

The Research Contribution of the Undergraduates of the Faculty of Indigenous Medicine (FIM): A Bibliometric Analysis

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Ayurveda originates from the Sanskrit terms “Ayu”, meaning life, and “Veda”, meaning knowledge, is a holistic medical system focusing on achieving harmony between the body, mind, and spirit. By systematically organizing knowledge through logical principles, Ayurveda has gradually evolved into a complete science of life, deeply rooted in the ancient wisdom of Vedic literature. The FIM at the University of Colombo offers two bachelor’s degree programs: the Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) and the Bachelor of Unani Medicine and Surgery (BUMS). As part of their degree requirements, undergraduates in these programs must complete a research project in their fourth academic year. This study analyses the research contributions of BAMS and BUMS undergraduates, focusing on the distribution of research topics and identifying gaps in the covered areas. Data were collected from the research project title lists maintained at the FIM library, covering four academic years (2014/15-2017/18). Seven hundred sixty-six research projects were categorized into six primary fields: Treatment, Pharmaceuticals, Diseases, Gynaecology, Paediatrics, and Nutrition, with additional topics classified under “other.” The analysis reveals a significant focus on treatment-related research (42%), emphasizing clinical applications within Ayurveda. Pharmaceuticals made up 32%, followed by 15% of disease-related research. However, critical areas such as gynaecology and nutrition were significantly underrepresented, comprising only 2% of the research output, while paediatrics received minimal attention at 3%. This may be due to the ethical aspect of these clinical studies pertaining to undergraduate students. Further content analysis highlighted a lack of research in broader comparative studies within alternative medical systems, which could diversify and enrich Ayurvedic practices. These findings emphasize the need for enhancing research in these fields which is essential for bridging knowledge gaps and advancing Ayurveda as a modern, global healthcare system. This study provides valuable insights for the research community, offering a framework to align future research efforts with the evolving needs. Expanding research into new areas such as surgical instruments, yoga, health tourism, and preventive medicine could further support the sustainable development and relevance of Ayurveda in the contemporary healthcare System of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Undergraduate Research, Indigenous Medicine, Research Trends, Faculty of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo*