in the final sample. The main characteristics of the journals are described in Tables 1, 2, and 3; it is important to note that journals are presented chronologically (first year of publication).

More than 50% of the journals included are published in European countries or in North America ($n=23$), and 46.15% ($n=18$) of the journals were created and first published during the 21st century. Regarding publication frequency, 41% ($n=16$) publish 4 issues per year and 25% ($n=10$), 2 issues. In addition, open access was not available in 56% ($n=22$), yet all journals published in Latin American countries, 15.38% ($n=6$), are open access journals.

In terms of publication language, despite the fact that all Latin American journals publish their contents in more than one language ($n=6$), 74% ($n=29$) of the included journals publish in a single language, mainly English. On the other hand, 51% ($n=20$) are published by commercial publishing houses, while only 33% ($n=13$) and 16% ($n=6$) are published by occupational therapy associations or scientific societies and universities, respectively.

Only 9 journals had impact factor. A description of the type articles published by year, impact factor and the databases said journals are indexed is shown in Table 4.

Table 1. Occupational therapy journals first published between 1930 and 1979 (n=6).

| Journal title/ Country | First year of publication | Publication Frequency | Open Access | Language | Publishing Company |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| The Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy - United States | 1933 | Five times per year | No | English and French | Sage Publications |
| British Journal of Occupational Therapy - United Kingdom | 1938 | Monthly | No | English | Sage Publications |
| The American Journal of Occupational Therapy - United States | 1947 | Bimonthly | No | English | American Occupational Therapy Association |
| Australian Occupational Therapy Journal - Australia | 1952 | Bimonthly | No | English | Wiley-Blackwell |
| South African Journal of Occupational Therapy - South Africa | 1953 | Quarterly | Yes | English | The Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa |
| World Federation of Occupational Therapists Bulletin - United Kingdom | 1978 | Semi-annual | No | English, Spanish, French and German. | Taylor & Francis |

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 2. Occupational therapy journals first published between 1980 and 1999 (n=15).

| Journal title/ Country | First year of publication | Publication Frequency | Open Access | Language | Publishing Company |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Occupational Therapy in Mental Health - United States | 1980 | Quarterly | No | English | Taylor & Francis |
| Physical & Occupational Therapy in Geriatrics - United Kingdom | 1980 | Quarterly | No | English | Taylor & Francis |
| Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics - United Kingdom | 1980 | Quarterly | No | English | Taylor & Francis |
| OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health - United States | 1981 | Quarterly | No | English | Sage Publications |
| Occupational Therapy in Health Care - United States | 1984 | Quarterly | No | English | Taylor & Francis |
| Revista Ocupación Humana - Colombia | 1984 | Semi-annual | Yes | English, Spanish and Portuguese | Colegio Colombiano de Terapia Ocupacional |
| Hong Kong Journal of Occupational Therapy - Netherlands | 1985 | Semi-annual | Yes | English | Elsevier |
| Cadernos de Terapia Ocupacional da UFSCar - Brazil | 1990 | Quarterly | Yes | English, Spanish and Portuguese | Universidade Federal de São Carlos |
| New Zealand Journal of Occupational Therapy - New Zealand | 1990 | Semi-annual | No | English | New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists |
| Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Universidade de São Paulo - Brazil | 1990 | Three times per year | Yes | English, Spanish and Portuguese | Universidade do Estado de São Paulo |
| The Israeli Journal of Occupational Therapy - Israel | 1991 | Quarterly | No | English and Hebrew | Israeli Society of Occupational Therapy |
| Irish Journal of Occupational Therapy - Ireland | 1992 | Semi-annual | Yes | English | Emerald Publishing Services |
| Ergotherapie und Rehabilitation - Germany | 1993 | Monthly | No | German | Schulz-Kirchner Verlag |
| Occupational Therapy International - United Kingdom | 1994 | Quarterly | Yes | English | Hindawi |
| Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy - United Kingdom | 1994 | Bimonthly | No | English | Taylor & Francis |

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3. Occupational therapy journals first published from 2000 to 2017 (n=18).

