

## Health Information Pioneers in the Middle East

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Middle East is an ancient large area with some wealthy countries possessing rich underground resources like gas & oil. The countries of this region are mostly considered as developing countries. The overall contribution to the world science by these countries is limited especially in producing scientific publications on health topics. Although most of these countries have some serious health problems, but the annual number of scientific papers published by the researchers of each country doesn't meet the healthcare needs of their populations. In this study the total scientific papers published by the researchers of all Middle East countries and indexed in Medline PubMed database, through the period 1988-2006 have been extracted. The number of papers produced by each country has been identified and adjusted for their number of researchers, universities, GDPs & also their populations. Moreover, the rate of citations and the number of citations per article were studied. Then the trend of paper indexing in Medline and also its adjusted trend is considered & compared. Over the past two decades, the number of papers produced by the Middle East countries has remained flat or declined, albeit with two striking exceptions which are Turkey & Iran. Turkey's publication rate per year has grown from around 500 in 1988 to more than 9000 in 2006. The other rising star is Iran, which from a low base of less than 100 articles per year a decade ago now produces nearly 4000. Both countries have eclipsed Egypt, previously the most prolific of all Middle East states in the scientific Publishing. Turkey, although not rich in oil, but has been the most scientifically successful country in the Middle East since 2003. It seems that there is a significant difference among the Middle East countries in producing scientific publications on health topics.

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