

# Publication Trend in the Journal of Psychiatrists' Association of Nepal

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## Abstract

### Background

Evaluating trends in journals are crucial as they offer valuable insights into research trends. We aim to evaluate the characteristics and trends of articles published in the Journal of Psychiatrists' Association of Nepal (JPAN), an official journal of the Psychiatrists' Association of Nepal (PAN)

### Methods

A bibliometric review was conducted by accessing all volumes of the online database of the JPAN. Articles were classified on the basis of psychiatry subspecialty, type of article, study design and study site. Data was entered and analyzed in Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics was used to calculate frequency and percentages.

### Result

A total of 275 articles from 14 volumes published between 2011 to 2025 were studied. Total number of

articles per issue is steady over the years with a mean of 19.64 articles per year. Maximum number (n=27) of articles were published in the year 2019. Majority of articles were based on general mental health followed by liaison psychiatry, addiction psychiatry, adult psychiatry and child and adolescent psychiatry. One hundred and seventy one studies were cross sectional followed by 12 retrospective studies, 6 case control studies and 3 randomized controlled trials. Based on article type, original research articles (ORA) constituted the majority (71.3%, n = 196 ). Most studies (81.3%, n = 192) were conducted in hospital-based settings.

### Conclusion

Our findings indicate that research publications in JPAN demonstrate a gradual upward trend. There is a need to diversify research topics, enhance methodological rigor, and promote generation of higher level-evidence.

### Keywords

Journal of Psychiatrists' Association of Nepal, Psychiatric research, Publication

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## INTRODUCTION

Nepalese psychiatry has witnessed tremendous developments in the last 60 years. These development ranges from increased numbers of mental health professionals, growth in coverage of the mental health services, and the development of sub-specialities to active engagement by the Psychiatrists' Association of Nepal (PAN).<sup>1</sup> Journal of Psychiatrists' Association of Nepal (JPAN) is a biannual, peer-reviewed national medical journal. It is an official journal of the Psychiatrists' Association of Nepal (PAN).<sup>2</sup> Publication in peer-reviewed journals not only

promotes the practice of evidence-based medicine but also provides opportunities for professional development and career advancement.

One method to describe psychiatric research is to quantify data regarding publications in the scientific literature. The published research literature is a historical record that can be examined over time to spot trends.<sup>3</sup> There is limited data to support anecdotal information that the volume of Nepalese psychiatric publications are rising. An editorial on "Psychiatric Research in Nepal" reported a steady growth in research, with 558 articles (a total of 738) published in the last decade.<sup>4</sup> Despite a consensus on the need for more research,<sup>1,4</sup> little is known about the current status of psychiatric research in Nepal. To date, no "research on research" has been conducted with a specific focus on JPAN. We selected the JPAN because it is the sole psychiatric journal in Nepal and it is easily accessible online.

It is imperative for the specialty to assess its growth and demands in light of recent developments. Trends in journals are crucial to examine, as they offer valuable insights into research trends and potential future development targets for the Nepalese psychiatric community. Publication trends have been examined in specialty journals such as the Indian Journal of Orthopaedics<sup>5</sup> and the Indian Journal of Ophthalmology<sup>6</sup> in neighboring countries.

We hypothesize that there is increasing publication trend in the JPAN during the period 2011 to 2025. The present study aimed to objectively evaluate the trends and characteristics of articles published during JPAN's publication journey.

## METHODS

A bibliometric review was conducted for articles published in JPAN website between 2011 and 2025. The study was conducted from 1st December 2025 to 31st January 2026. Ethical review was not required, as the study used a publicly available database and did not involve human participants. For each article, the following information was extracted: year of publication, psychiatric subspecialty (Adult, Addiction Psychiatry, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Community Psychiatry, Geriatric Psychiatry, Liaison Psychiatry, Psychotherapy), type of articles (original research article, review article, book review, case report/-case series, editorial, viewpoint, educational article), and study design (cross-sectional, retrospective, case-control, longitudinal follow-up, open-label, randomized controlled trials). Conference proceedings, conference papers, errata, retractions, and conference reviews were excluded to enhance the accuracy and reliability of the findings. Two investigators (GR and AA) independently reviewed the articles to ensure consistency in data abstraction. Disagreements were resolved through consultation with senior authors (YR and UK). Data were entered and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics were applied to calculate frequencies and percentages.

