

Dear reviewers,

We appreciate the valuable feedback you have provided. We express appreciation for the helpful ideas shared regarding the methodologies employed for data collecting and the categorization framework utilized in the study we conducted. The decision to employ the Web of Science only was driven by technical limitations. According to the founders of VOSviewer, the combining and interpretation of data from different databases is not a feasible project. The decision to prioritize the Expanded category in Web of Science above the Emerging category was made carefully, taking into account factors such as content overlap and the respected reputation that the Expanded category earned in the field of bibliometric studies. The categorization of "outside USA" was chosen mostly by considering the institutional affiliations of the authors, rather than only relying on their countries. We tried to get to the core of global collaboration with our larger grouping, but we also know that a more detailed grouping has its applications.

Furthermore, with regard to the discussion and limitations presented, we have tried to provide further clarification on the implications of our findings, supporting them with appropriate citations. Our deliberate focus on the "transplant" category within the Web of Science was intended to prioritize papers that are fundamental to transplantation research. Although this perspective may be considered conservative, our primary focus was to protect the integrity of the data. We acknowledge and appreciate the feedback provided, and we understand that including a more expansive perspective in future research, efforts could yield advantageous outcomes.

We have addressed each of these concerns point by point in the sections that follow.

Badi Rawashdeh

1. Reviewer Comment: Why not other databases too? Such as Pubmed? Why only Expanded? Why not Emerging too? It seems to me rather self-contradictory for a paper calling for collaboration with developing countries, to be so elitist in their methodology and inclusion criteria.

Comment: Why not other databases too? Such as Pubmed?

Response: Thank you for your suggestion to merge data from multiple databases for our VOSviewer application. However, we sought clarification on this matter from the founder of VOSviewer, Nees Jan van Eck. In his response (provided below for transparency), he highlighted the infeasibility of such a merging due to significant differences in file formats across various data sources.

Nees Jan van Eck's Response:

[Dear Badi,

Unfortunately, VOSviewer does not enable you to merge files from different data sources. Merging the files yourself won't be possible either, since there are significant differences between the file formats used by the different data sources. So, I'm afraid there is no easy way to combine data from different data sources.

Best, Nees]

Given this limitation, we opted to use the Web of Science as our primary database due to its extensive historical coverage and its comprehensive collection of academic journals. We understand the value of integrating data from multiple databases, and we did consider Scopus and PubMed among others. However, based on the feasibility and the vast resources Web of Science offers, it emerged as the most suitable option for our study.

Comment: Why only Expanded? Why not Emerging too?

Response: we added this paragraph to the method section with the relevant reference

“The Web of Science database has a vast collection of academic journals, providing a comprehensive historical view of academic publications. The utilization of databases such as Scopus and PubMed provide valuable insights. However, because of its extensive breadth and historical coverage, Web of Science emerged as the most suitable option for our specific research investigation (14). We chose the Science Citation Index Expanded over the Emerging Sources Citation Index explicitly. The selection was made of the well-established reputation of the Expanded Index in the field of bibliometric studies. Within the transplantation category, every material from the Emerging Sources Citation Index was represented in the Expanded section, Notably, the sole exception was the Journal of Transplantation, which was listed under Emerging Sources Citation Index only and comprised only eight articles. Given the limited content from this journal and the comprehensive coverage offered by Expanded section, we deemed the latter more appropriate for our study rendering it unnecessary to reference both categories concurrently.”

Comment: It seems to me rather self-contradictory for a paper calling for collaboration with developing countries, to be so elitist in their methodology and inclusion criteria:

Response: Our intent was not to appear elitist but rather to ensure data robustness and consistency. We appreciate your feedback and recognize the importance of broadening our data sources to foster a more inclusive view in future analyses.

2. Reviewer Comment: Why not more granular categorization? Such as if more than 50% or less than 50% of authors, or authors affiliations rather than nationality?, Why not have 3 categories? Such as, Purely National American, Nationalized (more than 50% of authors are from institution outside USA, and Collaborational American (less than 50% are from USA institutions)?, And what do you mean by :outside USA"/ is it by nationality, or by institution? How about double affiliations? And what does affiliations really mean? Does he work there? Or a visitor?."

Response: Thank you for the insightful feedback. In our categorization, the term "outside USA" was based on the institutional affiliations mentioned in the articles, not the nationality of the authors. We considered any article with at least one author affiliated to an institution outside the USA. This approach was chosen for its simplicity and to maintain a broader perspective of international collaboration.

We acknowledge the value in adopting a more granular categorization approach as you suggested. Categorizing articles based on the percentage of authors from institutions outside the USA can indeed provide a more detailed insight into collaboration patterns. This can be especially relevant to differentiate between major collaborations where the majority of the authors are from non-USA institutions versus minor collaborations.

Regarding your point on double affiliations, in our analysis, if an author had multiple affiliations and at least one of those was outside the USA, the article was considered under the "USA article with international affiliation" category.

We added this paragraph to the data analysis section: "The categorization of articles was conducted by utilizing the institutional affiliations provided within the articles. In particular, an article was designated as a 'USA article with international affiliation' if at least one of its authors was affiliated with an institution located outside of the USA. The primary objective of this classification system was to offer a comprehensive perspective on global cooperation, with a foundation based on simplicity. It is worth noting that in cases when authors have dual affiliations, an item was classified under the category of 'USA article with international affiliation' if any of the affiliations indicated were non-American".

3. Reviewer Comment: The authors need to elaborate more on the implications of their findings, rather than describing it, and support it with citations, along with recommendations.

Response: we agree with you totally and we made the necessary edits to the discussion paragraphs to align with your suggestions.

4. Reviewer Comment: Please justify, and explain how does this affect your results and your methodological rigor?

Response: Thank you for highlighting this point. The decision to focus on journals within the "transplant" category of the Web of Science source database was driven by our aim to capture the core of transplantation research publications. This database has been a reputable source for bibliometric studies and offers a comprehensive collection of journals specifically categorized for transplantation research.

However, it is acknowledged that this focused approach might have excluded some journals that occasionally publish transplantation-related articles but aren't primarily categorized under 'transplantation.' Thus, our results predominantly reflect the trends and contributions of the primary journals in the field of transplantation. This could mean our study provides a conservative estimate of the total volume and nature of transplantation research.

To address the methodological rigor, we made sure our inclusion and exclusion criteria were clearly defined and consistently applied, ensuring internal consistency in the data analyzed. We believe our results still offer valuable insights into the landscape of transplantation research, though future studies could expand the scope to include journals from other categories for a broader view."

We added this paragraph to the limitation section: "The primary emphasis of our analysis was on academic journals categorized under the "transplant" category within the Web of Science database. This approach was taken to ensure that our study included fundamental research in the field of transplantation. Although this approach is thorough, it might overlook journals that are not primarily categorized under the field of 'transplantation' but occasionally publish articles that are pertinent to the topic."