| Journal title/ Country | First year of publication | Publication Frequency | Open Access | Language | Publishing Company |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Ergothérapies - France | 2001 | Quarterly | No | French | Association Nationale Française des Ergothérapeutes |
| Asian Journal of Occupational Therapy - Japan | 2001 | Yearly | Yes | English | Japanese Association of Occupational Therapists |
| Indian Journal of Occupational Therapy - India | 2001 | Three times per year | Yes | English | India Occupational Therapists Association |
| Chilean Journal of Occupational Therapy - Chile | 2001 | Semi-annual | Yes | English, Spanish and Portuguese | Departamento de Terapia Ocupacional y Ciencia de la Ocupación de la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad de Chile |
| Revista de Terapia Ocupacional da Galicia (TOG) - Spain | 2004 | Semi-annual | Yes | Spanish | Asociación Profesional Gallega de Terapeutas Ocupacionales |
| Revista Asturiana de Terapia Ocupacional - Spain | 2005 | Yearly | Yes | Spanish | Asociación Profesional de Terapeutas Ocupacionales del Principado de Asturias |
| Ergoscience - Germany | 2006 | Quarterly | No | German | Idstein: Schulz-Kirchner |
| Indian Journal of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy: An International Journal - India | 2006 | Quarterly | No | English | Institute of Medico-Legal Publications |
| Japanese Journal of Occupational Therapy Research - Japan | 2007 | Bimonthly | No | English and Japanese | Japanese Association of Occupational Therapists |
| Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Journal - India | 2008 | Quarterly | No | English | Red Flower Publications |
| Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools, & Early Intervention - United States | 2008 | Quarterly | No | English | Taylor & Francis |
| TJPRC: International Journal of Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy - India | 2010 | Semi-annual | No | English | Trans Stellar |

Table 3. Occupational therapy journals first published from 2000 to 2017 (n=18). (continued).

| Journal title/ Country | First year of publication | Publication Frequency | Open Access | Language | Publishing Company |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|--|
| The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy - United States | 2012 | Quarterly | Yes | English | Western Michigan University |
| Argentine Journal of Occupational Therapy - Argentina | 2015 | Yearly | Yes | Spanish and Portuguese | Asociación Argentina Terapeutas Ocupacionales |
| Revue Francophone de Recherche en Ergothérapie - Switzerland | 2015 | Semi-annual | Yes | French | Communauté pour l'Avancement de la Recherche Appliquée Francophone en Ergothérapie |
| Interinstitutional Brazilian Journal of Occupational Therapy - Brazil | 2016 | Quarterly | Yes | English, Spanish and Portuguese | Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro |
| Journal of Occupational Therapy Education - United States | 2017 | Three times per year | Yes | English | Eastern Kentucky University |
| Annals of International Occupational Therapy - United States | 2017 | Quarterly | No | English | Slack Incorporated |

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 4. Online journals of occupational therapy with impact factor (n=9).

| Journal | Type of articles published by the journal | IF for 2015/ IF for 5 years | Databases in which the journal is indexed * |
|---|---|-----------------------------|--|
| Australian Occupational Therapy Journal | Feature articles, research articles, reviews, articles, viewpoints, critically appraised papers, letters to the editor | 1.404/ 1.600 | Australian Public Affairs & Information Service, Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts, Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature, CSA Biological Sciences Database, CSA Environmental Sciences & Pollution Management Database, Ecology Abstracts, Health Source Nursing/Academic, Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition, Medline/PubMed, ProQuest, Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection, PsycINFO/Psychological Abstracts, Science Citation Index Expanded, SCOPUS, The RECAL Legacy. |
| British Journal of Occupational Therapy | Research articles, critical reviews, practice analyses, opinion pieces, editorials, letters to the editor, registered RCT protocols, occasional book reviews | 0.935/ 1.047 | Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts, Current Contents Connect: Social and Behavioral Sciences edition, EBSCO, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature, EMBASE/ Excerpta Medica, GALE, Health Management Information Consortium, Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition, Journal Citation Reports/Social Sciences Edition, OTBIBSYS, OTDBase, PsycINFO, SciSearch, Science Citation Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, Thomson Reuters: Current Contents - Physical, Chemical & Earth Sciences, Web of Science |
| Hong Kong Journal of Occupational Therapy | Review articles, research papers, case reports, discussion articles, correspondence, book reviews | 0.348/ 0.554 | CINAHL, Embase, SCIE, Science Direct, Scopus, SIIC Data Bases |
| Occupational Therapy International | Research studies, original concept papers, single subject cases studies, reliability and validity of clinical instruments, surveys of treatment practices, historical reviews, meta-analyses | 0.683/ 0.921 | Academic Search, Academic Search Alumni Edition, Academic Search Elite, Academic Search Premier, Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts, Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature, Current Contents: Social & Behavioral Sciences, EMCare, Health Source Nursing/Academic, Medline/PubMed, PsycINFO/Psychological Abstracts, Science Citation Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, Web of Science. |
| OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health | Assessment/ measurement development, efficacy of interventions (preventive, restorative, and compensatory), intervention outcomes, translational research, basic research (including occupational science) | 0.524/ 0.829 | OTDBase, PubMed, Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature, Social Sciences Citation Index, Medline, Web of Science |
| Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics | Original research, case reports, systematic reviews, theory/ perspective and special communications, meta-analyses, scoping reviews, case series, appraisals of a test or measure | 1.255/ 1.582 | AMED; British Library Inside; Child Development Abstracts; Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature; Contents Pages in Education; EBSCO; ERA; ERIC; EMCARE; EMBASE; Family and Society Studies Worldwide; Family Index Database; Google Scholar; HaPI Database; HINARI; Index Copernicus; Intute; JournalSeek; MANTIS; MEDLINE; NewJour; OCLC; OTDBase; OT SEARCH; Otseeker; PEDro; ProQuest; PsycINFO; PSYCLINE; PubsHub; PubMed; REHABDATA; SCOPUS; SIRC; Social Work Abstracts; Special Educational Needs Abstracts; SwetsWise; Zetoc (British Library); Science Citation Index Expanded; Journal Citation Reports/ Science Edition; Social Sciences Citation Index; Journal Citation Reports/ Social Sciences Edition; Current Contents/Social and Behavioral Sciences; Current Contents/Clinical Medicine |
| Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy | Reviews, original articles, short communications, case reports, letters to the editor | 0.957/ 1.300 | Applied Social Science Index & Abstracts; Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Services; Ergonomics Abstracts; Medline; OT BibSys, OTDBase, Science Citation Index, Social Science Citation Index and Swemed |
| The American Journal of Occupational Therapy | Research about therapy practice, studies on the validity and reliability of occupational therapy instruments, studies on the relationship between occupational involvement, participation and health, articles on professional issues affecting education, practice and research. | 1.806/ 2.113 | Index Medicus, Medline, PubMed, Oldmedline, Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature, PsycINFO, Social Sciences Citation Index, Current Contents/Social & Behavioral Sciences, Web of Science, Scopus |
| The Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy | Full-length empirical studies, Registered RCT protocols, theoretical papers and conceptual reviews, client-centered practice; brief reports; theoretical or conceptual arguments to inform future research in occupational therapy, letters to the editor, and book reviews. | 1.179/ 1.464 | AARP AgeLine Database, Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature, Current Contents/Clinical Medicine, Elsevier: EMBASE, Health and Psychosocial Instruments, Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition, Journal Citation Reports/Social Sciences Edition, Medline/ Pubmed, OTBIBSYS, OTDBase, PsycINFO, REHABDATA, SCOPUS, Science Citation Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, Thomson ISI, Thomson Reuters: Current Contents—Social & Behavioral Sciences, Web of Science. |

IF: Impact Factor.

* This information was obtained from the websites of each journal

Source: Own elaboration.

The American Journal of Occupational Therapy had the highest impact factor for 2015 and for the past five years (2009-2014), 1.806 and 2.113, respectively. In general, the average impact factor in 2015 was 1.010, and all 9 OT journals with impact factor are indexed in approximately 139 different databases. The databases in which the most of these journals are indexed are Journal Citation Reports/Social Sciences Edition (n=7), CINAHL (n=6), Medline (n=6), Science Citation Index Expanded (SciSearch - n=6), OTDBase (n=5), and PsycINFO (n=5).

Discussion

According to the results obtained here it is possible to say that approximately 85% of OT journals were created since 1990, which makes them relatively recent publications in the context of scientific publishing. In this regard, it has been reported that there was a significant increase in the number of OT journals during the second half of the 20th century. (10) Furthermore, Potter (11) in 2010 published an update on the work made in 1999 by Reed (12), in which a significant increase in the number of publications and a larger database coverage were reported. (13)

Likewise, Brown *et al.* (6) have reported that in recent years the publication of articles on OT has significantly increased. In this regard, in 1997 Brown (9) had already described some factors that might explain said increase: the need of the researchers to update and get updated knowledge on the area, the increasing demand of OT students for scientific literature to perform academic activities, and the need to be informed on new progresses and research-based data in relation to the OT professional practice. (9)

In the present study it was found that most OT journals are published in Europe, followed by those published in North America, Asia, South America, Oceania, and Africa. Bearing this in mind, it is possible to establish a relationship between these findings and OT precursor movements and how these were developed during World War I and World War II, for this could explain why there is such a large gap between Europe and North America and the rest of the world in terms of OT journals, as said scenario led to the creation of OT as a profession. On the other hand, it was also found that, with the exception of one journal, all Latin American OT journals were created over the last three decades, which may indicate that research on OT in these countries has increased, which is consistent with the findings reported by Fernández-Moreno. (14)

