



# Mapping the Literature of Burns and Ethics

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## INTRODUCTION

Burn clinicians commonly experience ethical dilemmas as a direct result of a patient's burn injury, yet literature on ethics in burns is scarce. A bibliometric analysis of literature on burn patients and ethics is necessary to support decision-making for burn-injured patients and their families. By identifying core journals, analyzing cited references, categorizing journals into Zones, and estimating database coverage, the results of this study inform burn specialists of the most relevant journals related to discussions about ethical issues in treating burn patients.

## METHODS

This study examined references during a three-year period (2016-2018) from a sample core of journals using the mapping protocol from the Nursing and Allied Health Resources Section (NAHRS) of the Medical Library Association (MLA)<sup>1</sup>. Following the prescribed steps in the NAHRS protocol, the investigators polled experts from the burn unit in a U.S. urban academic medical center inquiring about resources they believe contain the highest amount of content related to burns and ethics. Using the following search strategy [Table 1.] the investigators queried Scopus, a subscription-based discovery portal, to retrieve references from the source journals published during the years 2016-2018.

Table 1. Search Strategy

1. ( EXACTSRCTITLE , "INSERT JOURNAL TITLE" )
2. All (burn\* OR burn patient\* NOT burnout) AND (ethic\* OR clinical ethic\* OR medical ethic\* OR nursing ethic\* OR ethicist\*)
3. 1 AND 2
4. (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR, 2018) OR LIMIT TO (PUBYEAR, 2017) OR LIMIT TO (PUBYEAR, 2016)
5. 3 AND 4

## RESULTS

Three journals informed the source titles for this study: *Burns*, *BMC Medical Ethics*, and *Journal of Medical Ethics*. 225 cited references were pulled from the bibliographies of source journal publications: 183 references from journal articles; 99 of these published in *Burns*. [Table 2.] The years 2009-2013 accounted for the highest number of references inclusive of all publication types (n=61), followed by 2014-2018 (n=52). [Table 3.] According to Bradford's Law of Scattering, the n for this study is 4.4 (49 journals in Zone 2 divided by the 11 journals in Zone 1). Each zone makes up approximately 33% of the total number of cited references in all journals. [Table 4.] The distribution of journal citations and availability of Zone 1 journals is described in Table 5.

## RESULTS (CONT'D)

Table 2. Format types by source journal & citation frequency

Cited format type	Number of citations in source journals						Total	
	Burns		BMC Medical Ethics		Journal of Medical Ethics		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Journal articles	99	80	76	93	8	42	183	81
Books	-	-	2	2	2	11	4	2
Conference Proceedings	4	3	-	-	-	-	4	2
Miscellaneous	21	17	4	5	9	47	34	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3. Cited format types by publication year periods

Publication year (range)	Cited format type								Total	
	Journal articles		Books		Conference Proceedings		Miscellaneous		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
2014-2018	45	25	-	-	-	-	7	20	52	23
2009-2013	47	26	2	50	1	25	11	32	61	27
2004-2008	33	18	1	25	3	75	3	9	40	18
1999-2003	30	16	1	25	-	-	4	12	35	15
1994-1998	13	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	6
Before 1993	12	6	-	-	-	-	4	12	16	7
Unknown	3	2	-	-	-	-	5	15	8	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4. Distribution by Zone of cited journal & references

Zones	Cited journals		Cited journal references		
	No.	%	No.	%	Cumulative total
1	11	9	67	33%	67
2	49	38	68	33.3%	135
3	68	53	68	33.3%	203
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 5. Distribution & indexing coverage of cited journals in Zone 1

	Zone 1: Cited journal	# of citations	MEDLINE	Embase	Web of Science
1	Burns	23	Y	Y	Y
2	Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare	6	Y	N	N
3	Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery	6	Y	N	N
4	Journal of the American Medical Association	6	Y	Y	Y
5	Journal of General Internal Medicine	4	Y	Y	Y
6	Journal of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery	4	Y	Y	N
7	PLOS ONE	4	Y	Y	Y
8	South African Medical Journal	4	N	N	N
9	Annals of Burns & Fire Disasters (Name changed to Journal of the Euro-Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters)	4	Y	N	N
10	Academic Medicine	3	Y	N	Y
11	Anesthesia and Analgesia	3	Y	Y	N

\* Journal of Burn Care and Rehabilitation (3 citations) and Journal of Burn Care and Research (2 citations): both in Zone 2

## CONCLUSION

Results of this mapping study reveal there is a need for further published research on burns and ethics. A number of Zone 1 Journals have a large readership, suggesting the topic of burns and ethics is reaching a wide audience when research findings are published. Advancing burn clinicians' understanding of ethics and burns will improve the overall care of burn-injured patients and supports the clinician in meeting their own professional ethical obligations.

## References, Funding and Disclosure

1. Delwiche FA, Schloman BF, Allen MP. Medical Library Association, Nursing and Allied Health Resources Section. Mapping the literature of nursing and allied health professions: project protocol [Internet] 2015 Aug 15; The Section (3 Jun 2010)

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