

Mapping the field of military nursing research 1990–2013: A bibliometric review

Jane Currie and Jennifer Chipps

Abstract

Background: Over the past 20 years, military forces worldwide have been engaged in a number of conflicts and humanitarian operations and the impact of this on the field of military nursing research is unknown. The aim of this bibliometric review was to investigate the research field of military nursing in the main databases with the purpose to describe trends in military nursing research since 1990.

Objectives: To identify military nursing papers in the main databases and to describe the field of military nursing research for the period 1990–2013 in terms of research productivity, trends in topic focus, trends in authorship and country of publication.

Method: Bibliometric review of published military nursing research papers was undertaken in March 2014 and data was extracted and coded and trends were analyzed using SPSSv21.

Results: In total 237 articles were included in the review. The majority of publications emanating from America ($n = 175$, 73.8%) and the quantity of papers has increased significantly since the commencement of the second Gulf War in Iraq from 2003 onwards ($n = 156$, 65.8%). This has been accompanied by a shift in topic focus from professional ($n = 16$, 20.3%) and occupational issues ($n = 17$, 21.5%) pre 2003, to clinical ($n = 48$, 30.4%) and an increase in multidisciplinary research from 4% in 1990–94 to 29% in 2010–13. The mean citations were 10.6 (sd 17.0) and the mean references per paper post 2003 showed a marked increase from 23.5 to 25.4.

Conclusion: The military nursing research field appears stronger than it has been in the past twenty years and has demonstrated increased transferability to other fields. To maintain this momentum and further develop the field of military nursing research, military forces worldwide need to devise focused nursing research strategies that involve international and multidisciplinary collaboration.

What is already known about the topic?

1. Conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have led to significant advances in health care practices.
2. Military nursing research has the potential to forward both military and civilian nursing practice.

What this paper adds

1. The military nursing research field appears underdeveloped, although there are signs of increased momentum in terms of the quantity of papers published, the number of

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