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DO PSYCHIATRIC JOURNALS REFLECT UNIVERSAL REPRESENTATION?

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Aims: Our aim was to describe the contribution of 'Low and middle-income' (LAMI) countries to six leading general psychiatric journals; Archives of General Psychiatry, American Journal of Psychiatry, Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, British Journal of Psychiatry, Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica and Psychological Medicine.

Methods: We surveyed the journals from January 2005 to December 2009. We searched all research articles, reviews and identified potential candidate articles, defined as an article containing original data collected from one or more low or middle-income countries, as defined by the World Bank criteria. We also compared our findings with the similar reviews of the periods 2002-2004 and 1996-1998

Results: Our search identified a total of 3791 research articles; less than 7% (n=259) were from low and middle-income countries. The three European journals published more articles from LAMI countries than the three American journals. Compared with the findings of a similar review of the period 1996-1998 and 2002-2004, there has been little change. The British Journal of Psychiatry and Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica provided the major contribution from the LAMI countries of 8.7% and 9.6% respectively.

Conclusion: It is interesting that almost all journals describe themselves as International; however, our findings clearly suggest that there is a nine-to-one rule with most of the articles coming from richer countries. We suggest that there is a need to break the barriers, so that there should be no more under-representation of research from LAMI countries; which will lead towards the development of a truly international psychiatry.