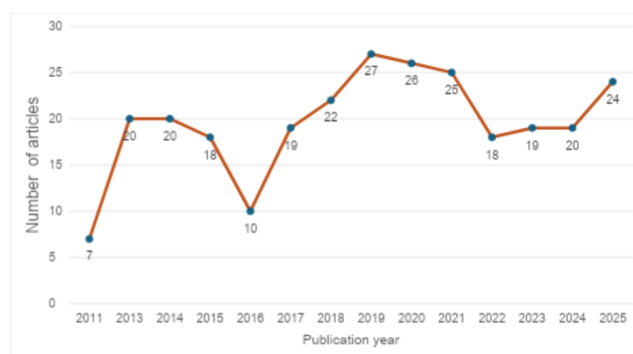
## RESULTS

Fourteen volumes of JPAN published between 2011 and 2025 were analyzed. No issues were published in 2012. JPAN publishes two issues per year, however, only single issue was published in 2011 and 2016. The number of articles has increased after the first six years of publication. Despite this growth, the annual number of articles has remained relatively stable, averaging 19.64 per year. The maximum

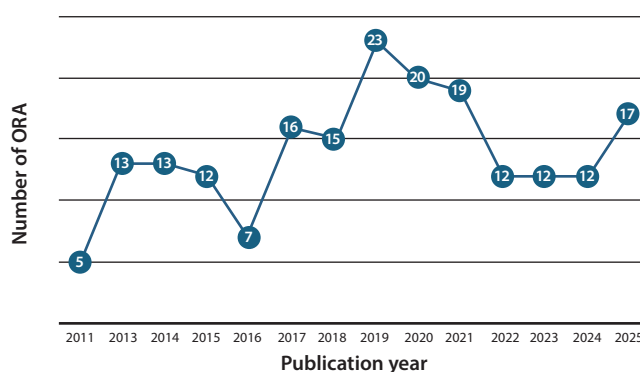
number of articles (n=27) was published in the year 2019.

We reviewed 275 articles and summarized the findings in Table 1. Most articles focused on general mental health, followed by liaison psychiatry, addiction psychiatry, adult psychiatry, and child and adolescent psychiatry. Of these, 71.3% (n=196) were original research articles (ORA), with the remainder comprising case reports (CR) and editorials. Only three viewpoints were published over 14 years. There were 171 cross-sectional studies, 12 retrospective studies, 6 case-control studies, and 3 randomized controlled trials (RCTs). A majority of the studies (81.3%, n = 192) were hospital-based.

**Fig. 1: Number of Articles per year (n=275)**



**Fig. 2: Number of Original Research Articles Per Year**



**Table 1: Characteristics of publications in JPAN**

Article Type	Frequency	Percentage
Original Research Article	196	71.3%
Case reports	39	14.2%
Editorial	26	9.4%
Narrative Review	5	1.8%
View Points	3	1.1%
Book review	2	0.7%
Case series	2	0.7%
Educational article	1	0.4%
Systematic Review	1	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>*Psychiatry subspecialty</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
General mental health	50	20.3%
Adult	39	15.9%
Addiction	35	14.2%
Liaison Psychiatry	34	13.8%
Child and adolescent	24	9.8%
Organic psychiatry	14	5.7%
Psychopharmacology	13	5.3%
Geriatric	13	5.3%
Community Psychiatry	13	5.3%
Psychotherapy	4	1.6%
Neuromodulation	3	1.2%
Mental health policy	1	0.4%
Biostatistics	1	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>**Study Design</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Cross sectional	171	87.7%
Retrospective study	12	6.2%
Case control	6	3.1%
Randomized Control Trial	3	1.5%
Open label	2	1.0%
Longitudinal follow up	1	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>***Study Site</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Hospital	192	81.3%
Community	53	18.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*Editorials, viewpoints and educational article are not included in subspecialty.

\*\*Case reports/series, review articles, educational article, editorials, viewpoints are not included in study design.

\*\*\*Editorials, viewpoints, educational article, review articles are not included in study site.

## DISCUSSION

This study presents a comprehensive overview of publication trends in the JPAN over a 14-year period (2011–2025), providing key insights into the development of psychiatric research in Nepal. The results indicate a gradual increase in publication output, particularly after the initial six years following the journal's inception. This pattern aligns with

global trends in psychiatric research, where publication output has demonstrated steady growth. For instance, a large bibliometric analysis reported a 1.26-fold increase in psychiatric publications worldwide between 2011 and 2015, reflecting expanding research activity across the discipline.<sup>7</sup> In contrast to the rapid global expansion, the growth observed in JPAN remains modest, which may be attributed to persistent challenges such as limited research funding, lack of dedicated research time, and insufficient training in research methodology, which are commonly reported barriers in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>4,8</sup>

Compared with regional journals such as the Indian Journal of Psychiatry, which has been published for over 70 years and maintains a higher publication frequency, JPAN is still in its early developmental stage.<sup>9</sup> Regional journals in India and other South Asian countries typically publish a greater volume of articles with more diverse articles, partly due to well-developed research infrastructure, a higher number of academic institutions, and increased funding availability. Similar bibliometric studies in Indian specialty journals, such as those in orthopedics and ophthalmology, have shown consistent growth in publication output and increasing methodological sophistication.<sup>5,6</sup> The consistent publication of JPAN over the past decade is encouraging and reflects the ongoing development of Nepal's psychiatric research ecosystem. This progress is driven by the expansion of psychiatry departments in medical colleges and a steady rise in postgraduate psychiatry training.<sup>10</sup> A research dissertation is also a core requirement of the postgraduate curriculum. The Nepal Medical Council (NMC) also requires publication in scientific journals for academic appointments in faculty positions and career advancement.<sup>11</sup>

The thematic distribution of articles in JPAN, with a focus on general mental health and adult psychiatry, is consistent with the clinical priorities of developing countries, where there is a high burden of untreated mental illness and strong overlap between physical and mental health conditions.<sup>12</sup> The notable contribution from liaison psychiatry and addiction psychiatry likely reflects emerging clinical needs and increasing recognition of comorbid psychiatric conditions in medical and substance-using populations. Conversely, the relatively low representation of child and adolescent psychiatry and geriatric psychiatry suggests potential gaps in research attention toward vulnerable populations. This imbalance may indicate areas where future research efforts and resource allocation should be prioritized.

The results of our study showed a predominance of original research articles (ORAs), demonstrating a strong emphasis on generating primary data within the country. In contrast, the low number of editorials and viewpoint articles indicates limited engagement in policy-oriented and opinion-based writing as well as in setting research priorities.<sup>13,14</sup> For example, in *World Psychiatry*, a high-impact journal of the World Psychiatric Association, editorials make up 56% of the articles, followed by original articles at 31.7% and letters at 9.5%.<sup>13</sup> It publishes themed commentaries and related materials to raise member awareness with significant influence on global mental health agendas. Increasing similar contributions in *JPAN* could enhance its academic credibility and visibility, while also supporting the development of national mental health policies and strengthen advocacy efforts in Nepal.

A notable finding from this study is that cross-sectional studies represent the predominant study design. The relatively small number of randomized controlled trials (RCTs), systematic reviews, and meta-analyses highlights a gap in the generation of high-quality evidence. This trend of study designs among Nepalese psychiatrists has remained consistent with similar patterns observed prior to the publication of *JPAN* in 2011.<sup>10</sup> It is likely that researchers encounter challenges in conducting systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and RCTs compared to cross-sectional studies, consistent with findings from previous research in Nepal.<sup>15</sup> Other studies identified the primary barriers to psychiatrists conducting research and publishing in academic journals such as a lack of mentorship, time constraints, and insufficient funding.<sup>4,16,17</sup> Additionally, Nepalese researchers prefer publications in international journals,<sup>18</sup> which may have contributed to these findings. This preference is likely motivated by the pursuit of greater visibility and the enhancement of academic credentials. It is timely that *JPAN* should raise its standards and secure indexing in major databases to attract higher-quality submissions.

This study offers several strengths. It is the first to systematically analyze publication trends in Nepal's only dedicated psychiatric journal, establishing a valuable baseline for future bibliometric research. Independent reviewers improved data extraction reliability, and the inclusion of multiple variables enabled a comprehensive assessment of trends. However, some limitations should be noted. The study focuses solely on *JPAN* and does not consider psychiatric research by Nepalese authors

published in other national or international journals, potentially leading to an underestimation of total research output. Further, the review does not examine factors influencing publication trends, such as institutional affiliations or funding sources. Future research could include citation analysis and authorship patterns to provide deeper insights into research impact and collaboration networks, thereby understanding psychiatric research trends in Nepal.

## CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate a positive but gradual growth in psychiatric research publications in Nepal, with a strong emphasis on original research and cross-sectional study designs. However, there remains a need to diversify research topics, enhance methodological rigor, and promote generation of higher level-evidence. Strengthening research capacity, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, and fostering a culture of critical academic discourse will be essential for advancing psychiatric research in Nepal.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge using ChatGPT refining English language and cross-checking grammatical errors.

## DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

Authors Utkarsh Karki (UK) and Yugesh Rai (YR) are members of the *JPAN* editorial board but were not involved in any editorial processes for this submission. Ghanashyam Rai (GR) and Anugya Amatya (AA) also declare no competing interests.

## FUNDING

No financial support was received for the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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