

Endocrine and diabetes research from SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) countries

Sir,

The South Asian region comprises eight member countries, which includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. These nations work together under an organization, South Asian Association

for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), to promote the welfare of the people. The region is also known as the Indian subcontinent and accounts for approximately 25% of the world's population. The people residing in SAARC countries comprise of diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, but share a common disease burden.

SAARC countries have a unique burden of infectious diseases coupled with noncommunicable diseases. Diabetes mellitus has reached epidemic proportions and India has the second highest number of patients with known diabetes. Diabetes among the South Asians is distinct in its etiopathogenesis, clinical presentation, and complications. Endocrine morbidity is increasing rapidly in SAARC nations and includes obesity, metabolic syndrome, and thyroid disorders. Metabolic bone disease due to vitamin D deficiency, Sheehan's syndrome due to poor obstetric care, and symptomatic hyperparathyroidism and are the unique diseases of the SAARC nations. Health-related research activities relevant to this region and close cooperation are essential to identify the disease burden of South Asia.

India has the greatest total disease burden than any country in the world due to its high population and rising life expectancy. India produced 90.5% of total biomedical publications generated by the SAARC countries.^[1] The medical journals where maximum research output was published include *Journal of Association of Physicians of India (JAPI)*, *Journal of Indian Medical Association (JIMA)*, *National Medical Journal of India (NMJI)*, *Indian Journal of Medical Research (IJMR)*, and *Indian Journal of Medical Sciences (IJMS)*.^[2] The journals which published the maximum articles in the field of diabetes include JAPI, Journal of Diabetes Association of India, and JIMA.^[3] Bibliometric analysis of publications in the JAPI suggests increasing contributions from our neighboring countries.^[4]

The *Indian Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism (IJEM)*, the official journal of the Endocrine Society of India, is growing at a rapid pace as the global face of the Indian endocrinology. The journal receives a lot of research papers from authors residing in SAARC countries. The papers published in this journal also highlight the common difficulties faced by the researchers in these

resource-constrained countries. Regional cooperation is evident with the contribution of the authors from the SAARC countries in the recently published guidelines on diabetes management in Ramadan and geriatric people.^[5] Collaborative multicentric studies are also on the rise with researchers located in the Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. The contributions from the researchers include in the form of original research, reviews, and case reports. The researchers from Bhutan, Maldives, and Afghanistan have not yet contributed to the medical literature from India and collaboration with local doctors is the need of the hour.

K. V. S. Hari Kumar, Anil Misra¹

Department of Endocrinology, Command Hospital, Lucknow,
¹Department of Medicine, Career Institute of Medical Sciences and Hospital, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author: Dr. K. V. S. Hari Kumar,
Department of Endocrinology, Command Hospital,
Lucknow - 226 002, Uttar Pradesh, India.
E-mail: hariendo@rediffmail.com

REFERENCES

1. Azim Majumder MA, Shaban SF, Rahman S, Rahman N, Ahmed M, Bin Abdulrahman KA, *et al.* PubMed-based quantitative analysis of biomedical publications in the SAARC countries: 1985-2009. *J Coll Physicians Surg Pak* 2012;22:560-4.
2. Gupta BM, Bala A. A scientometric analysis of Indian research output in medicine during 1999-2008. *J Nat Sci Biol Med* 2011;2:87-100.
3. Ranasinghe P, Jayawardena R, Katulanda P. Diabetes mellitus in South Asia: Scientific evaluation of the research output. *J Diabetes* 2013;5:34-42.
4. Hari Kumar KV, Aravinda K. Publication trends of a biomedical journal from India. *Indian J Med Sci* 2010;64:253-8.
5. Baruah MP, Kalra S, Unnikrishnan AG, Raza SA, Somasundaram N, John M, *et al.* Management of hyperglycemia in geriatric patients with diabetes mellitus: South Asian consensus guidelines. *Indian J Endocrinol Metab* 2011;15:75-90.

Access this article online	
Quick Response Code:	Website: www.ijem.in
	DOI: 10.4103/2230-8210.117213