

Effect of Research Grant Funding on Academic Productivity in Plastic Surgery

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Background:

The Plastic Surgery Foundation (PSF) funds investigators to augment their ability to produce research. The *h*-index is a measure that assesses the quantity and significance of an individual's academic contributions. The objective of this study was to determine whether receiving funding through a PSF grant results in increased research productivity.

Methods:

The PSF listing of funding appropriations was utilized to determine which surgeons have received grants between 2003-2013. The Scopus database was queried to determine each surgeon's current *h*-index and their *h*-index at the time of grant funding. Analysis was performed to determine whether research productivity increased after grant funding.

Results:

Sixty-seven out of 592 US academic plastic surgeons in our study received PSF grants from 2003-2013. The mean current *h*-index for all plastic surgeons that received a PSF grant was 12.91 and 8.46 for those who did not ($p < 0.05$). At the time of PSF grant award, the mean *h*-index for single-grant awardees was 6.43, which increased after funding to a current mean of 10.70 ($p < 0.05$). Of surgeons receiving grants, 77.6% came from a division/department with multiple grant recipients. On multivariate regression, receiving PSF grant funding correlated with increased academic productivity as measured by the *h*-index ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions:

Plastic surgeons receiving a PSF grant have higher academic productivity. Receiving a PSF grant appears to correlate with increased research productivity over time. Those surgeons who receive PSF grant funding tend to come from divisions/departments with multiple grant recipients and with higher departmental academic productivity.