According to the data available in the SCImago Journal and Country Rank database, approximately 93% of the papers on OT published between 1996 and 2015 were published by journals from North America, Western Europe, and Oceania. (13) These numbers might be explained by the fact that in said countries there are more OT professionals, there are more OT undergraduate and graduate academic programs courses, and there are more funding opportunities to promote research on the area. Nevertheless, it should be noted that unlike what has happened in English-speaking countries, research on OT and the creation of graduate programs in Latin American countries, in particular in Brazil and Mexico, has experienced a significant increase only in recent years. (14)

Another important finding was that geographical and linguistic aspects play an important role in how OT articles are published worldwide. In this sense, according to the data obtained here, 74% of journals publish their contents in only one language, mainly English, which might reflect economic circumstances and theoretical, practical, and research perspectives particular to the professional practice of OT. (15) Somehow, in Latin America, an increasing trend of OT journals publishing their contents both in English and the official language of

the country where they are published, as well of journals publishing in more than two languages, was observed. This might suggest that OT professionals in this region are interested in publishing their work and research not only for local readers, but for potential readers worldwide, by addressing both local and global issues related to OT. It is important to note that this trend has also been observed in other fields of knowledge such as social sciences, education and nursing. (2,15-17)

Another characteristic analyzed in the present study was how articles in each journal could be accessed. In this regard, although open access is becoming increasingly common in the field of academic publishing (8), as of the date the present study was conducted, 56% of the electronic OT journals were not open access, despite the fact that it has been widely recognized for its ability to significantly increase academic production and the dissemination of knowledge. (16)

Some works have stated the need for OT journals to implement open-access policies (7), since open access system allows a greater and faster dissemination of knowledge, as well as improving journals metrics and international visibility, which in turn translates into higher author citation rates and more opportunities to obtain funding from different institutions or organizations. (7)

Regarding the revision process of articles, all journals included in the present study informed that all papers submitted to them are peer reviewed in order to accept or reject them for publication, which it is an important indicator of the quality of the articles published by these journals, since peer review process ensures that papers meet high quality and methodological standards, and that the information they present is useful and relevant. (18)

In the present study, the publishing institutions or organizations of each journal were also identified, including publishing houses, academic institutions (mainly universities) and OT professionals associations, being the latter an important factor to be discussed, since they provide journals with organizational and financial support, which is essential for their proper operation. (9) In this sense, research activities on OT and the dissemination of the knowledge produced by said research are mainly promoted by OT professionals associations and scientific societies, so they play an important role in strengthening OT scientific production. (14)

On the other hand, it has been reported that private companies are also participating in the scientific publication process of OT contents. (17) In this regard, it has been stated that the emergence of new technologies, globalization processes, and the increasing interest of commercial companies in scientific publication has significantly influenced the industry of academic publishing. (2)

Regarding impact factor, and taking into account that these data are only to be considered for the study period (January-May 2017), only 9 journals had impact factor; however, if compared with the data obtained in 2011 by Brown (17), where only 5 journals had impact factor, this increase might suggest OT journals have improved both their quality and their relevance. (17) It should be noted that impact factor has been increasingly used in the academic and scientific publication context as a research quality indicator, so if a journal has a high impact factor metric, its visibility will increase, as well as its funding sources. (17)

Nevertheless, there could be a certain bias regarding this metric, as it can be conditioned by several aspects, such as if the articles are published in English, if only basic research papers are published, and the type of contents published by the journal, i.e. if the publication focuses on general or specific areas of research. (17) In fact, several studies on impact factor in the context of OT academic production state that this is the worst metric to be considered when assessing the performance of OT journals. (17,19-21)

Finally, concerning the type of articles published by OT journal, there are several works reporting a predominance of papers addressing

issues related to the clinical practice of occupational therapists. (5,9,22), which might be explained by the need of OT professionals to recognize evidence-based practices, which in turn encourages them to use the information available in OT journals as practice guidelines. (23)

Conclusions

The main contribution of the present study is presenting a current characterization of electronic OT journals, including those published in non-English-speaking countries. Said characterization allows a more comprehensive understanding of the existing strategies implemented for publishing OT scientific production worldwide. This is essential to encourage occupational therapists to engage in more research activities and to publish their works in journals that focus on publishing only OT related contents. Likewise, this characterization helps documenting what occupational therapists have published worldwide so far.

Further studies analyzing other types of OT journals and considering more characteristics and metrics related to OT as a field of study are required to have a more comprehensive understanding of OT scientific production at an international level. In addition, more studies classifying and the available information of OT journals are required in order to support the creation of a portal of OT journals in which immediate access to them is provided.

Finally, this study sought to characterize the existing electronic OT journals in order to provide a general panorama of OT academic production worldwide, but it is also necessary to conduct studies on what is being researched and informed in said articles, and studies analyzing if said journals are also publishing knowledge that is not specific to OT practice, as well as identifying the type of knowledge being published.

Conflicts of interest

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