Academic Productivity of Microsurgery Fellowship Faculty

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INTRODUCTION: The Hirsch index (H-index) is widely recognized as a reliable measure of academic productivity. While previous studies have applied the H-index to various surgical disciplines, none have analyzed microsurgery faculty. This manuscript aims to examine the applicability of the H-index to microsurgery fellowship faculty to determine it utility as a measure of academic output for this group.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: Faculty demographics and institution characteristics were obtained from the American Society of Reconstructive Microsurgery (ASRM) and official program websites. Faculty H-indices were calculated using the Scopus database (Elsevier, USA). Data was assessed using bivariate analysis and multiple linear regression models to determine the relationship between independent variables and total publications, career H-index and 5-year H-index (H5-index) of each faculty.

RESULTS: A total of 139 faculty members from 22 programs were identified to meet inclusion criteria. The median faculty age was 44 (IQR 13) and 84.9% of faculty were male. Faculty size, number of years of fellowship existence, number of fellows at their program, FACS membership status, number of free flaps performed annually, and academic appointment title were significantly associated with the H index, H5-index and total publications. Multivariate analysis based on the significant independent variables demonstrated that geographical region and faculty ranks were significantly associated with the H5-index.

CONCLUSIONS: Variables associated with seniority (age, years of practice after fellowship, and academic appointment were positively correlated with the H-index. Given the increased use of bibliometrics in academic medicine, these results show that H-index is a viable tool which can be used to assess research quantitative and qualitative productivity among academic microsurgeons.